

# Bishop Ridley Church of England (VA) Primary School



## Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy



**Approved by:** Governors  
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## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

**One Community  
Learning and Growing Together  
Sharing the Love of God**

### 1. Important Contacts

<b>Members of the Safeguarding Team</b>	<b>Mr Perry Catchpole</b> DSL and Deputy Head Teacher <a href="mailto:pcatchpole@bishop-ridley.bexley.sch.uk">pcatchpole@bishop-ridley.bexley.sch.uk</a>	
	<b>Mr Stuart Keep</b> Deputy DSL and Head Teacher	<b>Mrs Claire Coles</b> Assistant Headteacher & SENDCo
<b>Governor with special responsibility for child protection:</b>	<b>Mrs Geraldine Shackleton</b>	
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	<b>Mrs Deborah Haughton</b>	
<b>Bexley Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)</b>	<b>0203 045 5440</b>	
<b>Bexley Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)</b>	<b>Mr Edward Snelgar</b> <b>0203 045 3436</b>	

### 2. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

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

### 3. Commitment of the Governing Body of Bishop Ridley Church of England Primary School

The governors of Bishop Ridley Church of England Primary School are committed to safeguarding practices, which protect children from harm. This commitment is shared by staff and volunteers. We accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues, which cause children harm. We are supported by the London Borough of Bexley in all child protection matters.

We have accepted this policy and will implement it. As part of our commitment, we, the Governing Body of Bishop Ridley Primary School will ensure that our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is reviewed on an annual and an 'as and when necessary' basis. We will also make child protection a

standing agenda at all of our meetings and monitor this Policy by replying to reports, from the Head Teacher and staff, tabled at Full Governing Body meetings.

We commit that every member of the Governing Body will receive safeguarding training at induction or at least annually and will read Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

*This policy should be given to all new employees and made freely available to all staff, parents and carers. All staff receive Safeguarding & Child Protection training at least annually (and during induction).*

#### **4. Legislation and Statutory Guidance**

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and the Maintained Schools Governance Guide. We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by the Bexley Local Authority.

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 what must be recorded on the Single Central Record and the requirement for at least one person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a 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 18
- Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including age, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our Head Teacher and Governors should carefully consider how they are supporting our pupils with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes making

reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment

- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination
- The Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018, The Childcare Act 2006 and the Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 which set out who is disqualified from working with children
- This policy also meets requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## 5. Definitions

**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** is part of this definition and refers to 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 A explains 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, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Appendix A 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 that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video.

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

The following 3 **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017).

They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority (LA)
- Integrated care boards (previously known as clinical commissioning groups) for an area within the LA
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area.

**Early Help** means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

**Victim** is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim, or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

**Alleged perpetrator(s)** and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

## 6. Equality Statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or health conditions
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language (EAL)
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after
- Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

### 7.1. Everyone

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the 3 safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

The school plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by our:

- Behaviour policy
- Pastoral support system
- Planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered weekly, tackling issues such as:
  - a) Healthy and respectful relationships
  - b) Boundaries and consent
  - c) Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
  - d) Body confidence and self-esteem
  - e) How to recognise negative relationships (including coercive and controlling behaviour)
  - f) The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, harassment, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, so-called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and FGM and how to access support

Bishop Ridley C of E Primary School intends to create an environment where Safeguarding and Child Protection is integrated into all parts of school life. We aim for systems to be well-promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback. This is done through our "Tell 5 People" approach, our PSHE curriculum and regular work to promote the NSPCC and "Talk PANTS".

### 7.2. All Staff

All staff will:

- Read and understand Part 1 and Annex A of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and review this guidance at least annually
- Sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have reviewed the guidance
- Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents and carers. This includes making parents and carers aware of what we ask children to do online (e.g. sites they need to visit or who they'll be interacting with online)
- Provide a safe space for pupils who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning to speak out and share their concerns

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct, the role and identity of the DSL, the Deputy DSL and members of the Safeguarding Team, the Behaviour Policy, the Online Safety Policy and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- The early help assessment process and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect and exploitation, including domestic and sexual abuse (including controlling and coercive behaviour, as well as parental conflict that is frequent, intense and unresolved), as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines)
- New and emerging threats, including online harm, grooming, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, radicalisation, and the role of technology and social media in presenting harm
- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online
- The fact that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bi or gender questioning can be targeted by other children
- The fact that a child and their family may be experiencing multiple needs at the same time
- What to look for to identify children who need help or protection.

### **7.3. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

The DSL is a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Our DSL is Mr Perry Catchpole (Deputy Head Teacher). The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding in the school. This includes online safety and understand our filtering and monitoring processes on school devices and networks to keep children safe online.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The DSL can also be contacted via e-mail ([pcatchpole@bishop-ridley.bexley.sch.uk](mailto:pcatchpole@bishop-ridley.bexley.sch.uk)) outside of school hours if necessary.

In the event that the DSL is absent from school, the role will be covered by the other members of the school safeguarding team, namely:

- Mr Stuart Keep (Head Teacher and Deputy DSL)

- Mrs Claire Coles (Assistant Headteacher)

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

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so
- Contribute to the assessment of children
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly
- Have a good understanding of harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)
- Have a good understanding of the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at our school
- Make sure that staff have appropriate Prevent training and induction.

The DSL will also:

- Keep the headteacher informed of any issues
- Liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate
- Discuss the local response to sexual violence and sexual harassment with police and local authority children's social care colleagues to prepare the school's policies
- Be confident that they know what local specialist support is available to support all children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment, and be confident as to how to access this support
- Be aware that children must have an 'appropriate adult' to support and help them in the case of a police investigation or search

#### **7.4. The Governing Body**

The governing body will:

- Take strategic leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements
- Ensure that the school complies with its duties under child protection and safeguarding legislation
- Have overall strategic responsibility for filtering and monitoring and seek assurance that the filtering and monitoring standards for schools are being met
- Facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development
- Evaluate and approve this policy at each review, ensuring it complies with the law, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation
- Be aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and our school's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

- Appoint a link governor to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board.
- Ensure all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, and that such training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the safeguarding partners
- Ensure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place, and review their effectiveness. This includes:
  - Making sure that the leadership team and staff are aware of the provisions in place, and that they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training
  - Reviewing the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards, and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting these standards
- Make sure:
  - The DSL has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, including additional time, training, resources and support
  - Online safety is a running and interrelated theme within the whole-school approach to safeguarding and related policies
  - The DSL has lead authority for safeguarding, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place
  - The school has procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns) about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors).
  - That this policy reflects that children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised
- Where another body is providing services or activities (regardless of whether or not the children who attend these services/activities are children on the school roll):
  - Seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place, and inspect them if needed
  - Make sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the school about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate
  - Make sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the school premises, and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply.
- Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe where school facilities or premises are hired or rented out to organisations or individuals and, where services or activities are provided separately by another body, seek assurance that the body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place and that individuals working with children have appropriate DBS checks.
- Ensure that safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement, i.e. lease or hire agreement, as a condition of use and occupation of the premises, and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

- Establish robust health and safety and emergency evacuation procedures.

The Chair of Governors will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Head Teacher, where appropriate.

All governors will read Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 in its entirety.

### **7.5. The Head Teacher**

The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:
  - Are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
  - Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect
- Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the school and via the school website and ensuring that parents have an awareness of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in communications and/or in the home school agreement.
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see [Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy](#) for more information.)
- Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL on this
- Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable
- Ensure that the school practises safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children in accordance with the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 as amended.
- Ensure that the school carries out all necessary checks on the suitability of people who serve as members and/or on the governing board.
- Ensure that, where the school ceases to use the services of any person because that person was considered unsuitable to work with children, a prompt and detailed report is made to the DBS within one month.
- Overseeing the safe use of technology, mobile phones and cameras in the setting including ensuring that staff implement appropriate filters and monitoring of online material.

### **8. Confidentiality**

This policy is written in line with the school's [Confidentiality Policy](#).

Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding and fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children.

The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if:

- It is not possible to gain consent
- It cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent
- If to gain consent would place a child at risk

Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests.

If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about sexual violence or sexual harassment:

- There is no definitive answer, because even if a victim does not consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there is another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies
- The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children.

The DSL should consider that:

- Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
- The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care
- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains.

Regarding anonymity, all staff will:

- Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system
- Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment – for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved.
- Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities.

The government's Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information.

If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or Deputy DSL).

## **9. Recognising Abuse and Taking Action**

All staff will be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and will understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home, in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or by others, and online. Staff will also be aware that pupils can be affected by seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of abuse.

The school will recognise that abuse or neglect of a child may occur through the infliction of harm or through the failure to act to prevent harm. The school will understand that harm can include ill treatment that is not physical in nature, as well as the psychological impact of witnessing the ill treatment of others.

The school will pay particular attention to the effects of domestic abuse on children, recognising that harm may arise not only when children are directly involved, but also when they see, hear, or otherwise experience its consequences. All necessary steps will be taken to identify and respond appropriately to such concerns in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.

All staff shall be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs.
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education health and care (EHC) plan)
- Has a mental health need
- Is a young carer
- Is bereaved
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or home
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content or developing inappropriate relationships online.
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol
- Is suffering from mental ill health
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as FGM or forced marriage
- Is a privately fostered child
- Has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending
- Is missing education, or persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education
- Has experienced multiple suspensions and is at risk, or has been permanently excluded.

Staff, volunteers and governors must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue.

Please note in this and subsequent sections, you should take any references to “the DSL” to mean “the DSL (or members of the Safeguarding Team)”.

### **9.1. If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or is in immediate danger**

Make a referral to children’s social care and/or the police **immediately** if you believe a child is suffering or is likely to suffer from harm or is in immediate danger.

#### **Anyone can make a referral.**

Our school procedure is that referrals are normally carried out by the DSL. Tell the DSL as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

Where the DSL is made aware of a concern, they will act to understand the issue and ascertain if a child is at risk of, or may be suffering from significant harm. They will decide on the appropriate way to proceed referring to the local threshold document, “Effective Support for Children, Young People and Families in Bexley”.

Steps could include:

- Speaking to the adult raising a concern to clarify information
  - If this is a member of staff, they may ask them to speak informally to the child again about the matter. The DSL will provide advice and guidance to the member of staff on how to address the subject
- Speaking to the victim, perpetrator or witnesses directly
  - Taking account of the subject matter this may include another person sitting in on the conversation, ensuring that they are in a space which is private enough for the child to be comfortable, but ensuring that they use a room with a window or glass panel in the door (showing an awareness of the potential risk of false allegations against staff).
  - This will be with the aim of gaining enough information to understand the risk of harm to the child, but will not usually involve carrying out a detailed investigation
- Speaking to the child’s parent/carer to clarify or seek additional information
- Speaking to the Bexley MASH Team (or other appropriate body)
- Making a written referral to Children Social Services (see below)
- Speaking directly to the police

If a child has met the harm threshold, a referral can be made to the Bexley children’s social care team by the DSL. Referrals can be made online through the Bexley social care website. As part of our school procedures, the DSL will also call the Bexley Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team to confirm receipt of this referral and seek advice on next steps. The MASH team may also be contacted by phone to seek a consultation before making the written referral. In some cases, children’s social care and/or police may instruct the school on how to proceed, for example, to give no further information to parents/ carers regarding an allegation if they believe that doing so could place a child at further

risk of harm. The DSL will comply with these requests where they agree with the rationale, but will challenge or escalate if they are concerned about the way a case is being handled.

A summary of specific safeguarding issues is included as Appendix B of this policy.

### **9.2. If a child makes a disclosure to you or you notice indicators of abuse**

If a child discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible using either CPOMS or the green Cause or Concern form (included for reference as Appendix E to this policy), using the child's own words (and direct quotations where possible). Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it
- Sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL as soon as possible. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to children's social care and/or the police directly, and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so. Aside from these people, do not disclose the information to anyone else unless told to do so by a relevant authority involved in the safeguarding process.

If you notice other indicators of abuse, including evidence such as marks on the child, report the concerns as soon as possible using either CPOMS or the green Cause for Concern form and alert the DSL. Note the location and describe any physical marks (a body map should be completed in these cases).

Bear in mind that some children may:

- Not feel ready, or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected
- Not recognise their experiences as harmful
- Feel embarrassed, humiliated or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers.

None of this should stop you from having a 'professional curiosity' and speaking to the DSL if you have concerns about a child.

### **9.3. If you discover that FGM has taken place or a pupil is at risk of FGM**

Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs".

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Possible indicators that a pupil has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a pupil may be at risk, are set out in Appendix B of this policy.

Any **teacher** who either:

- Is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18

Must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a mandatory statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have been specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

Any **other member of staff** who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a pupil under 18 must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil is at risk of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. **Staff should not examine pupils.**

**Any member of staff** who suspects a pupil is at risk of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out should speak to the DSL.

Reports should be made orally by calling 101. Staff should be prepared to provide the call handler with the following information:

- Explain that you are making a report under the FGM mandatory reporting duty
- Your details (including name, contact details and times when you will be available to be called back, place of work and role)
- Details of the school DSL
- Details of the pupil (including name, age, date of birth and address)

A reference number for the call will be given and this should be shared with the DSL so that this can be documented in the school records.

#### **9.4. If you have concerns about a child** (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger)

Diagram 1 (below) illustrates the procedure to follow if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.

Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the safeguarding team or senior leadership team and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000. Share details of any actions you take with the DSL as soon as practically possible.

Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' below). Share any action taken with the DSL as soon as possible.

If an **early help assessment** is appropriate, the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Further guidance on effective assessment of the need for early help can be found in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

We will discuss and agree, with statutory safeguarding partners, levels for the different types of assessment, as part of local arrangements.

The DSL will keep the case under review and the school will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

If it is appropriate to make a **referral** to local authority children's social care or the police, the DSL or member of the safeguarding team will make the referral or support you to do so.

If you make a referral directly, you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The local authority will make a decision within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the local authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the child's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or person who made the referral must contact the MASH team duty manager to escalate the matter to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

### **9.5. If you have concerns about extremism (Prevent Duty)**

If a child is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from local authority children's social care. Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate. Inform the DSL or deputy as soon as practically possible after the referral.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include the police or Channel, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team.

The DfE also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which school staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. You can also email [counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk). Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related.

#### **9.6. If you have a concern about mental health**

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

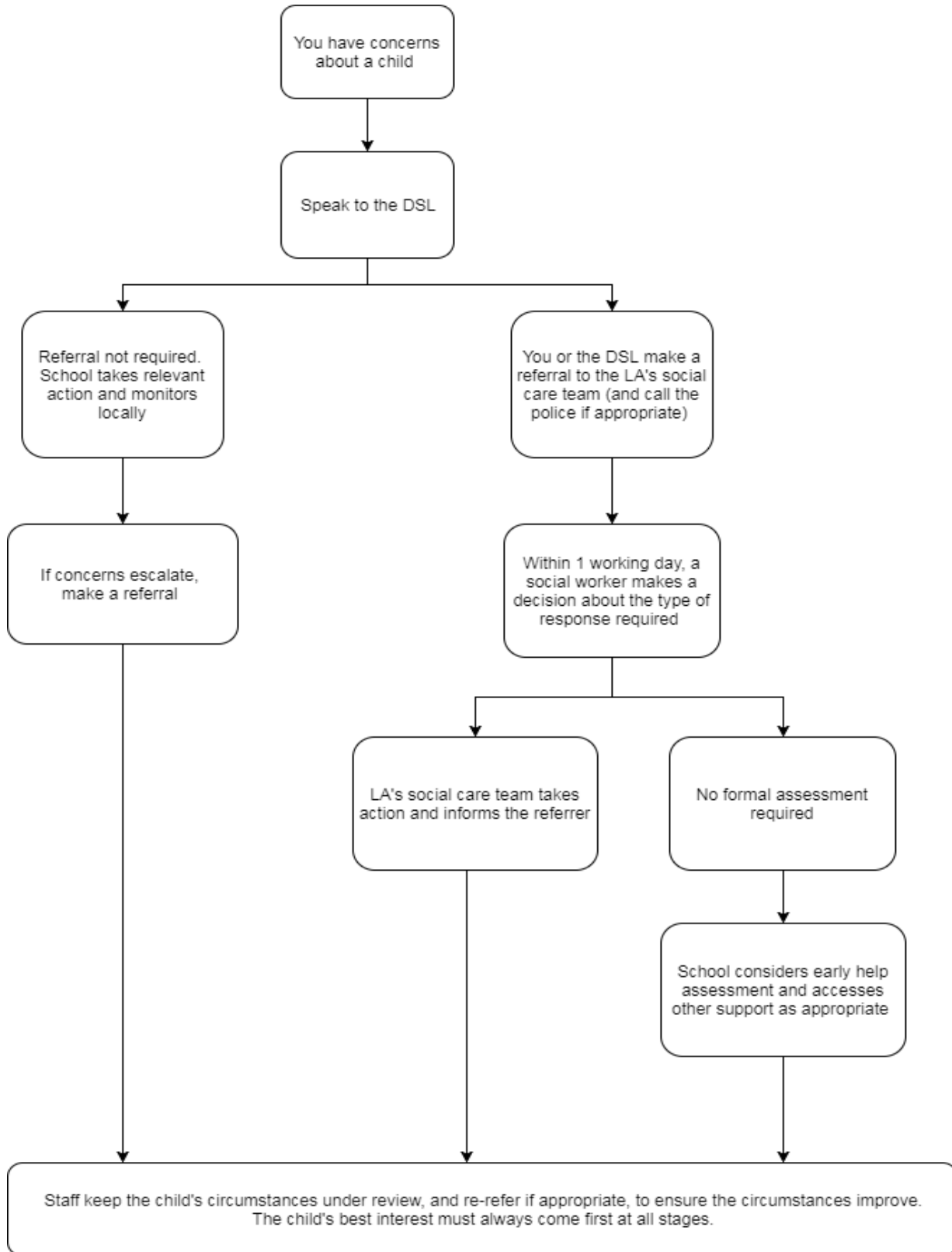
Staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by following the steps above.

If you have a mental health concern that is **not** also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL to agree a course of action.

More information can be found in the DfE guidance on Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools.

**Diagram 1: Procedure if you have concerns about a child's welfare (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger).**



### **9.7. If you have concerns about a staff member, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor**

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the Headteacher as soon as possible. If the concerns/allegations are about the Headteacher, speak to the Chair of Governors.

Where you believe there is a conflict of interest in reporting a concern or allegation about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) to the Headteacher, report it directly to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

If you receive an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using the school premises for running an activity for children, follow our school safeguarding policies and procedures, informing the LADO, as you would with any safeguarding allegation.

We work closely with groups and companies running activities on the school site who are expected to understand and follow the school's procedures (including Kinetic Kids and St Francis Polish School). Their own policies (regarding concerns about an adult) show that they will handle allegations in the way detailed above and will make us aware of any concerns.

For more information, see the [Managing Allegations Against Staff \(including Low-Level Concerns\) Policy](#).

### **9.8. Allegations of abuse made against other pupils**

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. At Bishop Ridley, abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up", as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils. All staff will be aware that child-on-child abuse can occur between pupils of any age, both inside and outside of school, as well as online. All staff will be aware of the indicators of child-on-child abuse, how to identify it, and how to respond to reports.

We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Some children may be particularly vulnerable and have an increased risk of abuse. The school will recognise that children with SEND or certain health conditions are three times more likely to be abused by their peers, can face additional safeguarding challenges and may be more prone to child-on-child group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. The school will consider extra pastoral support for those children.

All pupils have the right to be safeguarded from harm regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality or disability. The school will give special consideration to, amongst others, children who:

- Have SEND.
- Are vulnerable to being bullied.
- Are looked after or living in unsupportive home situations.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes)

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

- You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it
- The DSL will contact the Bexley MASH team and follow their advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed.
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate
- If the incident is a criminal offence and there are delays in the criminal process, the DSL will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator. We will ask the police if we have any questions about the investigation.

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensure pupils are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously

- Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners
- Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed
- Consider intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:
  - How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
  - That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”
  - That if they have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
    - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
    - A friend may make a report
    - A member of staff may overhear a conversation
    - A child’s behaviour might indicate that something is wrong
  - That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation
  - That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
  - The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it
  - That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns
  - That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side.

The DSL will take the lead role in any disciplining of the alleged perpetrator(s). We will provide support at the same time as taking any disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action can be taken while other investigations are going on, e.g. by the police. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident does not (in itself) prevent our school from coming to its own conclusion about what happened and imposing a penalty accordingly. We will consider these matters on a case-by-case basis, taking into account whether:

- Taking action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution – we will liaise with the police and/or children’s social care to determine this
- There are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for us to reach our own view about what happened while an independent investigation is ongoing.

## 9.9. Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes

If you are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos (also known as 'sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery'), you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must **not**:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it (if you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL)
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.

You should explain that you need to report the incident, and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an **initial review meeting** with appropriate school staff – this may include the staff member who reported the incident and the safeguarding team. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to pupil(s)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care (see below)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the image(s) has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images or videos from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the pupils involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the pupils involved (in most cases parents/carers should be involved).

The DSL will also make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care if:

- The incident involves an adult
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to SEN)
- What the DSL knows about the images or videos suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming).

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the Headteacher and other members of the safeguarding team, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care. The decision will be made and recorded in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

If at the initial review stage, a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a **further review** to establish the facts and assess the risks. They will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate). If at any point in the process there is a concern that a pupil has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

The DSL will inform parents/carers at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the pupil at risk of harm.

All incidents of sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, and the decisions made in responding to them, will be recorded.

#### **9.10. Reporting systems for our pupils**

Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will take the child's wishes and feelings into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

We recognise the importance of ensuring pupils feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations.

To achieve this, we will:

- Put systems in place for pupils to confidently report abuse, including frequent work around 'Tell 5 People', where pupils identify their five trusted adults to speak to about worries or concerns
- Ensure our reporting systems are well promoted (through regular assemblies/collective worship, PSHE lessons and displays around the school), easily understood and easily accessible for pupils
- Make it clear to pupils that their concerns will be taken seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback
- Ensure that pupils feel safe in submitting any concerns by reassuring them following disclosures.

### **10. Online Safety and the Use of Mobile Technology**

This policy has been written in line with our [Online Safety Policy](#), our [Mobile Phones and Portable Devices Policy](#), our [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and our [Social Media Policy](#).

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

To address this, our school aims to:

- Have robust processes (including filtering and monitoring systems) in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and governors
- Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate.

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following **4 key categories of risk**:

- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories.
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying;
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.

To meet our aims and address the risks above, we will:

- Educate pupils about online safety within PSHE and Computing lessons. For example:
  - The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
  - Keeping personal information private (and share all privacy notices online <https://www.bishopridleyschool.org.uk/data-protection-gdpr/> )
  - How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
  - How to report any incidents of cyberbullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they're a witness rather than a victim.
- Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying, the risks of online radicalisation, and the expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring. All staff members will receive refresher training as required and at least once each academic year
- Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and workshops run by the DSL. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:
  - Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present

- Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras
- Staff will only use school iPads to take pictures or videos of pupils, both in the classroom and on educational visits.
- Make all pupils, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and governors aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in school, use of the school's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology
- Explain the sanctions we will use if a pupil is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones
- Make sure all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation and our [Searching and Confiscation Policy](#)
- The school will ensure that appropriate filtering systems are in place on school devices and school networks to prevent children accessing inappropriate material, in accordance with the school's Cyber-security Policy. The appropriateness of the school's filters and monitoring systems will be informed by the Filtering and monitoring standards, the Cyber security standards for schools and colleges, and the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty. The school will, however, ensure that the use of filtering and monitoring systems does not cause "over blocking", which may lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what pupils can be taught online. The school will also ensure that it meets the filtering and monitoring standards published by the DfE.
- Carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our school community.
- Provide regular safeguarding and children protection updates including online safety to all staff, at least annually, in order to continue to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard effectively
- Review the Online Safety Policy annually and ensure the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly

### **10.1. Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT.

Bishop Ridley recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning, and in helping to protect and safeguard pupils. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose pupils to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

Bishop Ridley will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully pupils in line with this policy and our Anti-Bullying, Behaviour and Use of Artificial Intelligence policies.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools whilst they are still being developed and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the school. All uses of AI should ensure that they remain in line with the school's Data Protection and Confidentiality policies.

## **11. Notifying Parents or Carers**

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents or carers. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents or carers about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents or carers would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children's social care team before doing so and may follow their advice to delay sharing information.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents or carers of all the children involved. We will think carefully about what information we provide about the other child involved, and when. We will work with the police and/or local authority children's social care to make sure our approach to information sharing is consistent.

The DSL will, along with any relevant agencies (this will be decided on a case-by-case basis):

- Meet with the victim's parents or carers, with the victim, to discuss what's being put in place to safeguard them, and understand their wishes in terms of what support they may need and how the report will be progressed
- Meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss support for them, and what's being put in place that will impact them, e.g. moving them out of classes with the victim, and the reason(s) behind any decision(s).

## **12. Pupils with Special Educational Needs, Disabilities or Health Issues**

We recognise that pupils with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. Children with disabilities are more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- Pupils being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils
- The potential for pupils with SEN, disabilities or certain health conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges
- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in school.

We offer extra pastoral support for these pupils, including extra intervention (both academically and socially) and Special Time sessions with a trained member of staff.

Any abuse involving pupils with SEND will require close liaison with the DSL and the SENDCo (Claire Coles)

### **13. Pupils with a Social Worker**

Pupils may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

Where we are aware that a pupil has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the pupil's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:

- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- The provision of pastoral and/or academic support.

### **14. Pupils who are educated at home**

When parents elect to home educate, they take full responsibility for providing their child's education. Once a child is removed from the school roll, the school has no duty to provide learning, but it will share safeguarding information with the local authority and ensure any concerns identified while the child was on roll are followed up.

Flexi-schooling is different: a child remains on the school roll but attends for part of the week, with parents taking responsibility for education at home on the other days. This can only happen with the headteacher's agreement, and the arrangement must be reviewed regularly to ensure it continues to meet the child's needs. The school is responsible for the child's education, attendance and safeguarding during the time they are in school, while parents are responsible for the days when the child is educated at home. The school will keep clear records of attendance and safeguarding, and will work closely with families and the local authority if concerns arise.

There are other situations where the school or local authority may continue to provide education or support, such as if a child cannot attend school for health reasons, has an Education, Health and Care Plan, or is excluded. In all cases the school will ensure safeguarding arrangements remain in place and that concerns are acted upon without delay.

### **15. Pupils Accessing Alternative Provision**

Some children may be educated in alternative provision, either full time or for part of the week, when this is agreed as being in their best interests. In these cases, the child remains on the school roll, and the school retains overall responsibility for their education, progress and safeguarding. The school will ensure that any provider used is appropriate, registered where required, and able to meet

the child's needs safely. Safeguarding responsibilities are shared: the alternative provision setting has day-to-day responsibility for the child while they are on site, and the school maintains oversight, making sure safeguarding information is shared promptly and concerns are followed up. The school will keep regular contact with the provider, record attendance, and review the placement regularly to check that it continues to be suitable and that the child is safe and supported.

## **16. Use of School Premises for Non-School Activities**

When the school premises are hired or rented out for non-school activities, the governing body or remains responsible for ensuring that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place. This includes ensuring that the hirer has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures, including safer recruitment practices, in place.

The school will assess the suitability of the proposed activity and the hirer's safeguarding arrangements before granting permission.

The school will also ensure that the terms and conditions of the hire agreement include safeguarding requirements and that appropriate checks are carried out on any individuals who will be working with children during the activity. The school will monitor the activity to ensure compliance with safeguarding arrangements and take appropriate action if concerns arise.

## **17. Looked-after and Previously Looked-after Children**

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. In particular, we will ensure that:

- Appropriate staff have relevant information about children's "Looked-After" legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements
- The DSL has details of children's social workers and relevant virtual school heads.

We have appointed a designated teacher, Stuart Keep (Head Teacher), who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children in line with statutory guidance.

The role of the Virtual School Head has been extended to include a non-statutory responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children in kinship care.

As part of their role, the designated teacher will:

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Work with virtual school heads to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including discussing how pupil premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans

## **18. Pupils who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Gender Questioning**

We recognise that pupils who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning can be targeted by other children. We also recognise that these children are more likely to experience poor mental health. Any concerns should be reported to the DSL.

When families/ carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning pupils, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. This should be done as early as possible when supporting pre-pubertal children.

When supporting a gender questioning pupil, we will take a cautious approach as there are still unknowns around the impact of social transition, and a pupil may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

We will also consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with their parents/carers (other than in rare circumstances where involving parents/carers would constitute a significant risk of harm to the pupil). We will also include any clinical advice that is available and consider how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying.

Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. We therefore aim to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where pupils can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

## **19. Arrangements for pupils during Breakfast and After School Club**

The school runs Breakfast Club and After-School Club. These are staffed by employees of Bishop Ridley Primary School.

We aim to protect children from abuse and our team members from false allegations by adopting the same policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection as outlined in the rest of this policy. This also includes:

- keeping a register of all children attending our clubs
- keeping a register of all staff /outside providers (both paid staff members and volunteers) via our electronic signing in system
- The club will keep a register of all children attending the activities
- Our team members will follow the safeguarding and child protection procedures as detailed in this policy
- Written consent from a parent or guardian will be obtained for every child attending our clubs

- Where applicable, all clubs independent of the school must have their own child protection policy & procedure in line with the school's

The DSL and other members of the safeguarding team will ensure that they are always available for any concerns that arise during Breakfast or After School Club (this may be via telephone, rather than in person).

## **20. Complaints and Concerns About School Safeguarding Policies and Procedures**

At Bishop Ridley, we hope that all staff and other stakeholders feel comfortable to raise a concern about safeguarding procedures and should do so by speaking directly to the Head Teacher. However, if this is not appropriate, complaints should be made, in writing, to the Chair of Governors. Our Complaints Procedure can be found on our school website.

More information can be found in the school Whistleblowing Policy which can be found in the staff secure section of the school website.

## **21. Record-keeping**

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as children's social care or the Prevent programme etc. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- A note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child.

Any non-confidential records will be readily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

Copies of safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have left the school to ensure that the records are safely in the possession of the child's new school.

If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their original child protection file is forwarded as soon as possible, securely, and separately from the main pupil file.

To allow the new school/college to have support in place when the child arrives, this should be within:

- 5 days for an in-year transfer, or within
- The first 5 days of the start of a new term

In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

The majority of our safeguarding records are now electronic and are stored via CPOMS, accessed only by members of the safeguarding team. Paper-based forms are kept locked away securely. This information is shared with members of the safeguarding team and external agencies when appropriate.

## **22. Training**

### **22.1. All Staff**

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures and online safety, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect.

This training will be regularly updated and will:

- Be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole-school safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning
- Be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners
- Include online safety, including an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff around filtering and monitoring
- Have regard to the Teachers' Standards to support the expectation that all teachers:
  - Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe environment
  - Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils
- All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.
- Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including on online safety, as required but at least annually (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings).
- Contractors who are provided through a private finance initiative (PFI) or similar contract will also receive safeguarding training.
- Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

### **22.2. The DSL and Members of the Safeguarding Team**

The DSL and members of the Safeguarding Team will undertake suitable DSL training at least every 2 years.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through local authority safeguarding conferences, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments).

The DSL will also undertake more in-depth Prevent awareness training including on extremist and terrorist ideologies.

### **22.3. Governors**

All governors receive training about safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) at induction, which is regularly updated. This is to make sure that they:

- Have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, such as providing strategic challenge
- Can be assured that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the school to deliver a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding

As the Chair of Governors may be required to act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose.

### **22.4. Recruitment – Interview Panels**

At least one person conducting any interview for any post at the school will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025), and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

## **23. Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the DSL, Deputy DSL and Link Governor with responsibility for safeguarding. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

This policy is reviewed at least annually by the DSL, headteacher and link governor. This policy will be updated as needed to ensure it is up-to-date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including any lessons learnt.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme.

Any child protection incidents at the school will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the school and a prompt report to the governing board. Where an incident involves a member of staff, the LADO will assist in this review to determine whether any improvements can be made to the school's procedures.

If any concerns are raised by the LADO or Ofsted about safeguarding issues, the following actions will be taken:

- The DSL carries out an investigation as a priority and comply with any deadlines given
- The Chair of the Governors reports to the LADO or Ofsted on the findings of the investigation and sets out any action to be taken
- The school endeavours to comply as soon as possible with any recommendations from the LADO or Ofsted

## **24. Links with Other Policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Acceptable Use
- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Bexley LSCB Protocol for Managing allegations against staff
- Complaints
- Confidentiality
- Data Protection
- Equal Opportunities
- Equality and Diversity
- First Aid
- Health and Safety
- Managing Allegations Against Staff
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Mobile Phones and Portable Devices
- Online Safety
- Personal and Intimate Care
- Relationships and Sex Education
- Safer Recruitment
- Searching and Confiscation
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Social Media
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Supporting Children with Medical Needs
- Whistleblowing

## Appendices

These appendices are based on the DfE's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.

### Appendix A: Types of Abuse

**Abuse**, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by 1 definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

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

**Emotional abuse** 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 is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse may involve:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

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

**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 as a result of maternal substance abuse.

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

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **Appendix B: Specific Safeguarding Issues**

### **Assessing Adult-Involved Nude and Semi-Nude Sharing Incidents**

All adult-involved nude and semi-nude image sharing incidents are child sexual abuse offences and must immediately be referred to police/social care. However, as adult-involved incidents can present as child-on-child nude/semi-nude sharing, it may be difficult to initially assess adult involvement. There are two types of common adult-involved incidents: sexually motivated incidents and financially motivated incidents.

In a **sexually motivated incident**, an adult offender obtains nude and semi-nudes directly from a child or young person using online platforms.

To make initial contact, the offender may present as themselves or use a false identity on the platform, sometimes posing as a child or young person to encourage a response and build trust. The offender often grooms the child or young person on social media, in chatrooms or on gaming platforms, and may then move the conversation to a private messaging app or an end-to-end encrypted (E2EE) environment where a request for a nude or semi-nude is made. To encourage the child or young person to create and share nude or semi-nude, the offender may share pornography or child sexual abuse material (images of other young people), including AI-generated material.

Once a child or young person shares a nude or semi-nude, an offender may blackmail the child or young person into sending more images by threatening to release them online and/or send them to friends and family.

Potential signs of adult-involved grooming and coercion can include the child or young person being:

- Contacted by an online account that they do not know but appears to be another child or young person
- Quickly engaged in sexually explicit communications, which may include the offender sharing unsolicited images
- Moved from a public to a private/E2EE platform
- Coerced/pressured into doing sexual things, including creating nudes and semi-nudes
- Offered something of value such as money or gaming credits
- Threatened or blackmailed into carrying out further sexual activity. This may follow the child or young person initially sharing the image or the offender sharing a digitally manipulated image of the child or young person to extort 'real' images

**Financially motivated sexual extortion** (also known as 'sextortion') is an adult-involved incident in which an adult offender (or offenders) threatens to release nudes or semi-nudes of a child or young person unless they pay money or do something else to benefit them.

Unlike other adult-involved incidents, financially motivated sexual extortion is usually carried out by offenders working in sophisticated organised crime groups (OCGs) overseas and are only motivated by profit. Adults are usually targeted by these groups too.

Offenders will often use a false identity, sometimes posing as a child or young person, or hack another young person's account to make initial contact. To financially blackmail the child or young person, they may:

- Groom or coerce the child or young person into sending nudes or semi-nudes and financially blackmail them
- Use images that have been stolen from the child or young person taken through hacking their account
- Use digitally manipulated images, including AI-generated images, of the child or young person

The offender may demand payment or the use of the victim's bank account for the purposes of money laundering.

Potential signs of adult-involved financially motivated sexual extortion can include the child or young person being:

- Contacted by an online account that they do not know but appears to be another child or young person. They may be contacted by a hacked account of a child or young person
- Quickly engaged in sexually explicit communications which may include the offender sharing an image first
- Moved from a public to a private/E2EE platform
- Pressured into taking nudes or semi-nudes
- Told they have been hacked and they have access to their images, personal information and contacts
- Blackmailed into sending money or sharing bank account details after sharing an image or the offender sharing hacked or digitally manipulated images of the child or young person

### **Children who are absent from education**

A child being absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

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

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes

informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named, and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

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

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

### **Child criminal exploitation**

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

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

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

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education

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

### **Child sexual exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, in

exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

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

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

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

In addition to the CCE indicators above, indicators of CSE can include a child:

- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

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

### **Child-on-child abuse**

Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school. It can also take place both face-to-face and online, and can occur simultaneously between the 2.

Bishop Ridley has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We recognise that even if there are there no reports, that doesn't mean that this kind of abuse isn't happening.

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

- Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (this is sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse

- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Where children abuse their peers online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.

If staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 8 of this policy, as appropriate.

When considering instances of harmful sexual behaviour between children, we will consider their ages and stages of development. We recognise that children displaying harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma, and will offer them appropriate support.

### **Domestic abuse**

Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse and/or violence at home where it occurs between family members. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse (abuse in intimate personal relationships between children) and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. It can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological or emotional. It can also include ill treatment that isn't physical, as well as witnessing the ill treatment of others – for example, the impact of all forms of domestic abuse on children.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background, and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. Children who witness domestic abuse are also victims.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children and affect their health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn.

If police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any children in the household have experienced the incident, the police will inform the key adult in school (usually the designated safeguarding lead) before the child or children arrive at school the following day.

The DSL will provide support according to the child's needs and update records about their circumstances.

### **Homelessness**

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare.

The DSL and members of the Safeguarding Team will be aware of contact details and referral routes in to the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures).

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to children's social care.

### **So-called 'honour-based' abuse (including FGM and forced marriage)**

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All forms of HBA are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by **FGM or at risk of FGM**.

Section 8 of this policy sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a pupil is at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A pupil confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/pupil already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
  - Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
  - Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
  - Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
  - Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
  - Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
  - Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period
  - Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour

- Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
- Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Potential signs that a pupil may be at risk of FGM include:

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider)
- FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
  - Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
  - Having limited level of integration within UK society
  - Confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman"
  - Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents/carers stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
  - Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
  - Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion)
  - Being unexpectedly absent from school
  - Having sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

**Forced marriage** is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of 1 or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

It is also illegal to cause a child under the age of 18 to marry, even if violence, threats or coercion are not involved.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or [fm@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fm@fco.gov.uk)

- Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

### Preventing 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; or
  - Undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
  - Intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results outlined in either of the above points.
- **Terrorism** is an action that:
  - Endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people;
  - Causes serious damage to property; or
  - Seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system

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

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

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

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place, and equip our pupils to stay safe online at school and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour.

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

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance

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

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

If staff are concerned about a pupil, they will follow our procedures set out in section 8 of this policy, including discussing their concerns with the DSL.

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

### **Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur:

- Between 2 children of any age and sex
- Through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children
- Online and face to face (both physically and verbally)

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school.

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that staff make sure they are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting any form of abuse or neglect. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

When supporting victims, staff will:

- Reassure victims that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them
- Regularly review decisions and actions, and update policies with lessons learnt

- Look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, and decide on a course of action where we identify any patterns
- Consider if there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled inappropriate behaviour to occur and whether revising policies and/or providing extra staff training could minimise the risk of it happening again
- Remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting signs that a child has experienced sexual violence, and show sensitivity to their needs

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and gender questioning children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- Challenging inappropriate behaviours
- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them

If staff have any concerns about sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 8 of this policy, as appropriate.

### **Serious violence**

Indicators which may signal that a child is at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime may include:

- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions (this could indicate that the child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation (see above))

Risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include:

- Being male
- Having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- Having experienced child maltreatment
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery

Staff will be aware of these indicators and risk factors. If a member of staff has a concern about a pupil being involved in, or at risk of, serious violence, they will report this to the DSL.

### **Checking the identity and suitability of visitors**

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and will be supervised by a member of staff during their time on the site. They will never be left unsupervised with children.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are expected to sign in and wear a visitor's badge with the correct-coloured lanyard, determined by whether a DBS certificate has been checked and approved.

Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and school improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- The organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an appropriate level of DBS check has been carried out (if this is provided, we will not ask to see the DBS certificate)

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise pupils or staff.

### **Non-collection of children**

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we will accompany the child to the school office whilst we attempt to contact a parent or carer. The child will be placed in after school club until such a time when a parent can arrive to collect at the school. Should a parent be uncontactable, we will call all other numbers on the contact list and, in the last event, contact the local police or Bexley Children's Services for advice.

## **Appendix C: Making Contact with Other Agencies**

*In the case of concern about a child's safety, wellbeing or abuse of a child*

### **EMERGENCY DUTY TEAM**

Telephone: 0203 045 5440

Fax: 0203 045 5445

Email: [ChildrensDutyteam.admin@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:ChildrensDutyteam.admin@bexley.gov.uk)

### **DISABLED CHILDREN'S SERVICE**

Telephone: 0203 045 3600

Fax: 0203 045 3891

### **BEXLEY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S SERVICE**

Telephone: 020 3045 3266

Fax: 02030453891

### **BEXLEY LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD**

Telephone: 020 3045 4125

### **COMPLEX NEEDS MANAGER**

Telephone: 01322356333

### **NSPCC**

Telephone: 08088005000

### **POLICE CHILD ABUSE INVESTIGATION TEAM**

Telephone: 0207 230 3700 (8am – 6pm) or calls outside these hours should be made to 999

*In the case of allegations against staff*

### **HEAD OF SCHOOLS HR**

Telephone: via Bexley Switchboard – 0208 303 7777

### **LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO)**

Telephone: **0203 045 3436**

## **Appendix D: Guidelines if a Student Goes Missing**

While students are in school, we have a responsibility for duty of care to the students and act in loco-parentis by taking steps that are reasonable to ensure safety and well-being.

- **If a student goes missing while out-of-school, the following steps should be taken:**

- Gather other students together
- Allocate staff to search immediate area and notify local security/members of staff at the visit location.

If a student is missing for more than 10 minutes,

- Contact school to say which measures have been taken
- Ensure that there is good two-way communication established with a range of phone lines
- Notify the police / security if a student continues to go missing,
- Send other students accompanied by staff back to school (if possible), in bus / cabs asking school to send transport, and additional staff to help search.
- School alert parents as soon as possible and keep them posted.
- School alert London Borough of Bexley Deputy Director for Schools and Educational Improvement
- Set up link headquarters at school (i.e. Identify roles, rota for manning phones, making tea etc. preparing posters and alert transport police (bus and trains), taxi firms, local police, other police.
- Try to secure radio and TV help.

Ensure all staff are aware of these procedures.

On outings, always take a mobile phone leaving the number of the phone you have taken with the school office

Ensure that the school has the numbers of any other phones you have on the trip and make sure these are **ON** (all individuals with mobiles are recorded on the risk assessment).

Do not hesitate to alert school when there is a problem.

- **If a student goes missing in school, the following steps should be taken:**

- Let the main office / Head Teacher know immediately.
- One member of staff must go to the roadside to search
- One member of staff must circumnavigate the grounds
- One member of staff must search all rooms inside
- Let all these people know when the student has been found
- If the student remains missing, school should alert parents as soon as possible and keep them posted

Avoid a blame culture, celebrate the success of the mission when the student is found and learn from the investigation. Head Teacher or senior leader should investigate and evaluate what happened afterwards in order to learn from the situation and to satisfy ourselves that the best possible was done.

**Appendix E: Bishop Ridley Cause for Concern Sheet**

**BISHOP RIDLEY C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL - CAUSE FOR CONCERN SHEET**

<b>Child's Full Name:</b>		
<b>Child's Date of Birth:</b>		
<b>Male/Female:</b>	<b>Ethnic Origin:</b>	<b>Disability Y/N? :</b>
<b>Day, date and time of concern:</b>		
<b>Your account of the concern: (What was said, observed, reported and by whom)</b>		
<b>Additional information: (context of concern/disclosure, your opinion)</b>		
<b>Your response: (What did you do/say following the concern)</b>		
<b>Your name:</b>		
<b>Your signature:</b>	<b>Date and time of this recording:</b>	
<b>Your position in school:</b>		

Safeguarding Team Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date & Time concern received: \_\_\_\_\_

Action and response of Designated Safeguarding Lead/Safeguarding Team

Issues to be considered when planning action:

- Does the concern suggest harm or likelihood of harm? **Seek Consultation or make referral to Children's Social Care.**
- Is the child already known to Children Social care or another agency? Should this concern be shared with that agency?
- Is this a 'one-off' incident or is there a history or pattern to the concerns?
- Does the child have additional or related needs - does this increase vulnerability?
- Should the issue be addressed directly with the child?
- Is additional support or monitoring by the school indicated?
- Should a CAF be convened?

## Appendix F: Minimising Vulnerability to Allegations

### **Always:**

- work in an open environment. Avoid private or out of sight locations and encourage open communication.
- speak clearly, without whispering, so that students do not need to come close to hear
- avoid spending time alone with individual students away from others
- treat all students, regardless of race, disability, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, equally and with respect and dignity.
- ensure the student's welfare comes first and record it.
- be aware of the impact of proxemics; maintain safe and appropriate distances; Know where and how to place your body.
- avoid touching students, but where educationally necessary staff should follow these guidelines:
  - try to demonstrate without touching first
  - ask permission; say what you intend to do first and explain why
  - if a pupil seems uncomfortable: stop
  - only touch hands, arms or shoulder nearest you (don't reach across the body)
  - be aware of overall proximity; maintain physical space; don't stand behind
  - inappropriate areas for touch include: chest, diaphragm, waist, thighs
  - move away as soon as the contact is no longer required
- maintain professional boundaries, perhaps using a specific mobile number or email address for work purposes, rather than sharing personal details
- present as an exemplary role model by not smoking or drinking alcohol, swearing, allowing suggestive conversations or jokes or wearing less than professional clothing when in the company of a student
- seek to be enthusiastic and constructive when giving feedback rather than making negative or critical remarks
- record any injury that occurs and seek attention from a qualified First Aider or parent.
- record any incident of concern involving student's welfare.

### **Never:**

- allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon (this applies to any form of abuse or bullying);
- lock doors or cover windows in rooms where pupils are present (aside from when following lock-down or personal care procedures);
- use humiliation or power-based punishments on a student;
- show favouritism towards particular children;
- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;
- share a bedroom with a child;
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- make sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun;
- engage in any form of relationship, sexual or otherwise, with a young person you work with even if they are over the age of consent, but under 18 (older with vulnerable adults);

- do things of a personal or intimate nature for children or disabled young people that they can do for themselves;
- invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised;
- 'friend' a child on their social media or yours; social media can blur boundaries;
- take photographs or videos of children unless written/signed consent has been obtained from a parent/carer; this includes the use of phones.
- seek physical contact. Try to gently discourage contact, rather than reject students. Model appropriate contact, eg. shaking hands or patting the shoulder. Never allow physical contact when you are alone.
- take a child in your car, but where this is unavoidable:
  - prepare a risk assessment
  - ensure your insurance covers business passengers (NB This may provide a very good reason for not being able to take students in your car.)
  - obtain parental permission, preferably in writing
  - take another member of staff in the car with you
  - sit child in the back and adults in the front
  - travel directly to the destination
  - keep conversation professional