

Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy

Lancing College



Lancing College

Key Personnel

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Gary Bird	gdb@lancing.org.uk	01273 465774 07960126421
Deputy DSL	Fern Britnell	fdb@lancing.org.uk	01273 465894
Deputy DSL	Andy Brown	abrown@lancing.org.uk	01273 465701
Deputy DSL	James Grime	jag@lancing.org.uk	01273 465535
Deputy DSL	Charlotte Malik	Cmalik@lancing.org.uk	01273 465778
DSL and DDSL Team safeguarding@lancing.org.uk			

Senior Deputy Head	Emma-Kate Henry	EKH@lancing.org.uk	01273 465812
Head Master	Scott Crawford	hmpa@lancing.org.uk	01273 465802

Governing Body

Nominated Safeguarding Governor Lead: Mr Jason Hunter

Chairman of the Governing Body: Ms Siobhan Denning*

*email clerk, LDavies, gdb or hmpa@lancing.org.uk for contact details

West Sussex

West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership	wsscp@westsussex.gov.uk
West Sussex Integrated Front Door (IFD)	01403 229900 WSChildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk
Single Point of Access (SPoA) Mental Health Support in West Sussex	Under 18 years olds: https://e-wellbeing.co.uk/support/ Over 18 year olds: https://www.pathfinderwestsussex.org.uk/
West Sussex Local Authority Designated Officer: Miriam Williams, Donna Tomlinson and Victoria Williams	0330 222 6450 01403 229900 (via IFD) LADO Referral
West Sussex Safeguarding in Education Manager: Sally Arbuckle	03302 224030 safeguarding.education@westsussex.gov.uk

Childline	0800 1111
NSPCC	080 8800 5000
Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre	www.ceop.police.co.uk
Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)	0207 600 0100
Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)	0207 5935393
DfE Support and Advice about Extremism	0207 340 7264
Office of the Children's Commissioner	0207 783 8330 info.request@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

1 Policy statement

- 1.1 This policy applies to the Lancing College Senior School (Years 9 to 13). The core of the policy is also shared with and the Preparatory Schools (Nursery to Year 8) who have their particular, but overlapping, policies.
- 1.2 Any reference in this policy to **the College** encompasses the Senior School. Where **staff** are referenced in this policy this covers all staff, including ancillary and support staff and volunteers working with children.
- 1.3 This policy has been authorised by the Governors, is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers, and is available on the College website and to parents on request. It applies wherever staff or volunteers are working with pupils even where this is away from the College, for example at an activity centre or on an educational visit.
- 1.4 This policy is also in compliance with the requirements of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (May 2026), and is in accordance with locally agreed inter- agency procedures established by Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships.
- 1.5 The policy is appropriate for pupils in the Senior School from age 13 to 19.
- 1.6 The College aims to promote good behaviour amongst all of its pupils, with support, encouragement and guidance from all staff. As part of a happy and positive community, we expect all pupils to be diligent, honest and considerate in their relationship with others and we expect staff to treat pupils with kindness and fairness. In so doing we aim to create an environment in which all members of the College community can thrive and feel respected and valued.
- 1.7 Every pupil should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse (including that perpetrated by the use of technology i.e. cyberbullying) which, in this policy, means any kind of neglect, non-accidental physical injury, sexual exploitation or emotional ill-treatment.

The College recognises that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or health issues may be particularly vulnerable to bullying and abuse, and can face additional safeguarding challenges, which may include:

- 1.7.1 assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- 1.7.2 these children may be more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- 1.7.3 the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs;
- 1.7.4 communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges risks that they do not understand that what is happening to them is abuse
- 1.7.5 the need for intimate care or that these children are isolated from others

- 1.7.6 that these children are more likely to be dependent on adults for care, and
- 1.7.7 that these children may have issues over cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges, or the consequences of doing so.

[NSPCC - Safeguarding children with SEND](#)

- 1.8 The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The College's key duties are defined as:

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

These aspects of safeguarding are cumulative and are pertinent with regard to various criteria by which the Senior School is assessed by ISI during inspections. Related criteria include the following:

- i. The staff provide effective support and guidance for the pupils in accordance with the school's aims and consider at all times what is in the best interests of the child.
- ii. Relationships are positive between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves.
- iii. The school is effective in promoting good behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying, and it deals constructively with any unacceptable behaviour, taking due account of any related difficulty or disability.
- iv. The safeguarding arrangements have regard to official guidance [in [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(HM Gov March 2026\)](#); in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE September 2026\)](#); [Prevent Duty Guidance](#); [The Use of Social Media for On-Line Radicalisation \(HM Gov July 2015\)](#); in [What to do if you are worried that a child is being abused – Advice for Practitioners \(HM Gov March 2015\)](#); in [Information Sharing: Advice to practitioners providing safeguarding services \(HM Gov May 2024\)](#). These arrangements also have regard to the advice in [Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing \(HM Gov March 2023\)](#); [Preventing and Tackling Bullying \(DfE July 2017\)](#) and [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools \(DfE Nov 2018\)](#). In so doing they take proper account of any particular circumstance or context of the school which may indicate a need for protocols greater than the minimum legal requirements.
- v. Arrangements are effective in ensuring compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (May 2026), particularly in matters of safeguarding boarders' welfare, staffing, management of behaviour and

prevention of bullying.

The following extract is from the College's separate and full Anti-Bullying Policy. College Anti-Bullying Policy statement:

The College will aim to **“provide a safe, welcoming, supportive and tolerant environment in which each pupil feels valued as an individual, and, in turn, learns the importance of tolerance and consideration towards others”**.

The whole College community has a responsibility to ensure that this is achieved and should not fail to address any issues relating to bullying/abuse when they are encountered.

The College will therefore:

- take all practicable steps to ensure all staff will reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.
- ensure staff are aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.
- ensure that we practise safe recruitment (including DBS checks) in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers (including staff employed by another organisation) to work with children and young people in accordance with regulations and statutory guidance given in [Working together to Safeguard Children \(HM Gov March 2026\)](#) and [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE September 2026\)](#), the *Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations* (HM Gov, revised January 2015), and the [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools \(September 2026\)](#).
- ensure that where staff from another organisation are working with our pupils on another site, we have received assurances that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to those staff;
- ensure that we carry out all necessary checks on the suitability of people who serve on the College's Governing Body in accordance with regulations and guidance given in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE September 2026);
- ensure there are appropriate policies and procedures in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare;

- ensure that induction training is in place for all staff and volunteers and that all staff are familiar with the contents of this policy, with the [Lancing College Staff Code of Conduct](#) and with [Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE September 2026\)](#) and that all staff who work directly with children are familiar with [Annex A of KCSIE \(September 2026\)](#).
- ensure all staff receive appropriate online safety training at induction, and that online safety training is provided as part of regular updates with an emphasis on impact of technology on increasing risks to children. Training in online safety, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring;
- ensure that any temporary or voluntary staff are made aware of the arrangements for Child Protection and Safeguarding;
- ensure to take a proportionate risk-based approach to the level of information that is provided to temporary staff, volunteers and contractors;
- ensure, in accord with [Prevent Duty Guidance](#) that all visiting speakers are vetted as being suitable and are appropriately supervised;
- ensure that where the College ceases to use the services of any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) because that person was considered unsuitable to work with children, a detailed report is made to the Disclosure and Barring Service promptly, and in any event, within one month;
- ensure that all staff who work at any time with children under the age of 8, or who are directly concerned in the management of early or such later years provision as is covered by the Regulation, are not disqualified under the *Childhood (Disqualification) Regulations 2009* (updated 2018);
- ensure that all of our pupils have a choice of members of staff that they can talk to if they are worried about something;
- follow the local inter-agency procedures of the West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships;
- ensure that staff understand that they have the responsibility to identify children who may be in need of additional support or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm and that staff further recognise their responsibility then to take appropriate action (to include working with other services, as necessary);
- protect each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another pupil, being alert to the possibility of Child-on-Child abuse [eg sexual violence or sexual harassment between young people, sexting, an imbalance of power in a relationship, initiation rituals or 'banter'];
- be alert to signs of abuse both in the College and from outside; ensuring all staff members are aware that mental health problems can be an indication of abuse, exploitation or neglect and maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here', and feel able to raise concerns either about a child at risk, or a member of staff whose behaviour may present a risk to a child;

- deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse;
- design and operate procedures which promote this policy;
- design and operate procedures which, so far as possible, ensure that teachers and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations;
- support children who have been abused in accordance with their agreed child protection plan;
- be alert to the medical needs of children with medical conditions and provide an opportunity for age-appropriate healthcare (physical, mental and sexual) via the School Health Centre;
- be alert to the needs of pupils at risk of emotional or mental ill-health;
- operate robust and sensible health & safety procedures;
- take all practicable steps to ensure that College premises are as secure as circumstances permit;
- operate clear and supportive policies on drugs, alcohol and substance misuse;
- educate and guide children on measures to keep themselves safe, including the safe use of the internet and digital technologies;
- be alert to the possibility of sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring between children
- consider and develop procedures to deal with any other safeguarding issues e.g. the risk of radicalisation, of FGM or of going missing from education which may be specific to individual children in our school or in our local area, including cared for children;
- have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families in accordance with section 157 *Education Act 2002* and associated regulations;
- ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to Child Protection arrangements are remedied without delay.

All child protection issues will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures detailed in this policy and in line with the guidelines regarding staff/pupil relationships, both of which are detailed in the relevant Staff Handbook.

1.9 All senior pupils at the Senior School (School Prefects/Heads of House/House Captains/Peer Supporters) who are given responsibility over other pupils are given Child Protection training each year in line with Standard 21 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS 21). This briefing includes the appropriate action to be taken should they receive any allegation of abuse; i.e. senior pupils should:

- have a clear awareness of the Safeguarding structures of the school and that child protection concerns should always be referred to the DSL;

- always respond to any incident that concerns them: if it does not feel right then they should do something about it;
- encourage actively the passing on of concerns and the culture of a 'telling' school
- assist younger pupils who may well seek their advice;
- assist a pupil who has a known disability who may seek their support;
- endeavour to calm any pupil who is in distress and assure him/her that they will assist them in any way they can, but must not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality;
- seek assistance when the situation is calm;
- always pass on information relating to pupil distress to their respective Housemaster /Housemistress however minor or insignificant it may appear;
- be aware that additional support is available from other members of staff including: House tutors, School Chaplain, School Counsellor, Head Master, Senior Deputy Head, Deputy Head, Assistant Head (Pastoral), Assistant Head (Safeguarding).

1.10 **Opportunities to teach safeguarding**, including online safety.

We consider teaching safeguarding to be part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils are taught about keeping themselves and others safe, including online safety, through the curriculum, through PSHE, and through assemblies, discussions, presentations (including sessions for parents) and individual advice and guidance.

Unfortunately, some adults and other children use social media technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts or emails, to grooming and enticing children to engage in extremist or sexual behaviour. Pupils may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate material such as pornographic websites or those which promote racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.

At Lancing College, Relationships and Sex Education in 3F to UVI (Y9-Y13) is aimed at an age-appropriate stage in giving pupils the information necessary for them to develop healthy, respectful and loving relationships (including intimate relationships) that help them to flourish, and how to identify and resist unhealthy relationships; delivering information about human sexuality, contraception and sexual health in a fact-based and non- judgemental manner that emphasises the critical importance of consent and mutual respect.

Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-college approach that prepares pupils and students for life in modern Britain. At Lancing we wish to create a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, racism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic, sexual violence/harassment and derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence and conflict.

A wide variety of teaching and learning resources are available both locally and nationally. These include:

- a. West Sussex Education for Safeguarding (E4S) – we are already working within this structure, enabling us to identify the specific risks faced by children in our school so we can develop our safeguarding curriculum accordingly
- b. UKCCIS have recently published their Education for a connected world framework. Online safety is a whole school and college issue. The framework aims to support the development of the curriculum and is of particular relevance to PSHE education. It is designed, however, to be usable across the curriculum and beyond and to be central to a whole school or college approach to safeguarding and online safety. It covers early years through to Year 13. That is accessed [here](#)
- c. The PSHE Association provides guidance to schools on developing their PSHE curriculum including online safety –Accessed [here](#)

The Lancing College [Online Safety Policy](#) provides further information and guidance.

- d. The college has signed up for the Online Safety Alliance package for staff and pupils as well as the Wellbeing Hub, which both have useful resources in relation to online safety. This is in addition to external experts (Karl Hopwood) in online safety and the safeguarding concerns around AI presenting talks in PSHE to both pupils and parents.

1.11 Voice of The Child

Lancing College recognises the findings of [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2026\)](#) where children expressed the wish for the following from Safeguarding systems:

- Vigilance – that adults notice when things trouble them
- Understanding and action – to be heard and understood and to have that understanding acted upon
- Stability – to be able to develop ongoing stable relationships of trust with those helping them
- Respect – to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- Information and engagement – to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
- Explanation – to be informed in the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- Support – to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- Advocacy – to assist them in putting forward their views
- Protection – against all forms of abuse and discrimination, and the right to special protection and help if a refugee

- 1.12 All safeguarding concerns will be assessed promptly by the DSL and referred to Children's Social Care, Police or other agencies within 24 hours where threshold criteria are met.

1.13 Anti-Discriminatory Practice, Equality and Inclusion

Lancing College recognises that safeguarding practice must be child-centred, inclusive and anti-discriminatory. We acknowledge that discrimination, prejudice, harassment and

racism can have a significant impact on children's safety, welfare, wellbeing and educational outcomes. The College is committed to creating a culture in which all pupils feel safe, respected, valued and able to seek help.

The College recognises that some children may face additional barriers to recognising abuse, accessing support, reporting concerns or being heard because of factors including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, faith, disability, neurodivergence, sex, sexual orientation, language, family circumstances or socio-economic disadvantage.

All staff are expected to:

- recognise the potential impact of racism, discrimination, bias and stereotyping on children's experiences and outcomes;
- maintain professional curiosity and consider whether discrimination or prejudice may be contributing to a child's vulnerability;
- ensure that all safeguarding concerns are responded to fairly, consistently and without discrimination;
- listen to and take seriously the lived experiences of children and their families;
- challenge discriminatory, prejudicial, racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or other harmful language and behaviour;
- promote a culture of respect, dignity and inclusion across the College community; and
- work in partnership with pupils, parents, carers and external agencies to ensure all children are safeguarded effectively.

The College will continually review its safeguarding practice and procedures to ensure that they are equitable, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all children.

2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead

2.1 The College has appointed a member of the Senior Management Team with the necessary status and authority (Designated Safeguarding Lead) to have overall responsibility for matters relating to child protection and welfare for the Senior School. The current Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the Assistant Head, Safeguarding, Mr Gary Bird, who may be contacted on 01273 465774 or gdb@lancing.org.uk. The DSL and/or a deputy will always be available in term time for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns and appropriate cover arrangements are put in place for any out of term activities. The main responsibilities of the DSL are:

- to take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place);
- to co-ordinate the child protection procedures for the College;
- to manage referrals, referring all cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care and to the LADO (if the case concerns a staff member); the DBS (where a person is dismissed due to risk/harm to a child) and/ or the Police (where a crime may have been committed);
- to be the first point of contact for parents, pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff at the Senior School;
- to arrange and maintain an ongoing training programme, including induction training (which includes online safety which, amongst other things, includes an

understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring), in safeguarding matters for all College employees, volunteers and Governors, ensuring that all staff are familiar with the content of, and act upon, key statutory guidance;

- to act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding;
- to ensure the management and effective and proactive approach to online safety, working closely with the IT Department and other staff, including ensuring and understanding that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to ensure that children are, as far as is practicable, protected from risks posed by negative digital **content, contact, conduct and commerce** and ensure through the PSHE programme and other areas of the curriculum that children are taught how to stay safe online and this is communicated with parents and carers through briefings and PSHE for Parents seminars.
- to ensure that the school's acceptable use policies for mobile devices; policies for access to mobile devices and guidance to parents, staff and children are regularly reviewed and careful consideration is given to the management of pupil mobile devices and degrees of access via the internet and 3G ,4G and 5G;
- to monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to child protection; to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions, to request child protection files from the previous school of those pupils joining the College and to ensure that the child protection file of those pupils leaving Lancing is securely transferred to their new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term;
- to be the nominated member of staff responsible for looked-after children, including those who are fostered;
- to consider the context within which safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours occur – i.e. contextual safeguarding, ensuring that assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare;
- to help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing or have experienced with teachers and senior management, linking up safeguarding and academic support for pupils, particularly those identified as having increased risk or in need of additional support;
- to liaise with the child protection officer appointed by the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (Local Authority Designated Officer);
- to liaise with staff (especially teachers, pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT Technicians, senior mental health leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs)) on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children's needs are

considered holistically;

- to have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and to attend and contribute to these and any other appropriate strategy meetings as required;
- to receive refresher training in this role every two years and to keep knowledge and skills updated at least annually, undertaking such training as is required in inter- agency working, in participation in child protection case conferences, in supporting children in need, in the *Prevent* strategy in identifying children at risk of radicalisation, in record keeping and in promoting a culture of listening to children;
- to encourage a culture of listening to children and prioritising of their wishes and feelings among all staff, ensuring that each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child protection policy and procedures;
- to ensure the child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and updated if needed, so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt;
- to liaise with the Head Master to inform him or her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult present. The role of the appropriate adult is to safeguard the rights, entitlements and welfare of a young person(s) and vulnerable persons. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - [PACE Code C 2019](#)

He will:

- assist the Governing Body in fulfilling their responsibilities under section 175 or 157 of the Education Act 2002
- advise and act upon all suspicion, belief and evidence of abuse reported to him;
- keep the Head Master informed of all actions unless the Head Master is the subject of a complaint. In this situation, the DSL will report this to Ms Siobhan Denning, the Chairman of the Governing Body, or in his absence to Mr Jason Hunter, the Governing Body Safeguarding Lead;
- liaise with the three safeguarding partners and work with other agencies in line with [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#); [NSPCC – When to Call the Police: Guidance for Schools and Colleges](#) provides guidance on when a DSL/ DDSL should consider calling the police and what to expect when they do.
- be the lead for the school in engaging the relevant managing professional differences protocol when there is disagreement between the school and other agencies in respect of action to keep a child safe
- refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required
- understanding the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025

- liaise regularly with the DSLs at the Preparatory Schools.

2.2 Mrs Fern Britnell, Mr Andy Brown, Mrs Charlotte Malik, and Mr James Grime have been appointed to be the DSL's deputies for the Senior School.

They will:

- work alongside the Designated Person to assist in performing those responsibilities listed in 2.1 above;
- deputise in all matters of child protection in the absence of the DSL.

2.3 If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable or is himself the subject of a complaint (whereby the Head Master would be informed immediately as per procedures outlined in section 5.3), his duties will be carried out by the Deputy DSLs, who have received appropriate training.

2.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy DSLs have undertaken training in child protection and interagency working to the appropriate level (recorded at Annex A).

3 WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

All staff and volunteers should be aware of the main categories of abuse. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

3.1 Abuse, neglect, exploitation, modern slavery and other safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

3.2 **Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or care giver abuse. Forms of abuse come under four distinct headings: Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect. They are defined in [*Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2026\)*](#) as follows:

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

3.4 **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include verbal abuse, such

as persistent criticism, belittling, or name-calling, as well as not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

3.5 Sexual abuse: involves forcing, causing or inciting a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or penetration with an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it. There are specific offences for children under 13, who can never provide valid consent to sexual activity and there are specific offences which make clear that sexual activity with a child under 16 is an offence, regardless of whether they agreed to that activity.

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

3.7 Possible signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):

- the pupil says s/he has been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference;
- there is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a pupil's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there have been a number of injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries;
- the pupil's behaviour stands out from the group or there is a sudden change in the pupil's behaviour;
- heightened anxiety (e.g. shying away from being touched/flinching at sudden movements) and/or low self-esteem;

- knowledge of sexual matters beyond what would normally be expected;
- property and work damaged or lost more than is usual for the age group;
- a pupil becoming withdrawn and reluctant to say why;
- the pupil's development is delayed;
- the pupil loses or gains significant weight;
- a pupil going missing or absent from school, particularly on repeat occasions;
- the pupil appears neglected, e.g. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed;
- the pupil is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by his/her parents or carers.

The above list does not cover every aspect of child abuse. It is important to realise that children can be at risk of abuse or exploitation outside their families. Extra-familial harms can take a variety of forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms. Staff may observe or become aware of other things that worry them and should always share concerns with the DSL.

3.8 Other Types of Abuse: Staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that often overlap and can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos, can be signs that children are at risk.

3.9 All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying; prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers (teenage relationship abuse - including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and stalking)
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery, sharing nudes or semi-nude images/videos); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Further detailed information may be found in the [Policy on Child on Child Abuse](#) and all staff should be clear as to the College's policy and procedures with regards to Child on Child abuse (including harassment and violence).

3.10 Other Safeguarding issues can also be linked to (for example); child sexual exploitation; domestic abuse; fabricated or induced illness; faith abuse; female genital mutilation; forced marriage; gangs and youth violence; gender-based violence/violence against women and girls; radicalisation; relationship abuse and trafficking.

3.11 Child Sexual Exploitation: is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually

exploited for money, power or status. This can be committed by an individual or an organised network and most sexual abuse is committed by those previously known to the victim. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. Particular risks online include attempts from criminals to obtain indecent images from a child, or producing an AI generated indecent image of a child with the goal to blackmail the child into paying money in exchange for not sharing the image.

- 3.12 **Honour or faith-based abuse (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage)** Honour or Faith-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving “honour” often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. If staff have a concern that a pupil may be at risk of FGM, they should speak to the DSL or a DDSL who will (where appropriate) activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and Children’s Social Care. There is a statutory duty on teachers to report personally to the Police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Other staff should report to the DSL.

Forced Marriage: Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Force can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. In the cases of vulnerable adults who lack the capacity to consent to marriage, coercion is not required for a marriage to be forced. Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage.

Since 27 February 2023, it is an offence to carry out any conduct for the purpose of causing a child to enter into a marriage before the child’s eighteenth birthday (whether or not the conduct amounts to violence, threats, any other form of coercion or deception). It is an offence to lure someone overseas for the purpose of forced marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage. Staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 0207 008 0151 or Email fm@fcdo.gov.uk

- 3.13 **Extra-familial Harms:** Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse - including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and stalking), criminal exploitation (including financial exploitation), serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation.

- 3.14 **Harmful sexual behaviour:** Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is “harmful sexual behaviour”. Harmful sexual behaviour can occur online and/or face- to-face and can also occur simultaneously between the two. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years’ age difference, or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature. Harmful sexual behaviour can, in some cases, progress on a continuum. Addressing inappropriate behaviour can be an important intervention to prevent it in the future. It is important to offer appropriate support to all children involved or experiencing this behaviour.

The College recognises the government's expectations relating to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and will take proactive steps to challenge cultures, attitudes and behaviours that contribute to abuse.

- 3.15 **Domestic Abuse** is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional and a child witnessing domestic abuse against another/others will be emotionally harmed. Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse.

Operation Encompass is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse. Lancing College has joined Operation Encompass, which has a key principle to ensure that all incidents of domestic abuse are shared with the College, not just those where an offence can be identified. This ensures that the College has up to date relevant information about the child’s circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the child’s needs.

- 3.16 **Child abduction and community safety incidents.** Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers. Further information is available at: <http://www.actionagainstabduction.org/> and www.clevernevergoes.org

- 3.17 **Children and the Court System.** Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds. The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained. Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. A helpful resource for parents and carers is a link to [child arrangement information tool](#).

- 3.18 **Modern Slavery.** Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and

the removal of organs. Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in the Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance. Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

3.19 Cybercrime. Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded
- 'Denial of Service' (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources, and,
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. If there are concerns about a child in this area, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy), should consider referring into the Cyber Choices programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low-level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

Additional advice and support can be found at: Cyber Choices, [NPCC- When to call the Police](#) and National Cyber Security Centre - [NCSC.GOV.UK](#)

3.20 Homelessness. Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. The DSL recognises in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents and guardians and this may require a different level of intervention and support. Children's social care will be the lead agency for such children and would ensure appropriate referrals are made and followed up. [Homelessness Reduction Act: policy factsheets - GOV.UK \(\[www.gov.uk\]\(http://www.gov.uk\)\)](#)

3.21 Children with family members in prison. Children with a parent in prison are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO) provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children to help mitigate negative responses for those children.

3.22 Youth-produced sexual imagery (sexting). This refers to the consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery). Any incident involving youth produced sexual imagery should immediately be reported to the DSL, who will follow the guidance set out in [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings](#)

[working with children and young people \(UKCIS, March 2024\)](#)

3.23 Radicalisation: Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular have become major factors in the radicalisation of young people. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and refer concerns to the DSL.

a. Prevent

- From 1 July 2015 specified authorities, including all schools as defined in the summary of this guidance, are subject to a duty under section 26 of the *Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015* ("the CTSA 2015"), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard¹ to the need prevent people being drawn into terrorism²" must have regard to statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the CTSA 2015 ("the Prevent guidance"). Paragraphs 57-76 of the Prevent guidance are concerned specifically with schools (but also cover childcare).
- The statutory Prevent guidance summarises the requirements on schools in terms of four general themes: risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training and IT policies.
- Schools are expected to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. This means being able to demonstrate both a general understanding of the risks affecting children and young people in the area and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and what to do to support them. Schools and colleges should have clear procedures in place for protecting children at risk of radicalisation. These procedures may be set out in existing safeguarding policies. It is not necessary for schools and colleges to have distinct policies on implementing the Prevent duty.
- The Prevent duty builds on existing local partnership arrangements. For example, governing bodies and proprietors of all schools should ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships.
- The Prevent guidance refers to the importance of Prevent awareness training to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Individual schools are best placed to assess the training needs of staff in the light of their assessment of the risk to pupils at the school of being drawn into terrorism. As a minimum, however, schools should ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead undertakes Prevent awareness training and is able to provide

advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.

- Schools must ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools. Schools should ensure that suitable filtering is in place. It is also important that schools teach pupils about online safety more generally.
- The Department for Education has issued advice and social media guidance to schools and childcare providers to help them keep children safe from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.

The Prevent duty also requires educational settings to ensure that preventing radicalisation and violent extremism is embedded within the curriculum. Staff are also expected to feel confident and competent in using appropriate pedagogical approaches to facilitate this learning. **Prevent duty advice**

b. Channel Programme – for those at risk of radicalisation

School staff should understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel programme.³ ¹Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

- [**Prevent and Channel Duty – A Toolkit for Schools**](#)
- [**Making a Channel Referral in West Sussex**](#)
- [**Prevent Channel Referral Form**](#)

Further advice and guidance regarding the Prevent duty and preventing radicalisation and violent extremism can be accessed on the West Sussex Service for Schools website, accessed [here](#)

¹ According to the Prevent duty guidance 'having due regard' means that the authorities should place an appropriate amount of weight on the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism when they consider all the other factors relevant to how they carry out their usual functions

² "Terrorism" for these purposes has the same meaning as for the Terrorism Act 2000 (section 1(1) to (4) of that Act).

³ Guidance issued under section 36(7) and section 38(6) of the CTSA 2015 in respect of Channel is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance>

- 3.24 **Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities:** Pupils with SEND may not outwardly show signs of abuse and/or may have difficulties in communication about abuse or neglect. Staff will support such pupils in expressing any concerns they may have and will be particularly vigilant to any signs or indicators of abuse, discussing this with the DSL as appropriate.
- 3.25 **Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual:** A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are.
- 3.26 **Children who are questioning their gender:** When supporting pupils that are questioning their gender the college will take a cautious approach. The Cass review identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there remain many unknowns about the impact of social transition and children may well have wider vulnerabilities. It is recommended that when families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning children, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. When parents are supporting pre-pubertal children, clinical services should ensure that they can be seen as early as possible by a clinical professional with relevant experience to advise on the risks and benefits of social transition as a planned intervention.

The college will refer to the guidance in KCSIE 2026 in response to a request made by a child or their parent. Staff members will immediately inform the DSL upon any request in regards to a child to socially transition made by the child or a parent. Decisions and action will be determined on a case-by-case basis, recognising the complexities involved around children wishing to socially transition. The college should not initiate any action regarding social transition without full regard to KCSIE 2026; Members of staff should not adopt any changes relating to social transition unless a decision has been made by a school or college in consultation with parents or carers.

Parents and carers have the leading role in the lives of their children, and this area should be no exception. Therefore, where a child who is questioning their gender asks for support from the college, the college will engage parents/carers as a matter of priority and treat their views with importance.

The college will explore how best to support these conversations, including offering a staff member to be present or to speak to parents or carers on the child's behalf. However, in the rare circumstances where involving parents or carers would constitute a greater risk to the child than not involving them, the college will involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to determine what action is needed to safeguard the child, before the parents are contacted or any decisions are taken.

The advice above applies in cases where a child has requested support with social transition. In cases where a child confides in a member of staff about their feelings but does not ask the school or college to make changes to how they are treated, there is no reason to break any confidence unless there is a related safeguarding risk.

When discussing requests with children, the college will take time to sensitively explain that supporting any degree of social transition will not include allowing access to toilets, changing rooms or boarding or residential accommodation designated for the opposite sex, and will not include allowing children to join PE classes designated for the opposite sex

where there are safety reasons for single-sex PE.

The college will remain aware of the potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender, including the possibility of complex mental health and psychosocial needs, for example relating to relationships with family, peers or their broader social environment, including discriminatory bullying.

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

The college will make sure that children and their families are aware that while the school or college will appropriately sanction any cases of bullying or harassment, and take a strong stand against bullying, the college will also be conscious of the rights of pupils and staff in relation to their religion or belief. However, the college supporting social transition will consider discussing options with pupils and staff such as using names instead of pronouns.

For any request for social transition, the college will have due regard to the Equality Act and Human Rights Act and ensure compliance to these accordingly.

The below decision chart should be referred to in relation to a request to socially transition:

Request → DSL involvement → Information gathering → Parent engagement → Risk assessment → Decision → Review

3.27 Children who are absent from education: A child being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. The response of the school to persistently absent pupils should help prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. The School will report to the local authority and the local authority where the child is normally resident if a pupil fails to attend school regularly or has been absent from school without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more and if there has been a period of absences due to illness for 15 days accumulated across the academic year (or if the college knows in advance that a pupil will be absent for 15 days due to illness). The School shall inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the School's admission register at non-standard transition points in accordance with the requirements of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. For further information see the College's policy on [Children Missing from Education](#) and [Attendance Policy](#).

3.28 Upskirting: The *Voyeurism (Offences) Act* came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

3.29 Children at risk from/ involved with serious violent crime: Serious violence is a continuing safeguarding concern. It may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with, or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying, and it can also be associated with criminal exploitation. Staff should report any concerns about a child carrying or using a weapon (or expressing intent to do so) to the designated safeguarding

lead (or a deputy), who will assess the risk and take appropriate action. Where relevant this will include any action needed to de-escalate peer conflict.

All staff should be aware of indicators which may signal pupils are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from School, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Staff understand that such cases are often difficult to identify so the school is committed to doing all it can to hearing the voice of the child, enabling pupils to share concerns and to feel empowered to ask for help.

Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#) and its [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines](#) guidance.

All staff should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these. If staff have any concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger), they should speak with the School's DSL to agree a course of action.

3.30 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE): Child criminal exploitation (county lines): Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs.

They can also be forced or manipulated into shoplifting, pickpocketing, committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

All staff should be aware that CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator.

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

- It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.
- This can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and victims may identify as part of this group.
- It should be noted that Victims can be still be exploited even when activity appears consensual

3.31 **Mental Health:**

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. This could include self-harm, signs of an eating disorder, suicidal ideation or suicide. They could be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If a child is struggling with their mental health, self-harming, has an eating disorder or is experiencing suicidal ideation and making plans to end their life, there are likely to be potential warning signs which education staff are well placed to recognise.

These could include:

- significant changes in behaviour
- ongoing difficulty sleeping
- withdrawing from social situations
- not wanting to do things they usually like, and
- physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves.

Not every child who exhibits these behaviours is suicidal or has a mental health concern. However, education staff are well placed to identify these and other potential warning signs. In doing so they can identify children who may be struggling with their mental health and contemplating suicide and offer support and vital early intervention.

If staff have a concern about a child's mental health that is also a safeguarding concern, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy. If staff feel that a child is in danger, they should call 999 or take them to A&E immediately. If a child needs help urgently for their mental health, but it's not an emergency, staff can get help from NHS 111 online or call 111 and select the mental health option.

3.32 Further information:

Further advice and guidance can be found in the DfE documents **Preventing and Tackling Bullying**, and **Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools**. In addition, UK Health Security Agency and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance **Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing**.

The issues listed above, along with gang and youth violence, fabricated or induced illness and faith abuse are all extremely serious matters and are covered in [Keeping Children Safe In Education \(2026\)](#), with which all staff should be familiar. In addition, further guidance can be found in specific documents

- [Guidance on Forced Marriage](#)
- [Children Missing Education](#)
- [CSE Guidance](#)
- [Prevent Duty Advice for Schools](#)

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues, some of which are listed above and in KCSIE 2026 (Annex A: Further Information). Staff should be aware that behaviours linked to incidents, for example, of drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sharing nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos, put children in danger.

3.33 **Staff response to concerns**

When staff have **any** safeguarding concern then it should be raised with the DSL immediately. The DSL will consider whether there has been or is a likelihood of harm and whether there is a need for additional support from one or more agencies; the former will be reported to the Children's Social Care immediately, the latter would lead to multi-agency assessment using the local processes.

Thus, the options available are:

- managing any support for the child internally via the school or college's own pastoral support processes, including considering where doing so does not place the child at additional risk, whether the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should inform parents or carers to further support the child's wellbeing,
- undertaking a family help assessment, or
- making a referral to statutory services, for example as the child could be in need, is in need or is suffering, or likely to suffer harm.
- Refer to Adult Social Services if the pupil is 18 or over

As a boarding school with pupils attending from across the UK and across the globe, Lancing College will work and liaise with such relevant multi-agency partners outside West Sussex, as appropriate and required for the discharging of our safeguarding duties for all children in our care.

4 Duty of employees, Governors and volunteers

4.1 Every employee and Governor of the College as well as every volunteer who assists the College is under a general legal duty:

- to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating;
- to provide a safe environment in which children can learn;
- to protect children from abuse;
- to be aware of the College's child protection procedures and to follow them;
- to have read at least Part 1 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE September 2026\)](#)

and, if working closely with children to have read Annex A.

- to have read and to follow the staff [Code of Conduct](#) (including the [Whistleblowing Policy](#)) as detailed in the relevant Staff Handbook. This includes guidance on staff/pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media;
- to be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding and which will be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include: the *child protection (safeguarding) policy*; the [promoting good behaviour policy](#); the [child-on-child abuse policy](#); the safeguarding response to children who are absent (particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods) from education; and the role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).
- to know how to access and implement the Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures, independently if necessary. These procedures are available as an electronic copy at <https://sussexchildprotection.procedures.org.uk/>
- to be aware of the process for community-based Family Help assessment (Targeted Early Help and/or Section 17 child in need) and understand their role in this. This includes identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL and sharing information with other professionals in undertaking a community-based family help assessment. The Dedicated Schools Team offers a named worker to support to issues as they emerge, especially focused on school attendance, transition points, targeted family support, mental health, emotional wellbeing and SEND;
- the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm)
 - Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 (care and supervision orders), and
 - Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 (duty to accommodate a child)
- and clear procedures and processes for cases relating to:
 - the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children
 - children managed within the youth secure estate
 - disabled children
- to know what to do if a child tells them he/she is being abused or neglected. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality whilst keeping a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event and passing this on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the same day as the concern arises. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the designated safeguarding lead (or the Deputy DSLs) and children's social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.
- to report any matters of concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy DSL;
- to call the police (999) if a child is at immediate risk of significant harm;

- if a teacher, to report to the police (a mandatory duty) any case where they discover that an act of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out - discussing such a case with the DSL who will involve Children's Social Care as appropriate.
- to undertake appropriate training, including induction training within their first days at the College and/update training at regular intervals (recorded at Annex A), in addition to receiving and noting informal updates (e.g. via email and staff meetings) which will occur at least annually;
- to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, all staff should always act in the interests of the child;
- to be active in reinforcing the anti-bullying policy and active in challenging unacceptable behaviour e.g. 'banter', discriminatory or derogatory language and attitudes and online behaviour which may occasion harm
- to support the teaching and guidance that takes place pastorally as well as through the PSHE and ICT curriculum on keeping safe and e-safety. Details of this provision can be found in the [Anti-Bullying](#) and [RSE](#) policies.

4.2 **Training for Governors:**

Governing bodies should ensure that all governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training should be regularly updated.

- 4.3 **Whistleblowing:** All College staff are required to report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, a Deputy DSL or the Head Master any concern or allegations about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the College's safeguarding regime. They should expect that such concerns be taken seriously. In exceptional cases such reports should be made to ISI. There will be no retribution or disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report provided that it is done in good faith. The College's [Whistleblowing Policy](#) is contained in the relevant Staff Handbook and the importance of this policy and of a culture of safety where concerns are raised and unsafe practice is challenged is highlighted in child protection training. The *NSPCC whistleblowing helpline* is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failure internally, tel. 0800 028 0285; email help@nspcc.org.uk.

- 4.4 **Safer Recruitment:** The College's recruitment and selection policy and procedures, including required checks for all staff and volunteers, is in accord with the requirements of Part 3 of *KCSIE* (September 2026). Lancing College seeks to create a culture that safeguards and promotes the welfare of our pupils. As part of this culture, we adopt robust recruitment procedures that deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment. Lancing College will advise their intention to carry out a search (via an online search engine) as part of the due diligence on shortlisted candidates. This may help to identify any incidents or issues that have arisen, and are publicly available online, which might be explored with the applicant at interview.

4.5 Family Help (Targeted Early Help and/or Section 17 child in need): Any child may benefit from an family help assessment, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for family help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is pregnant and or is a parent themselves
- has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
- is at risk of exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking, including criminal or sexual exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised into terrorism
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of honour or faith-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage, and
- is a privately fostered child.

5 Procedures

5.1 Initial complaint: An employee, Governor or volunteer suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse:

- 5.1.1 must listen carefully to the child and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place;
- 5.1.2 should refrain from asking questions as far as possible and must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer;
- 5.1.3 must reassure the child but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy DSLs who will ensure that the correct action is taken;
- 5.1.4 must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy DSLs;
- 5.1.5 must report any allegation of alleged abuse by a member of staff, including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, school governors and contractors immediately to the Head Master (or the Senior Deputy Head in his absence), or the Chairman of the Governing Body if the allegation is about the Head Master. The DSL must, in addition, refer all cases of child abuse relating to staff, including supply staff, trainee

teachers, volunteers, school governors and contractors to the LADO (*KCSIE, Part 4, Section 1*, 2026). The LADO will provide advice and then, if necessary, preside over the investigation or suspicion of abuse directed against anyone working in the school. All allegations are reported to the LADO immediately and within one working day at the latest.

- 5.2 **Preserving evidence:** All evidence (for example, scribbled notes, text messages, clothing, tablets or computers) must be safeguarded and preserved.
- 5.3 **Reporting:** All suspicion or complaints of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or in their absence a Deputy DSL immediately. If the complaint involves a member of staff, this must be reported to the Head Master.

If a child is in immediate danger, the police must be called by dialling 999

If at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to children's social care immediately. Referrals should follow the local referral process. Anyone can make this referral in the absence of being able to make contact with the DSL or his deputies. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, a staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

If anyone other than the DSL makes the referral, they should inform the DSL as soon as possible.

Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision.

Information Sharing: The DSL and DDSL team may share information without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that sharing the information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner. If consent is withheld or impossible to obtain, it would nevertheless still be legitimate to share information if a practitioner could not reasonably be expected to gain such consent or if a child would be placed at risk in obtaining it. [Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers](#) supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. This advice includes the seven golden rules for sharing information.

- 5.4 **Action by the Designated Safeguarding Lead:** The action to be taken will take into account:
 - 5.4.1 the local inter-agency procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships of West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove, or other LSCPs as appropriate;
 - 5.4.2 the nature and seriousness of the suspicion or complaint. A complaint involving a serious criminal offence will always be referred to children's social care and/or the police without further investigation within the College;
 - 5.4.3 the wishes and feelings of the pupil who has made a disclosure, provided that the pupil is of sufficient understanding and maturity and properly informed. However, there may be times when the situation is so serious that decisions may need to be taken, after all appropriate consultation, that override a pupil's wishes;

- 5.4.4 the wishes and views of the complainant's parents, provided they have no interest which is in conflict with the pupil's best interests and that they are properly informed. Again, it may be necessary, after all appropriate consultation, to override parental wishes in some circumstances. If the DSL is concerned that disclosing information to parents would put a child at risk, he will take further advice from the relevant professionals before making a decision to disclose. NB Referral can be made without parental permission if a pupil is at risk of harm;
- 5.4.5 duties of confidentiality, so far as applicable;
- 5.4.6 the lawful rights and interests of the College community as a whole including its employees and its insurers;
- 5.4.7 if there is room for doubt as to whether a referral should be made, or to which body a referral should be made (e.g. to *Channel* or Children's Social Care for a child at risk of radicalisation) the DSL may consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer or other appropriate professionals on a no names basis without identifying the family. However, if sufficient concern exists that a child may be at risk of significant harm, or if there is suspicion of abuse and/or a disclosure is made, a referral will be made without delay and within 24 hours. If the initial referral is made by telephone, the Designated Person will confirm the referral in writing to children's social care also within 24 hours. If no response or acknowledgment is received within three working days, the Designated Person will contact children's social care again.
- 5.4.8 Child in Need. If a child is not deemed to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm but is deemed to be in need of additional support from one or more agencies, they should be referred to the DSL and will be assessed via the Early Family Help Assessment and the Team around the Child (TAC) approaches, in line with local inter-agency procedures.
- 5.5 **Referral guidelines:** It is key that children receive the right help at the right time to address risks and to prevent issues escalating. A referral to children's social care or police should be made when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, harm and/ or where a criminal offence has taken place. If necessary anyone can make such a referral. (See Annex A).
- 5.6 **External agencies:** In the event that the College decides not to refer a particular incident to the police, the parents and pupil will be informed of their right to make their own complaint or referral. Pupils and their parents have access to a complaints procedure in relation to issues affecting their welfare which provides contact details for ISI.
- 5.7 (A) **Allegations against a member of staff that may meet the harms threshold** (including volunteers, supply staff, trainee teachers, school governors and contractors): The College has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff, governors, contractors and volunteers who work with children) that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations. These procedures follow the guidance in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \[Part 4\] \(2026\)](#).

The following process must be followed:

- Make an immediate written record of the allegation using the informant's words including: time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, brief details of

what happened, what was said and who was present

- This record should be signed, dated and immediately passed on to the Head Master or Chair of Governors (if the allegation relates to the Head Master)
- The recipient of an allegation must not unilaterally determine its validity and failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter. The Head Master or Chair will not investigate the allegation themselves, or take written or detailed statements, but will assess and decide whether to refer the concern to the LADO. If there is any doubt as to whether to refer, advice should be taken from the LADO.
- Where a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the Head exists, the LADO should be contacted directly and the allegation shared with them.
- If there are concerns that a child is at risk, the matter must be immediately reported to West Sussex Integrated Front Door.
- Any records generated in the course of such matters must be retained securely, away from other child protection and personnel records and only be accessed by those who need to for investigation / review purposes.
- Guidelines contained within the Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures in respect of managing allegations made against people who work or volunteer with children, found [here](#), must be followed on each occasion. If there is any doubt then advice must be taken from the LADO

The College will not undertake its own investigations of an allegation without prior consultation with the LADO, or in the most serious cases the police, in order not to jeopardise statutory investigations.

Where an allegation relates to a member of supply staff, provided by an agency, the College at the direction and advice of the LADO and/or police will involve and work with the agency.

Where an allegation relates to a trainee teacher, provided by a teacher training provider, the College at the direction and advice of the LADO and/or police will involve and work with the teacher training provider.

Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation. Full consideration will be given to all the options, subject to the need to ensure:

- the safety and welfare of the pupils or pupil concerned; and
- the need for a full and fair investigation.

If a member of boarding staff is suspended pending a child protection investigation, arrangements will be made for alternative accommodation away from children.

Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Head Master of the Senior School or Head of the Preparatory Schools, the person receiving the allegation should, without first notifying the Head Master/ Head, immediately inform the Chairman of the Governing Body (Ms Siobhan Denning), or in his absence the Board-level Safeguarding Lead, Jason Hunter [contact details for both may be gained from the Clerk to the Governing body, the Bursar's PA, or in their absence from, the Head Master's Personal Assistant or the Designated Safeguarding Lead], who will consult with the relevant LADO.

Detailed guidance is given to staff to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil. This guidance is contained in the [Staff Code of Conduct](#).

If the College ceases to use the services of a member of staff (or a Governor or volunteer or supply teacher) because they are unsuitable to work with children, a compromise agreement will not be used and there will be a prompt and detailed report to the DBS. The College will consider whether to make a referral to the Teaching Regulatory Agency where the criteria are met. Any such incidents will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the College with a report being presented to the Governing Body without delay.

(B) Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold (including volunteers, supply staff, trainee teachers, school governors and contractors):

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harm threshold. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of the workplace (including online); and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Low-level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors will be shared with their employers, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified. The Head Master or his delegated representative will communicate with their employers. Lancing College reserves the right to remove supply staff and contractors from the premises, if required. The [Lancing College Low-Level Concerns policy](#) details the actions in relation to low level concerns which do not meet the 'harm' threshold.

It is important to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the College's values and expected behaviour which are set out in the staff code of conduct are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

Safeguarding concerns about a member of staff should be referred to the Head Master as per the Lancing College Low-Level Concerns Policy.

Non recent allegations: Where an adult makes an allegation to a school or college that they were abused as a child, Lancing College would advise the individual to report the allegation to the police. Non recent allegations made by a child, will be reported to the LADO who will coordinate with children social care and the police. Abuse can be reported no matter how long ago it happened. The college will follow the Disclosure of Non-Recent Abuse Policy (2025).

5.8 **School complaints:** Complaints by parents about any aspect of school MUST be reviewed to ensure there are no allegations against staff, including volunteers, contained within the complaint which require referral to LADO

5.9 **Allegations against pupils:** A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the College during the investigation and the College's policy on behaviour, discipline and sanctions will apply.

In the instance where there is the allegation of abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm' then any such abuse will be referred to local agencies as a child protection

concern. In the event of disclosure about pupil on pupil abuse, all children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, will be treated as being 'at risk'.

- 5.10 **Child-on-Child Abuse:** This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based, discriminatory bullying, racism and faith-based targeted abuse); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; initiating/hazing type violence and rituals; abuse within intimate partner relationships; consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos; AI generated indecent images, causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.

The College seeks to ensure that the risk of Child on Child abuse (including harassment and violence) is minimised by:

- Challenging inappropriate behaviours;
- Providing a developmentally appropriate PSHE programme which develops pupils' understanding of consent, acceptable behaviour and healthy relationships;
- Developing robust risk assessments and providing targeted work and support for pupils identified as being a potential risk to other pupils;
- Having systems in place for any pupils to raise concerns with staff knowing that they will be listened to, believed and valued;
- Clarity about how allegations of Child on Child abuse will be recorded, investigated and dealt with
- Recognition that all Child on Child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously, including clarity that it should never be passed off as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" all of which can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, misogyny, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.
- Ensuring that staff are suitably trained to manage a report of Child on Child sexual violence.
- Clear processes through which all children (victims, perpetrators and others affected by Child on Child abuse) will be supported

The College's [Policy on Child on Child Abuse](#) details this guidance in full.

- 5.11 **Child-on-child harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), including sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges**

Harmful sexual behaviour:

Harmful Sexual Behaviour refers to sexual behaviours, language, attitudes, or interactions between children that are inappropriate for their age or stage of development, cause harm or distress, violate another person's boundaries, or indicate unhealthy attitudes towards sex, relationships, consent, or gender. Such behaviours occur on a continuum, from concerns such as persistent sexualised comments or objectification of others, through to sexual harassment, coercion, and sexual violence.

Harmful sexual behaviour will not be tolerated at the college. The college recognises the escalatory nature of misogyny/misandry and the benefits of early identification in order to minimise the risk of harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Context:

Harmful sexual behaviour can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It can also occur online. It can also occur through a

group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of Harmful sexual behaviour will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Harmful sexual behaviour exists on a continuum and may overlap, can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and is never acceptable. Harmful sexual behaviour can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk. Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that harmful sexual behaviour is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing harmful sexual behaviour as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

5.12 **Managing reports of Child on Child harmful sexual behaviour, including sexual violence and harassment**

A. Responding to reports of harmful sexual behaviour, including sexual violence and sexual harassment

- Children making a report of harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence or sexual harassment will be taken seriously, kept safe and will be well supported. Staff taking a report must never promise confidentiality and inform the DSL immediately.
- If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral will be made without delay.
- Parents or carers should be informed at an early stage (unless this would put the child at greater risk).

B Confidentiality

- Staff taking a report should never promise confidentiality as it is very likely that it will be in the best interest of the victim to seek advice and guidance from others in order to provide support and engage appropriate agencies.
- The DSL would only engage staff and agencies who are required to support the children involved and/or be involved in any investigation.
- The victim may ask the DSL not to tell anyone about the harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence or sexual harassment. There are no easy or definitive answers when a victim makes this request. If the victim does not give consent to share information, staff may still lawfully share it, if there is another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies.
- The DSL (or a DDSL) will have to balance the victim’s wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children.
- If the DSL (or a DDSL) decide to go ahead and make a referral to the local authority children’s social care and/or a report to the police against the victim’s wishes, this would be handled extremely carefully, the reasons would be explained to the victim and appropriate specialist support would be offered.

C Anonymity

- Where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system, the College should be aware of anonymity, witness support,

and the criminal process in general so as to offer support and act appropriately.

- As a matter of effective safeguarding practice, the college would do all that is reasonably possible to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Amongst other things, this will mean carefully considering, based on the nature of the report, which staff should know about the report and any support that will be put in place for the children involved.
- The College would also consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities and work with all involved to reduce the risk of this.

D. Risk Assessment

- Following the report the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment, which considers:
 - The victim, especially their protection and support;
 - Whether there may have been other victims;
 - The alleged perpetrator, their support needs and any discipline action;
 - All other children at the school;
 - The victim and the alleged perpetrator sharing classes and space at school.
 - The time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer
- The risk assessment will be recorded and kept under review.
- Where there has been other professional intervention and/or other specialist risk assessments, these professional assessments will be used to inform the College's approach to supporting and protecting pupils.

E. Actions

- The DSL will consider the following actions:
 - The wishes of the victim;
 - The nature of the incident including whether a crime has been committed and the harm caused;
 - Ages of the children involved;
 - Developmental stages of the children;
 - Any power imbalance between the children;
 - Any previous incidents;
 - An understanding of intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents;
 - Ongoing risks;
 - Other related issues or wider context.

F. Options

- The DSL, in consultation with the Safeguarding Team, will decide between the following options:
 - Manage internally
 - Refer to universal services and community based Early Help
 - Refer to Family Help (including targeted Early Help) and/or local authority children's social care in need)
 - Report to the police (generally in parallel with a referral to Children's Social Care)

G. Ongoing Response

- The DSL will manage each case individually and ensure that the risk assessment is reviewed regularly with relevant partner agencies, for example the Police and Children's Social Care.
- Where there is a criminal investigation into a rape, assault by penetration or sexual

assault, the alleged perpetrator would be removed from any classes they share with the victim.

- The DSL will consider how best to keep the victim and perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises and on transport where appropriate.
- Where a criminal investigation into a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault or leads to a conviction or caution, the College will take disciplinary action in line with its Rewards, Discipline and Sanctions Policy. Whether or not allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same school or college would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially themselves and other pupils) is one of several factors that will be considered.
- The victim, alleged perpetrator and any other affected children and adults will be offered appropriate support. The College recognises that taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions and can occur at the same time if necessary.

A NSPCC helpline 0800 136 663 is available to support potential victims of sexual harassment and abuse in education settings. It aims to provide appropriate support and advice to children and adults who are victims of sexual abuse in schools, including on how to contact the police and report crimes. The helpline also provides support to parents and professionals.

- 5.13 **Suspected harm from outside the College:** A member of staff who suspects that a pupil is suffering harm from outside the College should discuss this matter with the DSL, and consideration will be given as to who best should seek to elicit information from the child using sensitively "open", and not leading, questions. A sufficient record should be made of the conversation and, if there are concerns confirmed, the matter should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or to one of his deputies.
- 5.14 **Missing pupil (boarder or day):** All staff should follow the procedures outlined in the policy (refer to the relevant Staff Handbook) for searching for, reporting and recording any pupil (boarder or day) missing from school. The procedure includes the requirement to record any incident, the action taken and the reasons given by the pupil for being missing.

6 Monitoring

- 6.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor the operation of this policy and its procedures and make a termly report to the Governors.
- 6.2 The Governing Body will undertake an annual review of the College's child protection policies and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. The member of the Governing Body taking leadership responsibility for the College's safeguarding arrangements is Jason Hunter.
- 6.3 The Governors will ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.
- 6.4 The Governors, through the Bursar, will ensure appropriate child protection checks apply to all staff including supply staff, trainee teachers, governors, volunteers, employees of other organisations spending extended time on the College premises, or working with the College's pupils on another site (for example in a separate institution).
- 6.5 The Governors, through the Bursar, will ensure appropriate checks are in place to keep children safe when hiring or renting out College facilities to external organisations or individuals. Failure of the external organisations or individuals to fully comply will lead to a

termination of the hiring or rental agreement. In the event of the College receiving an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using the College premises for the purposes of running activities for children (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities), as with any safeguarding allegation, the College would follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

- 6.6 The Governors, through the Head Master, will ensure that where the College ceases to use the services of any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) because that person was considered unsuitable to work with children, a report is made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) within one month of the person leaving the College. The Governors have noted that failure to make a report constitutes an offence.

The Governors should ensure the College has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness (at least once every academic year). They should ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. Governors receive assurance reports regarding filtering and monitoring effectiveness and annual review outcomes.

- 6.7 Independent schools are also under a duty to report to the TRA where a teacher has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed had he/she not resigned) and a prohibition order may be appropriate. The reasons such an order would be considered are: 'unacceptable professional conduct', 'conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute' or a 'conviction, at any time, for a relevant offence'. In such circumstances the Head Master will consider making such a referral, following the guidance on the TRA website.

7 Links to other policies

This policy is linked to and underpinned by a number of other policies sent to staff prior to their commencement of employ*, available to staff on the VLE and through the Staff Handbook or available in hard copy by request:

- [Policy for the Induction of New Staff in Child Protection*](#)
- [Staff Code of Conduct*](#)
- [Anti-bullying Policy](#)
- [Recruitment Policy](#)
- [Behaviour and Discipline Policy](#)
- [Promoting Fundamental British Values Policy](#)
- [Supervision Policy](#)
- [Whistleblowing Policy](#)
- [Access to School Premises Policy](#)
- [Child Missing From Education Policy](#)
- [Child-on-child Abuse Policy](#)
- [Complaints Procedure](#)
- [Distance Learning Responsible User Agreement](#)
- [Self-Harm Policy](#)
- [Suicide-Prevention Policy](#)
- [Bereavement Policy](#)
- [Relationships and Sex Education Policy](#)
- [Low Level Concerns Policy](#)
- [Online Safety Policy](#)

Authorised by	Resolution of the Governing Body
Date	September 2026
	Review Date: June 2027
Effective date of the policy	Amended and updated with effect from 21 June 2019; effective from 2 September 2019. Further updated 21 November 2019, 3 February 2020, 20 April 2020, 27 November 2020, 20 January 2021, 21 April 2021, 14 June 2021, 01 September 2021, 21 June 2022, 1 September 2022, 10 October 2022, 1 March 2023, 12 June 2023, 6 September 2023, 18 December 2023, 4 July 2024, 5 September 2024, 23 January 2025, 1 September 2025
Circulation	Governors/all staff/volunteers automatically Available on website Parents on request
Status	Complies with paragraph 3(2)(b) of the <i>Schedule to the Education</i> (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2026, the <i>National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> (HM Gov March 2026) and <i>DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education</i> (September 2026)

Annex A

A1 Record of Designated Persons' recent Safeguarding / Child Protection training

- *SPOT Suicide awareness course, Papyrus, June 2026*
- *Prevent in Education – Training for Independent Schools, DfE January 2026*
- *West Sussex DSL Refresher training October 2025*
- *Optimus Education Leading Safeguarding 2025 conference (DSL and DDSL) June 2025*
- *Olive Consultancy Suicide Prevention Course (DSL) – November 2024*
- *Optimus Education Child Protection in Education conference - September 2024*
- *West Sussex Designated Safeguarding Lead introduction – June 2024 (DSL, DDSL's VWV Safer Recruitment training – April 2024 (DDSL - incoming DSL)*
- *West Sussex termly Network Meetings – 09/22; 03/23 (DSL); 07/24 11/24; 07/25 (DSL)*
- *West Sussex DSL Training - 13 January 2022 (DSL, DDSLs, Safeguarding Governor, AMC and DTO)*
- *West Sussex Self Harm Workshop – 23 June 2021 (DSL)*
- *West Sussex termly Network Meetings – 09/20; 03/21; 06/21 (DSL)*
- *West Sussex DSL Training – 2 June 2020 (DSL-elect)*
- *West Sussex DSL Training - 16 January 2020 (DDSLs and DTO)*
- *Responding to issues of Child-on-child Abuse – 16 January 2020 {DSL}*
- *My Concern Online training for DSLs – January 2020 (DSL and DDSLs)*
- *Farrer & Co Training Day for Safeguarding Governors – 8 November 2019 (GB Lead)*
- *VWV Webinars: Safer Recruitment and Contextual Safeguarding – November 2020 (DSL)*
- *DSL Self-Care Workshop, Wellington College – 2 October 2019 (DDSLs)*
- *Farrer & Co Annual Safeguarding Conference – 25 September 2019 (GB Lead)*
- *West Sussex Advanced Safeguarding Training – 17 June 2019 (DSL and DDSLs)*
- *DSL Refresher Training - 14 May 2019 (DSL and DDSL)*
- *Child Sexual Abuse, W Sussex – 4 April 2019 (DSL)*
- *Transforming Young Lives, Christ's Hospital – 6 March 2019 (DDSL)*
- *Safe and Sound Safeguarding, BSA Conference – 21 November 2018 (DDSL and GB Lead))*
- *DSL Refresher Training, W Sussex LSCB - 20 September 2018 (DSL);*

A2 Record of recent Safeguarding/Child Protection training at Lancing College

All teaching staff undertake the *Educare* Child Protection Refresher annually in addition to two other compulsory modules from a suite of four possibilities. Many take a significant number more.

- Safeguarding/Child Protection training/update for teaching staff

01 September 2026
 01 September 2025
 02 September 2024
 04 September 2023
 02 September 2022
 28 January 2022
 04 January 2022
 10 December 2021
 01 September 2021
 16 April 2021
 04 January 2021
 01 September 2020
 18 January 2020 Mental Health First Aid. MHFA England
 6 January 2020
 2 September 2019
 18 June 2019 *Working with Bereaved Children*, Winston's Wish
 17 June 2019, *Advanced Safeguarding Training*, W Sussex
 2 April 2019 *Mental Health First Aid*, MHFA England
 3 September 2018

- Safeguarding/Child Protection training/update for new teaching and support staff
28 August 2026
29 August 2025
30 August 2024
04 September 2023
31 August 2022

Since September 2021, courses run on a weekly basis (or on a needs basis) in conjunction with HR and recruitment patterns.

6 January 2020
29 August and 3 October 2019
16 May 2019
23 April 2019
9 January 2019
14 December 2018
29 August and 30 September 2018

1. Safeguarding/Child Protection training/update for support staff & volunteers
01 September 2026
01 September 2025
02 September 2024
04 September 2023
24 February 2023
02 September 2022
26 January 2022
04 January 2022
01 September 2021
16 January (Matrons)
04 January 2021 (Matrons)
03 September 2020 (VMTs)
01 September 2020 (Maintenance, Grounds, Domestic Assistants and Catering)
6 January 2020 (Maintenance, Grounds, Domestic Assistants and Catering)
21 November 2019 (College drivers)
10 October 2019 (visiting sports coaches)
17 September 2019 (support staff)
5 September 2019 (VMTs)
24 April 2019 (invigilators)
14 December 2018 (support staff)
16 November 2018 (College drivers)
6 September 2018 (VMTs)

- Safeguarding/Child Protection training/update for Governors
08 September 2026
10 September 2025
9 September 2024
21 September 2023
16 September 2022
18 June 2022

25 June 2021
19 March 2021
27 November 2020
20 March 2020
29 November 2019
21 June 2019
22 March 2019
30 November 2018
15 June 2018

- Safeguarding/Child Protection training for PGCE students

29 September 2021
19 April 2021
19 March 2021
22 February 2021
5 September 2021
26 September 2019
29 September 2018
19 February 2018

- Safeguarding/Child Protection training for School Prefects

04 June 2026
11 September 2025
10 September 2024
September 2023
14 September 2022
09 September 2021
10 September 2020
28 January 2020 *Mental Health First Aid for Senior Pupils*, MHFA
11 September 2019
12 September 2018
13 September 2017

- Safeguarding training for Heads of House and House Captains

15-16 June 2026
16+19 June 2025
11+12 June 2024
June 2023
14+15 June 2022
15+16 June 2021
10 June 2020
28 January 2020 *Mental Health First Aid for Senior Pupils*, MHFA
13 & 18 June 2019
13 & 18 June 2018
7 September 2017

- Safeguarding/Child Protection training for Peer Supporters

October 2025
October 2024
October 2023
November 2022
12 January 2022
04 December 2021

26 November 2020

11 October 2020

28 January 2020 *Mental Health First Aid for Senior Pupils*, MHFA

14 January 2020

18 June 2019 *Working with Bereaved Children*, Winston's Wish

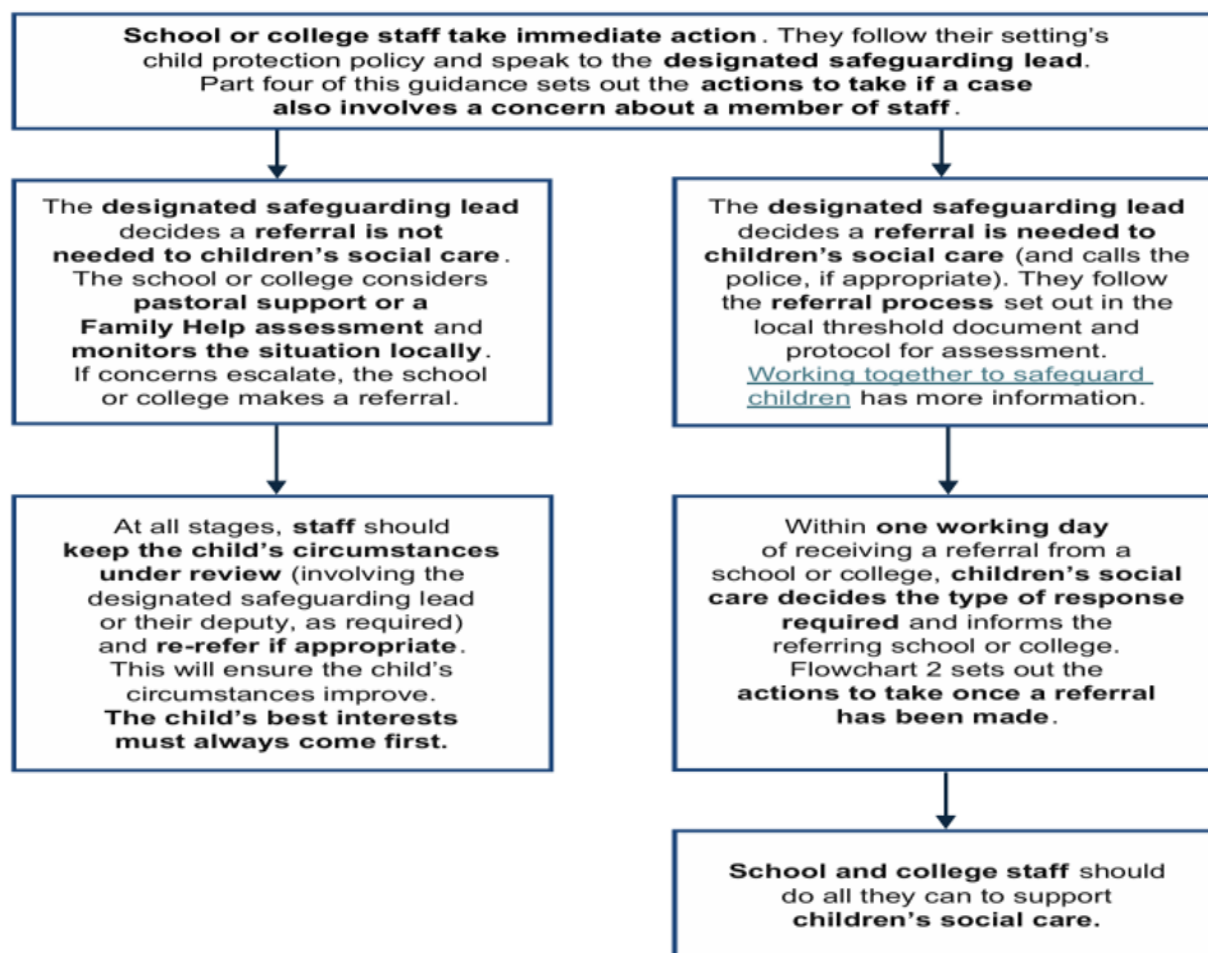
16 January 2019

18 January 2018

19 January 2017

Annex B - taken from *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE September 2026) Actions when there are concerns about a child

Flowchart 1: actions taken by a school or college when there are concerns about a child



Flowchart 2: actions taken once a referral has been made to children's social care

