ABBOTSHOLME SCHOOL

ABBOTSHOLME SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING POLICY

AND CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Jennie Denton Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) are Amy Thornton, Helen Hudson, Sam Ritchie, Bernadette Carr Richard Brindley – DDSL for Preparatory School including EYFS
Specialist supporting on the team: Helen Wilkinson – Headmistress

All members of the safeguarding team can be contacted on safeguarding@abbotsholme.co.uk or by mobile phone out of normal school hours, on 07823 788207. In the school holidays the above applies; however, if a reply is not received within a reasonable amount of time contact should be made with Derbyshire 'Starting Point' or the police on 999.

This policy is applicable to all pupils in the school including Early Years Foundation Stage.

This policy is in accordance with the locally agreed inter-agency procedures. The Local Children's Safeguarding Partnership is Derby and Derbyshire. This policy is available to parents on the website and in reception on request.

The full Derby and Derbyshire procedures are available on the Derby and Derbyshire Website: https://www.ddscp.org.uk/

The Safeguarding Team meet weekly to discuss welfare issues and will confer on all matters arising in relation to child protection issues. They will communicate with the appropriate safeguarding agency when an allegation or disclosure of abuse has been made.

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Safeguarding

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in this school is:

Mrs Jennie Denton

E: safeguarding@abbotsholme.co.uk

T: 07823 788207

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads with responsibility for Senior School are:

Mrs Helen Hudson (School Health Advisor)

Mrs Amy Thornton (Deputy Head)

Mrs Bernadette Carr (Head of Lower School)

Mr Sam Ritchie (Head of Middle School)

E: safeguarding@abbotsholme.co.uk

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for the EYFS is:

Mr Richard Brindley

E: richard.brindley@abbotsholme.co.uk

T: 01889 590217

The Nominated Proprietor for Safeguarding is:

Mrs Tong Zhou (Director)

E: tong@achieve-group.com

Chair of the Advisory Board overseeing safeguarding:

Dr Helen Wright

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The Headmistress of the School is:

Mrs Helen Wilkinson

E: helen.wilkinson@abbotsholme.co.uk

Local Support:

Derbyshire Starting Point

Immediate child protection concerns: 01629 533190

All other referrals through electronic request: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/startingpoint

Starting Point Professionals Advice Line: 01629 535353

Urgent Care Team CAMHS - 07901330724

Derby city and South Derbyshire CAMHS/RISE - 0300 123 3124

Prevent: Derbyshire Channel – Ali.Chandler@derbyshire.gov.uk

Sometimes it may be necessary to liaise directly with other local authorities in relation to the needs of children resident in authorities other than Derbyshire. Due to our location on the Derbyshire / Staffordshire border, a large proportion of our pupils reside in Staffordshire so their contact details are included below.

The Staffordshire website is: www.staffsscb.org.uk

Staffordshire First Response: 0800 1313126 or firstr@staffordshire.gov.uk

Staffordshire EDS (out of hours) Tel No. 0845 6042886

Or email: eds.team.manager@staffordshire.gov.uk

National Support:

CEOP-wwww.ceop.police.uk

Childline -0800 1111

'For Me' – Childline App via smartphone

Internet watch foundation – www.iwf.org.uk

Professionals online safety helpline – helpline@saferinternet.org.uk

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NSPCC website – www.nspcc.org.uk

Whistleblowing helpline 0800 028 0285 (8am-8pm Monday to Friday)

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

NSPCC National Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Summary Guidance

Disclosures

If a child discloses to you or you suspect abuse:

- Report any disclosure immediately to a DSL or, in their absence, the DDSL.
- Do not question a child should you suspect abuse, but refer your suspicion to the DSL or DDSL immediately.
- Make a clear record of what the child has said to you and give this to the DSL or DDSL.
- Do not ask leading questions and do not promise confidentiality to the child.
- Ensure that the child is safe.
- Do tell the child that you must speak to a DSL or the DDSL.
- Be guided by the DSL or DDSL as to what you should do next: do not investigate yourself
- Do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends, family or anyone else unless otherwise directed by the DSL or DDSL
- Be aware that you may contact local children's services and/or the Police directly.

Remember: It is important for all staff to understand that some children may find it hard to tell someone they are being abused: they may not be ready or know how to do so. Hence we provide a wide range of avenues for children to speak out with confidence that support will be available and action will be taken, including: tutors, boarding staff, trusted adults for LGBTQIA+ pupils, class teachers, counsellors, independent listeners, senior pastoral staff, learning support staff, medical staff.

Child-on-child including sexual harassment or violence

If a child discloses to you or you suspect abuse:

- Report this immediately to the DSL or in their absence a DDSL.
- Make a clear record of what the child has said to you or of the information given to you.
- Be guided by the DSL or DDSL as to next steps: do not investigate yourself.

In all cases of disclosure:

Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe so that no victim will be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment; no victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Allegations against and low-level safeguarding concerns regarding staff other than the Headmistress

- Report an allegation immediately to the Headmistress or in her absence the Proprietors' onsite representative without informing the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- Report a low-level concern to the Headmistress or in her absence to the DSL without informing the person relating to whom the concern applies.
- Should you believe that there may be a conflict of interest on the part of the Headmistress, refer the matter to the Proprietors' onsite representative and/or the local children's services.
- Be aware that should the need arise you may contact local children's services and/or the Police directly.

Allegations against and low-level safeguarding concerns regarding the Headmistress

- Report this immediately to the Proprietors' onsite representative without informing the Headmistress.
- Be aware that should the need arise you may contact local children's services and/or the Police directly.

Abbotsholme School recognises that the welfare of the child (throughout this document, 'child' refers to a young person under the age of 18) is paramount. We take seriously our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people in our care.

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. '*Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023)*, HM Government statutory guidance, defines safeguarding as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge

- protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The Board of Directors (Proprietors) will act in accordance with Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 (which applies to Independent Schools) and the supporting statutory guidance *'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2023)* to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in this school. The Board of Directors (Proprietors) is responsible for ensuring that the school meets its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and that all policies and procedures are in place and effective. It is a requirement of the Independent Schools' Standards Requirements (ISSRs) that the Board of Directors (Proprietors) will receive a report from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) /Nominated Proprietor in order to help monitor compliance with statutory responsibilities. A termly safeguarding report is provided by the DSL along with a safeguarding audit annually. The safeguarding and online safety policy will be reviewed annually and updated whenever needed in the interim so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt.

All children have the right to be safeguarded from harm or exploitation whatever their age, health or disability, gender or sexual orientation, race, religion, belief or first language, political or immigration status.

Proprietors, staff and regular volunteers understand the importance of taking appropriate action and working in partnership with children, their parents/carers and other agencies in order to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

The purpose of this policy is to: afford protection for all pupils, enable staff and volunteers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and promote a culture which makes the school a safer place to learn and live. The policy applies to the Headmistress, all staff (including supply and peripatetic staff), regular volunteers (ie those who come into school once a week or more or 4 times in a 30 day period), proprietors or anyone working on behalf of the school.

Our approach is child-centred, with consideration being given at all times to what is in the best interests of the child. Our aim is to know everyone as an individual and to provide a

secure and caring environment so that every pupil can develop, learn, and live in safety. The School recognises that pupils require high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends, and clear lines of communication with supportive and trusted adults, if they are to thrive.

Everyone in the school shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe by:

- creating and maintaining a safe learning environment, promoting safe practice and eliminating unsafe practice
- preventing unsuitable people from working with children and young people
- identifying where there are child welfare concerns, taking action to address these in partnership with other agencies if appropriate
- contributing to effective partnership between all those involved with providing services for children
- developing children's understanding, awareness, and resilience
- ensuring that our pupils are able to make their views and concerns known through tutors, trusted adults, school councils, boarders' forum, suggestion boxes, counsellors, independent listeners, meetings with senior leadership and with proprietors.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- always acting in their best interests
- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- involving them in decisions which affect them
- ensuring that they understand that the law is there for their protection
- never tolerating bullying, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic behaviour, racism, sexism or any other forms of discrimination, including through use of technology
- ensuring the curriculum affords a range of opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe, particularly when using technology and, where appropriate, in respect of radicalisation and extremist behaviour
- exercising our duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 by ensuring key staff attend 'Prevent' training biannually in respect of radicalisation and extremist behaviour and by assessing the risk of our pupils being drawn into terrorism
- supporting attendance and taking action if a child is missing school regularly

- appointing a senior member of staff as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Jennie Denton) and ensuring this person has the authority, time, funding, support, training and resources to perform the role effectively
- appointing Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (Amy Thornton, Helen Hudson, Bernadette Carr, Sam Ritchie and Richard Brindley) to ensure there is always someone available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns
- ensuring that there is always cover for this role
- The practitioner designated to take the lead responsibility for safeguarding children in EYFS is Mr Richard Brindley (Preparatory School).
- appointing a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after/in care (Amy Thornton).
- ensuring that staff working with Looked-After Children have information appropriate to their role regarding, for example, the child's care arrangements, legal status and contact with birth parents
- making sure all staff and volunteers are aware of and committed to the Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures and also understand their individual responsibility to take action
- ensuring that all those named above (i.e. DSLs and Deputy DSLs; the Headmaster, all staff and regular volunteers) have training appropriate to their roles as set out in statutory guidance.
- identifying any concerns early and providing appropriate help to prevent them from escalating (Housemasters/Housemistresses, Heads of Year and Tutors and the Health Centre) and including working with parents/carers and other agencies as appropriate
- sharing information about child safeguarding concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving children and their parents/carers appropriately
- acknowledging and actively promoting that multi-agency working is the best way to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm
- taking the right action, in accordance with Derby & Derbyshire Safeguarding Partnership inter- agency safeguarding procedures, if a child discloses or there are indicators of abuse
- keeping clear, accurate and contemporaneous safeguarding and child protection records
- recruiting staff and volunteers (including host families) safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made in accordance with statutory guidance and legal

requirements and also making sure that at least one appointment panel member has undertaken safer recruitment training

- providing effective management for the above through induction, support and regular training appropriate to role
- adopting a code of conduct for all staff and volunteers which includes acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships, low level concerns and communications including the use of social media
- ensuring our online safety process includes appropriate filters and monitoring systems
- ensuring staff and volunteers understand about 'whistleblowing' and how to escalate concerns about pupils or staff if they think the right action has not been taken to safeguard children
- promoting a culture in which staff feel able to report to senior leaders what they consider to be unacceptable behaviour or breaches of the school Code of Conduct by their colleagues, having faith that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken
- dealing appropriately with any allegations/concerns about the behaviour of staff or volunteers in accordance with the process set out in statutory guidance
- ensuring that the proprietors will be given sufficient training to ensure that they are aware of the pressures on staff and on pupils arising from child protection and safeguarding needs in the School.

The implementation and effectiveness of the Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures are reviewed and endorsed annually by the board. It applies to all staff and volunteers. Parents are informed of the policy and procedures through the website. The Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures are reviewed at regular intervals by the DSL, and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

The school is committed to the Safe Recruitment, including the selection and vetting, of all staff, contractors, and volunteers (see separate policy). The school takes all possible steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children through its recruitment practices, Disclosure and Barring Service [DBS] checks and Induction procedures. This adheres to the 2009, 2012, 2013 and March 2015 legislation regarding referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service [DBS] [formally the Independent Safeguarding Authority]. Safe Recruitment practice also includes the requirement to check that all those employed as teachers from April 2012 are not subject to any prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State. These documents are a vetting process and complete part of the schools

Single Central Register. Section 128 checks are carried out where required. Shortlisted applicants will be informed that the school may carry out online checks as part of the due diligence process.

The School does not use or threaten to use corporal punishment. Any form of physical punishment of pupils is unlawful as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of restraint. There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain a pupil physically to prevent them from inflicting injury to others, self-injury, damaging property, or causing disruption. In such cases only the minimum force necessary may be used and any action taken must be to restrain the pupil. For further details, see separate policy. If a member of staff takes action physically to restrain a pupil a written report is made, as soon as practical and sent to the Headmistress or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Safeguarding children and young people and promoting their well-being is more than just child protection. In order to safeguard children and young people and ensure their personal development, we will have safeguarding at the heart of our purpose. We recognise that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and for some, a sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, they may be withdrawn or their behaviour may not show any obvious changes at all.

Boarding

We acknowledge that as a boarding school, there are additional factors that may affect safeguarding, in particular opportunities and vulnerabilities for child on child abuse and inappropriate staff/pupil relationships.

The School has due regard to the safeguarding requirements of the revised National Minimum Standards for Boarding (September 2022) and to the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse (IICSA) (March 2022).

IICSA noted that sexual abuse can and does occur

- in all types of schools;
- to all ages of children.

And so it recommended that schools must go beyond the acceptance that 'it could happen here' to the belief that 'it probably is happening here'.

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The boarding environment is regarded by IICSA as a high risk for grooming and abuse by adults working at the school as well as providing opportunities for child-on-child sex abuse. Day pupils at boarding schools are also judged to be vulnerable to these risks. Overseas boarders may be especially vulnerable not just at school but when staying with their educational guardians for whom there is no convincing system of checks. The current statutory guidance and independent school standards are judged to be inadequate in these regards.

The Inquiry maintained that there is no simple general solution to the problem of child sexual abuse (CSA) in schools. Instead a series of incremental changes are proposed most of which require government action. However, several specific actions for individual schools are recommended, which the school fully embraces: accordingly we shall

1. report any allegation of child sexual abuse to the inspectorate as well as to the DBS and TRA;
2. ensure that the Headmistress, DSL, and members of the DS team (and DSG) are trained to the highest level;
3. ensure that RSE for all pupils including those with SEND is as effective as possible; and
4. ensure that pre-appointment checks and supervision of volunteers are as effective as possible.

We support and embrace the key substantive changes made to the National Minimum Standards for boarding:

1. the focus upon good rather than suitable or adequate provision (e.g. accommodation, facilities, food); how inspectors will decide between 'good' and suitable/adequate' is yet to be seen;
2. the central importance of the welfare and wellbeing of boarders;
3. the need to ensure that our policies reflect the interests and needs of boarders;
4. the need to monitor any lodgings, host families and guardians rigorously.

The School shall carry out an annual audit of boarding which shall be submitted to the proprietors: boarding pupils will be invited to provide feedback to proprietors on the experiences of boarding especially as it relates to their welfare and wellbeing.

Accordingly, the following guidelines amongst others will be followed:

- The **wellbeing of boarders** will be a primary concern.

- The risks associated with the **potential impact of sexual violence and sexual harassment** in the boarding environment will be considered
- Any incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence within the boarding environment will be **recorded as boarding incidents**.
- Staff and boarders of all kinds and needs should know **what to do in an emergency including at night**.
- We shall ensure that there are **clear arrangements for arrival at and departure** from school.
- We shall ensure that **boarders know how to raise concerns** and staff must know how to respond when this happens.
- **Our behaviour and bullying policies** reference behaviour and bullying in boarding accommodation.
- Any incidents of bullying or misconduct within the boarding environment are **recorded as boarding incidents**.
- In accordance with our **RSE policy** we promote good relationships amongst boarders.
- We take appropriate steps to ensure that **guardians are suitable and promote the welfare of boarders**.
- We do not appoint school staff as educational guardians for **boarders.**
- There will be termly checks in place for any **lodgings and host families** and DBS checks on all over 16s residing in such accommodation which will be good not merely suitable.

Proactive and preventive approaches

The school takes a proactive approach towards safeguarding our pupils. Relationship, sex and health education is delivered through both our PSHE and tutorial programmes. Pupils are also taught about safety and appropriate behaviour online so that they are as clear about what is expected of them online as offline. Suitable filtering is in place on the school network but we acknowledge that pupils will have access to 3G and 4G on the school premises through their phones and personal devices as well as at home in the evenings and at weekends. All boarders in year 8 and below must hand in their devices before bed each evening. We aim to teach all of our pupils to use the internet responsibly and raise their awareness of potential risks online. Staff are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues and that it may be used to view and share pornography and other harmful content,

share indecent images consensually and non-consensually and to sexually harass or bully their peers. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life. Whilst adults often perceive there to be a clear separation between 'real life' and the 'online world', for young people this is not the case.

The school supports its pupils through:

- Provision of a curriculum that assists pupils to make good choices about safe and healthy lifestyles and informs them who to approach if their health or safety is threatened.
- Through the school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment. It seeks to give pupils a sense of being valued and helps all to fulfil potential, regardless of their background or circumstances.
- A safe learning environment where pupils are listened to, they feel safe and secure, they do not experience bullying, racism, homophobia, transphobia or other types of discrimination, and where medical needs are met.
- The early identification of pupils with additional needs, liaison and intervention with other agencies such as Social Services and Child and Adult Mental Health Services.
- The school behaviour policy which provides appropriate guidelines and which supports all pupils.
- Ensuring that when a pupil who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan leaves, their details are transferred to the new school immediately and the child's social worker is informed.
- The school's pastoral care system ensures pupils' self-awareness of safeguarding and welfare matters are developed at levels appropriate to their maturity, through curricular and extra-curricular events. These may include, for example, PSHE lessons, tutorials, house assemblies and year group meetings, where a trusting climate is established and pupils may talk and share their thoughts and feelings.
- Provision of guidance on the safe use of electronic equipment, including access to the internet.
- Encouraging amongst all staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings and an understanding of the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances. It is important to consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.
- Developing positive partnerships and nurturing a commitment to open and honest relationships with parents and carers at all stages of a pupil's education.

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COVID-19 and Pandemics

- During any periods of school closure / remote working, staff are able to access the safeguarding team as normal via the safeguarding email or mobile phone.
- Microsoft Teams is used for online learning and tutorial sessions and all sessions are recorded. Regular contact is established between tutors and their groups via video tutorials. Whilst the school policy is not to have one-to-one video conference sessions between staff and pupils, it is acknowledged that there are some circumstances where this may be necessary. There is a specific protocol for this which all parties must agree to in advance of any sessions.
- The DSL will attend early help and local partnership meetings remotely and completing online training where this is available.
- School policies and risk assessments related to Covid-19 were written with regard to *Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers (2020) and Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19)*
- Should the need arise further risk assessments will be made and published

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ABBOTSHOLME SCHOOL - CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Child protection is one very important aspect of safeguarding. It refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention by statutory agencies in family life in the best interests of children. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Sometimes it might be a single traumatic event but more often it is a compilation of significant events which damage the child's physical and psychological development. Decisions about significant harm are complex and require discussion with the statutory agencies (Children's Social Care and Police).

These procedures explain what action should be taken if there are concerns that a child is or might be suffering harm. A 'child' is a person under 18 years but the principles of these procedures apply to all pupils at this school, including those over 18.

All adults in the school have an individual responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by taking appropriate action. This includes taking action where there are child protection concerns.

The Board of Directors (Proprietors) is accountable for ensuring that the school has an effective Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy. This policy is reviewed annually by the Board of Directors (Proprietors), and is made available publicly, including being placed upon the school's website. The Board of Directors has nominated an individual Governor to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding and to work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, thereby providing a link between the school and the Board of Directors to monitor whether mandatory policies, procedures and training are in place and effective.

The school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). This is the person who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and online safety, including filtering and monitoring processes. Any concerns about children should be discussed with/reported to the DSL who will decide what action to take including referring to Children's Social Care, Police or integrated care board as appropriate.

All action is taken in line with the following guidance:

- DfE guidance– "*Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024"*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)* – published by HM Government
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – Government Guidance (2015)
- Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (July 2018)
- The Prevent Duty advice for schools and child care providers (June 2015)
- *Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales* (July 2015)
- *The use of social media for online radicalisation* (July 2015)
- *When to call the police* – guidance from the National Police Chief's Council(September 2021)
- Teaching safety online: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes

Furthermore, we will follow the procedures set out by the local safeguarding partnership.

It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse. The following definitions are based on references in '*Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023).*

1. Physical abuse
   Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission (doing something), can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect. 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.

   Most children will collect cuts and bruises and injuries, and these should always be interpreted in the context of the child's medical / social history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body, e.g. elbows, knees, shins, and are often on the front of the body. Some children, however, will have bruising that is more than likely inflicted rather than accidental.

   Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given; these can often be visible on the 'soft' parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e g, cheeks, abdomen,

back and buttocks. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern.

The physical signs of abuse may include unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body; multiple bruises- in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh; cigarette burns; human bite marks; broken bones; scalds, with upward splash marks and multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse: fear of parents being approached for an explanation; aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts; flinching when approached or touched; reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather; depression; withdrawn behaviour and running away from home.

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

Emotional abuse can be difficult to identify as there are often no outward physical signs. Indications may be a developmental delay due to a failure to thrive and grow, however, children who appear well-cared for may nevertheless be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix or play with other children.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include: neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking; being unable to play; fear of making mistakes; sudden speech disorders; self-harm; fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour and developmental delay in terms of emotional progress.

3. Sexual abuse
   Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

   The physical signs of sexual abuse may include: pain or itching in the genital area; bruising or bleeding near genital area; sexually transmitted disease; vaginal discharge or infection; stomach pains; discomfort when walking or sitting down and pregnancy.

   Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include: sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn; fear of being left with a specific person or group of people; having nightmares; running away from home; sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level; sexual drawings or language; bedwetting; eating problems such as overeating or anorexia; self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts; saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about; substance or drug abuse; suddenly having unexplained sources of money; not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence) and acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.

4. Neglect
   The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance use. Once a child is born,

neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failure to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of adequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

It can be difficult to recognise neglect, however its effects can be long term and damaging for children.

The physical signs of neglect may include: being constantly dirty or 'smelly'; constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children; losing weight, or being constantly underweight and inappropriate or dirty clothing.

Neglect may be indicated by changes in behaviour which may include: mentioning being left alone or unsupervised; not having many friends; complaining of being tired all the time and not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments.

It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another. Staff and pupils are aware that abuse can take place wholly online or that the internet may be used facilitate offline abuse.

Recognising child abuse – signs and symptoms

1. Child abuse can and does occur both within a child's family and in institutional or community settings. School staff are in contact with children all day and are in a strong position to detect possible abuse. They must not think that by voicing concern they are necessarily starting procedures. The criteria should be that they have '*reasonable suspicion*' and under the Children Act 1989, this definition has been extended to include '*or may suffer in future'*.
2. '*Keeping Children Safe in Education*' is clear: 'All school and college staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection'.
3. Recognising child abuse is not always easy, and it is not the responsibility of school staff to decide whether or not child abuse has definitely taken place or if a child is at significant risk. They do, however, have a clear responsibility to act if they have a concern about a child's welfare or safety or if a child talks about (discloses) abuse.

They should maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and always act in the best interests of the child. But avoid saying "I believe you" – better to express sympathy saying e.g. "I know this must be so difficult for you" or "it is so brave of you to speak out".

Pupils engaging in underage sexual activity

1. Sexual activity where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of children who are consenting partners of a similar age is not usual. DSLs will exercise professional judgement when deciding whether to refer to social workers, taking into account such things as imbalance of power, wide difference in ages or developmental stages etc.
2. However, where a child is under the age of 13 penetrative sex is classified as rape under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 so must be reported to police and local children's services in every case.
3. Where both involved are in the age range 13-16, always consult children's services. Decisions about how to go forward are for others to make.
4. The inter-agency safeguarding procedures, on the DDSCP website, have more information about underage sexual activity.

Allegations made by children about other children, including child on child abuse

Child on child abuse (sometimes called peer on peer abuse) can take various forms including abuse within intimate partner relationships, bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying), sexual violence (such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault), sexual harassment (such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment), causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party, physical abuse (such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm), consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery(YPSI)), upskirting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (which could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group). Whilst it is often assumed that girls are more likely to be victims and boys the perpetrators in child on child abuse, staff should be aware that it may also occur between pupils of the same sex or where girls are the perpetrators and boys the victims.

All child on child abuse is unacceptable and is taken seriously. The school will respond to all suspected or reported incidents whether they occur inside or outside school or online.

Even if there are no reported cases of child on child abuse, the school acknowledges that such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported. Staff have an important role to play in preventing child on child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it both by challenging abusive behaviours between peers and passing on any concerns. All concerns and allegations of child on child abuse should be reported to the safeguarding team who will record and deal with any instances. All pupils should be reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Support will be provided to both victims and perpetrators as well as any other pupil affected. Abuse should never be tolerated or passed as mere 'banter,' 'just boys being boys,' or 'having a laugh' or an inevitable part of growing up as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children. Teaching is provided through PSHE and the pastoral system in accordance with *Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education (2019)* in order to minimize the risk of child on child abuse.

Part 5 of KCSIE contains valuable advice of how to deal with situations where the victim and alleged perpetrator remain in the same school together.

The primary focus of the school's PSHE programme on sexual harassment and sexual violence is preventative education.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary to secondary stage both in person and 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 this will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college.

If one pupil causes harm to another, it is not always necessary for it to be dealt with through a referral to Children's Social Care: sexual experimentation within 'normal parameters',

bullying and fighting, for example, are not generally seen as child protection issues. All incidents will, however, be taken seriously and appropriate action taken to support both victim and perpetrator. In all cases of doubt, the matter should be discussed with local children's services.

1. The nature and severity of the allegation or concern will determine whether staff will implement the school's anti-bullying or other school procedures or whether a referral needs to be made to social workers or the Police. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be consulted if there is any doubt about the right course of action.
2. A referral to Children's Social Care will be made in all cases of domestic abuse relating to young people aged 16 and 17 who experience physical, emotional, sexual and/or financial abuse, or coercive control, in their intimate relationships.
3. A referral to Children's Social Care will be considered if a child or young person displays sexually harmful behaviour. This involves one or more children engaging in sexual discussions or acts that are *inappropriate for their age or stage of development.* It is also considered harmful if it involves coercion or threats of violence or if one of the children is much older than the other.
4. The process for managing sexually harmful behaviour can be found in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures website. In brief, a multi-agency meeting should be convened by the Children's Social Care following a referral and an action plan agreed, including considering a school Risk Assessment.
5. Staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as 'normal' between young people and should not develop high thresholds before taking action.
6. Staff should be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people including upskirting. 'Upskirting' typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.
7. Issues relating to sexting will be presented to pupils in PSHE lessons, school assemblies and house assemblies. Incidents of sexting will be dealt with making reference to *Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people*, December 2020. Devices may be confiscated in order to preserve any evidence and to prevent staff from viewing or forwarding illegal images of a child. Any incident of sharing of nude or semi-nude images should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible. The young people involved will be spoken to if appropriate and parents spoken to at an early stage and involved in the response to the incident unless this would put the young person at risk of harm. A referral to children's social care or the

police will be made immediately if there is a concern that a child has been harmed or is at risk of immediate harm.

8. Issues relating to child on child abuse will be addressed through the PSHE curriculum. In addition, Housemasters/ Housemistresses and Heads of School will address these issues through House Team meetings, House assemblies, year group assemblies and they will use appropriate school policies such as the Abbotsholme School Behaviour Policy. This will also involve close liaison with the Health Centre. Regular discussions will also take place with the School Prefects.

What should staff do if they have concerns about a child?

Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" where safeguarding is concerned. Indeed, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) suggests that the view that "it may well be happening here" is more appropriate. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately by speaking to the DSL or deputy. They should not attempt to investigate in any way. Next steps may then include: managing support for the child internally via the school's pastoral support processes, undertaking an early help assessment or making a referral to statutory services.

Early help

Early help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who: is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs; has special educational needs (whether or not they have an EHC plan); has a mental health need; is a young carer; is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behavior, including gang involvement and association with organized crime groups or county lines; is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or from home; has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit; is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation; is at risk of being radicalized or exploited; has a parent/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 drugs or alcohol themselves; has returned home to their family from care; is at risk of honour-

based abuse such as FGM or forced marriage; is a privately-fostered child and is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, mobile phones, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse. It can also occur through the use of technology, e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones.

Recognition of child sexual exploitation is part of staff training. We note that any child or young person may be at risk of this form of abuse, regardless of family background or other circumstances, and can experience significant harm to physical and mental health. There are a number of indicators which may signal that children 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, being overly secretive, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant, using drugs or alcohol, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Due to the grooming methods used by abusers, it is common for young people not to recognise they are being abused and may feel they are 'in a relationship' and acting voluntarily.

Any concerns about child sexual exploitation will be discussed with the DSL who will take appropriate action which might including completing a risk assessment form.

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The criminal exploitation of children: County Lines

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Signs which may indicate criminal exploitation: persistently going missing from school or home or regularly come home late and / or being found out-of-area; unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones; access to or carrying an unusual number of mobile phones; excessive receipt of texts /phone calls; relationships with controlling /older individuals or groups; associating with other young people involved in exploitation; leaving home / care without explanation; suspicion of physical assault /unexplained injuries; parental concerns; carrying weapons; misusing drugs or alcohol; significant decline in school results / performance; gang association or isolation from peers or social networks and self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

Criminal exploitation of children is a Safeguarding concern and will require a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will seek advice from agencies and professionals; including, reference to the Safeguarding procedures as outlined by the local authority. This will mean a referral into the Police and Social Care. The school will offer support to a victim.

Modern slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

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. Any concerns should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Carrying knifes/offensive Weapons & Gang Culture

Bringing and carrying a knife/offensive weapon onto school premises is a criminal offence and immediate action will be taken by calling the police. The guidance on *Searching, Screening and Confiscation for Head teachers, schools and Governors*, January 2018 will be consulted and the school will consider and may apply the disciplinary procedure.

If a member of staff suspects a pupil of being involved in gang culture, this is a safeguarding concern and will require a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will seek advice from agencies and professionals including reference to the Safeguarding procedures as outlined by the local authority. The pupil may be an exploited child and victim to which the school will offer support.

Children with family members in prison

Children with family members in prison are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. NICCO provides information designed to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are guides available for two different age groups explaining each step of the process, support and special measures that are available.

Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorized 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 and by strangers. Other incidents around people loitering near to the school or unknown adults engaging children in conversation can also raise concerns. Practical advice is given to children on how to keep themselves safe.

Forms of abuse linked to culture, faith or belief

All staff at Abbotsholme will promote mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Some forms of abuse are linked to these and staff should strive to suspend professional disbelief (i.e. that they 'could not happen here') and to report promptly any concerns to the DSL who will seek further advice from statutory agencies, prior to contacting parents/carers. Honour-based abuse can include female genital mutilation, forced marriage and practices such as breast ironing.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal and involves intentionally altering or injuring female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It can have serious and long lasting implications for

physical health and emotional well-being. Possible indicators include days absent from school, not participating in PE, frequent and long visits to the toilet, taking a girl out of school/country for a prolonged period or talk of a 'special procedure' or celebration. In addition to reporting any concerns to the DSL, teachers (along with regulated health and social care professionals) have a statutory duty to report personally to the Police if they discover that female genital mutilation has or appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

The mandatory reporting duty commenced in October 2015. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the DSL and involve children's social care, as appropriate.

Forced Marriage is illegal and occurs where one or both people do not or, in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot consent to the marriage. Pressure or abuse may be used but it is illegal to cause a child under the age of 18 to marry, even if violence, threats or coercion are not used. It is not the same as arranged marriage. Young people at risk of forced marriage might have their freedom unreasonably restricted or be 'monitored' by siblings. There might be a request for extended absence from school or they might not return from a holiday abroad. We recognise that school staff can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

So called 'honour-based' abuse is a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community. It can exist in all communities and cultures and occurs when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code. Females are predominantly, but not exclusively, the victims and the violence is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family or community members. All forms of so called honour-based violence are abuse, regardless of the motivation, and should be referred accordingly.

Radicalisation and extremism

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

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Extremism is defined by HM Government as '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; and/or calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas'.

We recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability.

Our curriculum promotes respect, tolerance and diversity. Children are encouraged to share their views and to understand that they are entitled to have their own different beliefs which should not be used to influence others.

We recognise that children with low aspirations are more vulnerable to radicalisation and therefore we strive to equip our pupils with confidence, self-belief, respect and tolerance as well as setting high standards and expectations for themselves.

Children are taught about how to stay safe when using the Internet and are encouraged to recognise that people are not always who they say they are online. They are taught to seek adult help if they are upset or concerned about anything they read or see on the Internet.

They are also taught to avoid being influenced by harmful online challenges, hoaxes and misinformation.

Any concerns about pupils becoming radicalised or being drawn into extremism will be reported to the DSL who will *not* speak to parents/carers or other family members at this stage but will take prompt advice from the Police. A representative from school will participate in a Channel panel if requested.

The school understands its responsibilities under the 'Prevent' Strategy and staff have been told of the effects of social media in relation to recruitment or extremist/radicalised causes. The school is also aware of the need to set out clear protocols in ensuring that any visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or the pupils themselves, are suitable and appropriately supervised.

It is important that staff in all schools are aware of all above forms of abuse and report concerns to the DSL who will seek further advice from statutory agencies.

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Children who are absent from Education

We recognise that a child being absent from education is a potential indicator of a range of safeguarding possibilities such as abuse, neglect and exploitation, including the specific types of abuse detailed above and/or travelling to conflict zones. It may also indicate mental health problems.

Therefore, all staff will follow the school's procedure for dealing with unauthorised absence, particularly for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, to help identify vulnerable pupils and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Actions could include involving other professionals and, if any of the criteria are met, informing the local authority where a pupil's name has been removed from the school roll.

DfE statutory guidance: *Children Missing Education* September 2016 underpins actions in relation to these matters.

Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It includes crimes such as hacking, denial of service attacks and creating /obtaining malicious software. If there are concerns relating to a child in this area, a referral into the Cyber Choices programme will be considered.

Domestic abuse

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. Child safeguarding procedures will be followed and support will be offered in school.

Staff training will include guidance on the impact of domestic violence on children.

Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life. Children will sometimes blame themselves when they hear or see violent words or actions in the home; just hearing a violent quarrel will seriously unsettle many children.

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Homelessness

Being homeless or at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The school will refer into the Local Housing Authority where appropriate and consider a referral into children's social care if a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Mental health and wellbeing

Emotional health and wellbeing describes how we think, feel and relate to ourselves and others and how we interpret the world around us. Good emotional health and wellbeing is not only about feeling confident and happy, it is also about being positively engaged with the world and having a strong sense of self-esteem.

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state might suggest an underlying problem. They may, for example, become withdrawn or over-friendly, fearful, aggressive or oppositional, or have low self-esteem. If a member of staff has any concerns about a pupil's mental health, they should contact the Health Centre (see emotional wellbeing policy). If it is suspected that this is also a safeguarding concern, then it should be reported to the safeguarding team. The DSL meets with the school health advisor weekly to discuss any concerns regarding pupils' mental health.

Pupils are taught about mental wellbeing and resilience through the PSHE curriculum and tutorials. They are signposted towards sources of support both in and out of school and are encouraged to seek help whenever they need it. The school will offer guidance with accessing external agencies for specialist support and treatment where needed.

Responding to the child who discloses (i.e. talks about) abuse

Staff/volunteers are asked to:

- Listen carefully to what is said
- Avoid showing shock or disbelief if at all possible
- Observe the child's demeanour
- Find an appropriate opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others, i.e. do not promise to keep the matter confidential or a 'secret'

- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace and do not interrupt if the child is freely recalling events. There is no need to find a 'witness', as this could inhibit the child from saying more
- Ask questions for the purposes of clarification only, and avoid asking leading questions or pressing for more information. Questions should be asked in an open manner (remember TED: Tell me, Explain, Describe).
- Reassure the child, if necessary, that she/he has done the right thing in telling
- Reassure the child that what has happened is not his/her fault.
- Explain what will happen next and with whom the information will be shared
- When recording what was said, use the child's own words – noting the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
- Record any noticeable non-verbal behaviour.
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions.
- If appropriate, draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or injury.
- Where physical injuries have been observed, these will be carefully noted but not photographed. The staff member will not ask to see injuries that are said to be on an intimate part of the child's body.
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Any disclosure or indicators of abuse will be reported verbally to the DSL or Deputy straight away or, where they are not available and concerns are immediate, ensure a referral is made without delay to Children's Social Care in the area in which the child and family live.
- Where the child already has an allocated social worker, that person or a manager or duty worker in the same team will be contacted promptly.
- If the child can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to social workers, they will be asked for their views. It will be explained that whilst their view will be taken into account, the school has a responsibility to take whatever action is required to ensure the child's safety and that of other children.

- All records should be passed to the DSL immediately – NO copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer. This includes the original notes as these constitute prima facie evidence and may be needed by a court. Records should be kept by the DSL in a secure, designated file separate from the child's academic records.
- The advice of the LADO will be sought by the DSL about when communication with the individual involved and the parents/carers involved should take place and by whom. The DSL will decide whether to contact parents at this stage, judging whether do so

is likely to place the child at risk of harm from their actions or reactions - for example in circumstances where there are concerns that a serious crime such as sexual abuse, domestic violence or induced illness has taken place. The reason for the decision not to contact parents first will be recorded in the child's school child protection file.

- A child protection referral from a professional cannot be treated as anonymous.
- Where there is no disclosure by a child but concerns are accumulating, such as in relation to neglect or emotional abuse, the DSL will ensure that all information is brought together and that s/he makes a professional judgement about whether to refer to outside agencies.
- It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the DSL and Child Protection Agencies, following a referral from the DSL.
- A member of staff who reports concerns to the DSL should expect some feedback, although confidentiality might mean in some cases that this is not detailed. If the member of staff is not happy with the outcome s/he can press for reconsideration and if following this, s/he still believes the correct action has not been taken, can refer the concerns directly to social workers.
- Dealing with a disclosure from a child, and a child protection case in general, is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff/volunteer should, therefore, consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the DSL.

Taking action

Where physical injuries have been observed, these will be carefully noted but not photographed. The staff member will not ask to see injuries that are said to be on an intimate part of the child's body.

Any disclosure or indicators of abuse will be reported verbally to the DSL or Deputy straight away or, where they are not available and concerns are immediate, ensure a referral is made without delay to Children's Social Care.

Where the child already has an allocated social worker, that person or a manager or duty worker in the same team will be contacted promptly

A written record will then be made of what was said, including the child's own words, as soon as possible and given to the DSL.

If the child can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to social workers, they will be asked for their views. It will be explained that whilst their views will be taken into account, the school has a responsibility to take whatever action is required to ensure the child's safety and that of other children.

The DSL will decide whether to contact parents at this stage, judging whether to do so is likely to place the child at risk of harm from their actions or reactions - for example in circumstances where there are concerns that a serious crime such as sexual abuse, domestic violence or induced illness has taken place. If in any doubt, the DSL or staff member will call the duty worker first and agree with him/her when parents/carers should be contacted and by whom. The reason for the decision not to contact parents first will be recorded in the child's school child protection file.

A child protection referral from a professional cannot be treated as anonymous.

Where there is no disclosure by a child but concerns are accumulating, such as in relation to neglect or emotional abuse, the DSL will ensure that all information is brought together and that s/he makes a professional judgement about whether to refer to outside agencies.

A member of staff who reports concerns to the DSL should expect some feedback, although confidentiality might mean in some cases that this is not detailed. If the member of staff is not happy with the outcome s/he can press for reconsideration and if following this, s/he still believes the correct action has not been taken, will refer the concerns directly to social workers.

Responding to concerns reported by parents or others in the community

Occasionally parents or other people in the local community tell school staff about an incident in or accumulation of concerns they have about the family life of a child who is also a pupil at the school.

If the incident or concern relates to *child protection*, the information cannot be ignored, even if there are suspicions about the motives for making the report. Members of staff must therefore pass the information to the DSL in the usual way.

It is preferable if the parent / community member who witnessed or knows about the concerns or incident makes a call to Children's Social Care themselves as they will be better able to answer any questions. They can ask for their name not to be divulged if a visit is made

to the family. The DSL will advise accordingly and later confirm that this referral has been made.

If the parent / community member refuses to make the referral, the DSL will clarify that s/he has a responsibility to do so and will also need to pass on to social workers how s/he is aware of the information.

This process also applies to parents / community members who are also school staff. As professionals who work with children they cannot be anonymous when making the referral but can ask for the situation to be managed sensitively and, if necessary, for their identity to be withheld from the family if it will cause difficulties in their private life.

Remember

Any suspicion or concern that a child or young person may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm MUST be acted on. Doing nothing is not an option. Any suspicion or concerns will be reported without delay to the DSL or Deputy. During term time the DSL and/or a Deputy should always be available for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. However, if for whatever reason they are not available, anyone can make a referral to Social Care, not just the DSLs.

It is important that everyone in the school is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for making a judgement about whether or not abuse has occurred and should not conduct an 'investigation' to establish whether the child is telling the truth. That is a task for social workers and the Police following a referral to them of concern about a child. The role of school staff is to act promptly on the information received.

This applies regardless of the alleged 'perpetrator': whether the child talks about a family member or someone outside school, a member of staff or another child/pupil.

A careful record will be made of what has been seen/heard that has led to the concerns and the date, time, location and people who were present. As far as possible, staff should record verbatim what was said and by whom. The record will be passed to the DSL.

The DSL will keep a record of the conversation with the duty worker and other social workers, noting what actions will be taken and by whom, giving the date and time of the referral. The referral will be confirmed in writing on the inter-agency referral form as soon

as possible and at least within 48 hours. Any pre-existing assessments such as through the Common Assessment Framework should be attached.

A school child protection file will be started in the child's name, where the child is not already known to social workers. If a file already exists, the new information will be added to the chronology.

Response from Children's Social Care to a school referral

- Referral
  Once a referral is received by the relevant team, a manager will decide on the next course of action within one working day. When there is concern that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, this will be decided more quickly and a strategy discussion held with the Police and Health professionals and other agencies as appropriate (section 47 Children Act 1989).

  The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be told within three working days of the outcome of the referral. If this does not happen s/he will contact the duty worker again.

- Assessment
  All assessments should be planned and co-ordinated by qualified social worker. They should be holistic, involving other professionals, parents/carers and the children themselves as far as practicable. Assessments should show analysis, be focused on outcomes and usually take no longer than 45 working days from the point of referral. School staff have a responsibility to contribute fully to the assessment.
- Section 47 Enquiries (regarding significant harm)
  The process of the investigation is determined by the needs of the case, but the child/young person will always be seen as part of that process and sometimes without parents' knowledge or permission. On occasions, this will mean the child/young person is jointly interviewed by the Police and social workers, sometimes at a special suite where a video- recording of the interview is made.
- The Child Protection Conference
  If, following the Section 47 enquiries, the concerns are substantiated and the child is judged to be at risk of significant harm, a Child Protection Conference (CPC) will normally be convened. The CPC must be held within 15 days of the first strategy discussion and school staff will be invited to attend - normally the Headmaster or

DSL. This person will produce a written report in the correct format. This will be shared with the child/young person and his/her family before the conference is held. A copy will also be sent to the person chairing the initial CPC at least 24 hours in advance.

If the DSL disagrees with the decisions made by social workers regarding the outcome of the referral, the conclusions of the assessment or any actions taken, the matter should be discussed and if necessary escalated to more senior managers *particularly* if the child's situation does not appear to be improving.

Responding to allegations or concerns about staff or volunteers

All children and adults have a fundamental right to be protected from harm.

Abbotsholme School has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and create and maintain a safe learning environment (section 157 of the Education Act 2002). Schools should identify where there are child welfare concerns and take action to address them, in partnership with other organisations where appropriate, and in accordance with local inter-agency procedures.

Rigorous recruitment and selection procedures and adhering to the school's code of conduct and safer practice guidance will mean that that there are relatively few allegations against or concerns about staff or volunteers. However, if a member of staff, or any other person, has any reason to believe that another adult in school has acted inappropriately or abused a child or young person, they will take action by reporting to the Headmistress (or the DSL where the Headmistress is not immediately available). Even though it may seem difficult to believe that a colleague may be unsuitable to work with children, the risk is far too serious for any member of staff to dismiss such a suspicion without taking action. Any allegation made about a member of staff working on supply or a contractor will be handled in the same way as any other allegation and the supply agency / their employer will also be informed so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

If the allegation/concern is about the Headmistress (or the DSL and the Headmistress is not immediately available) or where there would be a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the Headmistress, the person with concerns will contact the Proprietor's onsite representative or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the Local Authority Safeguarding and Standards Team.

1. In all cases of allegations against staff or volunteers, the Headmistress and Nominated Proprietor for Safeguarding will contact the LADO without delay and follow the correct procedures as set out in the separate school policy. This must comply with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2024.
2. The procedure aims to ensure that all allegations are dealt with fairly, consistently and quickly and in a way that provides protection for the child, whilst supporting the person who is the subject of the allegation.
3. In the event that a member of staff has a general concern about malpractice within the school, reference can also be made to the school's Whistleblowing policy.
4. The policy should be read in conjunction with the Whistleblowing Policy and Code of Conduct for Abbotsholme School Staff.
5. The school will:

(i) Report promptly to the DBS any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used for regulated activity and who has caused harm or posed a risk of harm to a child.

(ii) Make a referral to the TRA where a teacher has been dismissed (or would have been if they had not resigned) and a prohibition order may be appropriate.

Definition of low-level concerns

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, **and**
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

ABBOTSHOLME SCHOOL

Sharing low-level concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency where the school's values and expected behaviour are set out in the staff code of conduct and are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff and where all staff are encouraged to share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns they may have about other staff
- Empowering staff to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to identify any weakness in the school's safeguarding system

The school actively encourages all members of the school community, staff, pupils and parents to participate in discussions about school life and actions that can be taken to improve life in school for all. Pupils are encouraged to talk openly within their tutor groups, year groups and PSHE lessons and to discuss any worries they may have. Forums are available for all to communicate their views and raise concerns such as the staff committee, school council and APA. Senior staff make themselves available to listen to the views and concerns of anyone in the school community. Parents are invited to come in to school on a Friday afternoon for a parents' café which offers an opportunity to talk to the Headmistress and other parents.

Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the Headmistress will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- To the individual involved and any witnesses

The Headmistress will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the school's staff behaviour policy.

Staff are encouraged to come forward with any concern they may have, no matter how small it may seem. They may choose to discuss this with the DSL in the first instance or in situations where the Headmistress is not immediately available. All low-level concerns raised in this way will be passed on to the Headmistress at the earliest possible opportunity.

Reports of low level concerns should be recorded in writing, with details taken of the concern, the context in which it arose and action taken. The name of the person reporting should be noted, respecting wishes to remain anonymous as far as reasonably possible. Records of low level concerns should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and responded to. Where a pattern of behaviour is identified, the school should decide on a course of action. This might be internal disciplinary procedures, or referral to the LADO if the harms threshold is met. The school must consider if there are any wider cultural issues in school that enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of recurrence. The rationale for all decisions and actions take must be recorded.

Children with disabilities

1. Research shows that children with disabilites are especially vulnerable to abuse both online and offline and adults who work with them need to be vigilant and take extra care when interpreting apparent signs of abuse or neglect.
2. Additional barriers can exist for adults who work with such children, in respect of recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation. These can include:
    - Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
    - Children with SEN and who are disabled and those who are or identify with LGBTQIA+ can be disproportionately impacted by things like peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) – without outwardly showing any signs; and
    - Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers to manage or report challenges
3. These child protection procedures will be followed if a child with disabilities discloses abuse or there are indicators of abuse or neglect. There are no different or separate procedures for such children.
4. Staff responsible for intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times and in accordance with the school's intimate care policy.

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Safer Working Practice

1. All adults who come into contact with children at this school will behave at all times in a professional manner which secures the best outcomes for children and also prevents allegations being made in relation to sports provision as well as performing arts.
2. We promote a culture whereby members of the school community should feel able to raise with the Headmistress, the DSL, or any member of the leadership team, any concerns about staff conduct. If the reporter feels that the issue has not been addressed they should contact someone outside the school, such as the proprietors or the LADO.

Training

Child protection will be part of induction for all staff, proprietors, and volunteers new to the school; they will also be given a copy of this policy, the Staff Code of Conduct, details about the role of the DSL and part one of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education: information for all school and college staff' plus Annex B if they work directly with children. Safeguarding induction includes online safety and roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, the school's response to children missing from education, the behaviour policy, acceptable use of IT and guidance on staff/pupil relationships, low-level concerns and communications, including the use of social media. The school has a duty of care to its employees. The school hopes to create a caring and listening environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in doing so. If staff should experience a situation that is an emergency or extremely urgent they may make a direct referral to external agencies.

Child Protection raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff/volunteers in schools.

- If a child confides in a member of staff/volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff/volunteer tells the child in a manner appropriate to the child's age/stage of development that they cannot promise complete confidentiality – instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe.
- Staff/volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.

- All staff, both teaching and support, have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies when appropriate.

This will be followed up by basic child protection training that equips individuals to recognise and respond appropriately to concerns about pupils. The depth and detail of the training will vary according to the nature of the role and the extent of involvement with children.

A proportional risk based approach will be taken regarding the level of information provided to all temporary staff and volunteers.

Staff who do not have designated responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including the Headmistress and qualified teachers, will undertake suitable refresher training at regular intervals, including prevent and online safety, at least annually in line with DDSCP recommendations.

In addition, all staff members will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates from the DSL as required, but at least annually. This will include learning from local and national serious cases when the learning becomes available.

When DSLs and Deputies take up the role they will work towards ensuring they attend enhanced (Level 3) training –These are updated at 2 yearly intervals after that.

In addition, their knowledge and skills will be updated regularly - at least annually. These individuals are expected to take responsibility for their own learning about safeguarding and child protection by, for example: taking time to read and digest newsletters and relevant research articles; attending training offered on matters such as domestic abuse, attachment and child sexual exploitation and FGM and also attending local DSL forums etc.

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children will undertake appropriate training where required.

A number of senior staff have completed safer recruitment training and at least one of these will be part of any appointments panel.

Members of the advisory board attend training, briefings or other input which equips them to understand fully and comply with their safeguarding duties as set out in '*Keeping Children safe*

in Education' 2024. Attendance includes those who also work with children and have attended child protection training in that role.

Parents will be made aware of the many ways in which they may assist the school. They will also be advised that most online abuse takes place at home and not at school.

Raising concerns about safeguarding practice at Abbotsholme

We promote a culture where any staff or volunteers feel able to raise with the Headmistress any concerns about safeguarding or child protection practice.

Any issues which they have not been able to resolve with the Headmistress should be reported to the proprietors in the first instance. If they are still not satisfied they should approach the Director for Children's Services or, if the issue relates to the conduct of or allegation against a member of staff, should contact the designated officer (also known as the LADO).

Staff should refer to the school's Whistleblowing policy for more information or can use the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline: 0800 028 0285.

Information for parents and carers

1. The school's DSL will ensure that parents or carers of pupils have an understanding of the responsibilities placed on the school and staff for safeguarding children. This will generally be carried out through publication of information on the school's website.
2. We are committed to keeping pupils safe. Our first priority is our pupils' welfare and we will usually discuss with parents any concerns we have about their child. There might be rare occasions, however, when we have to provide information to or consult other agencies such as Children's Services Social Care before we contact parents. This will include situations where we judge that to tell parents first will or might put the child at risk of significant harm.

Where a strategy discussion is required, or police or children's social care services need to be involved, the DSL or Headmistress will not contact parents until all agencies have been consulted and have agreed what information can be disclosed. Parental consent is not required for a referral where the DSL believes a pupil is at risk of significant harm.

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Parents or carers will be informed about the progress of the case, and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process.

Our responsibilities are set out in this policy, and are in conjunction with the following policies:

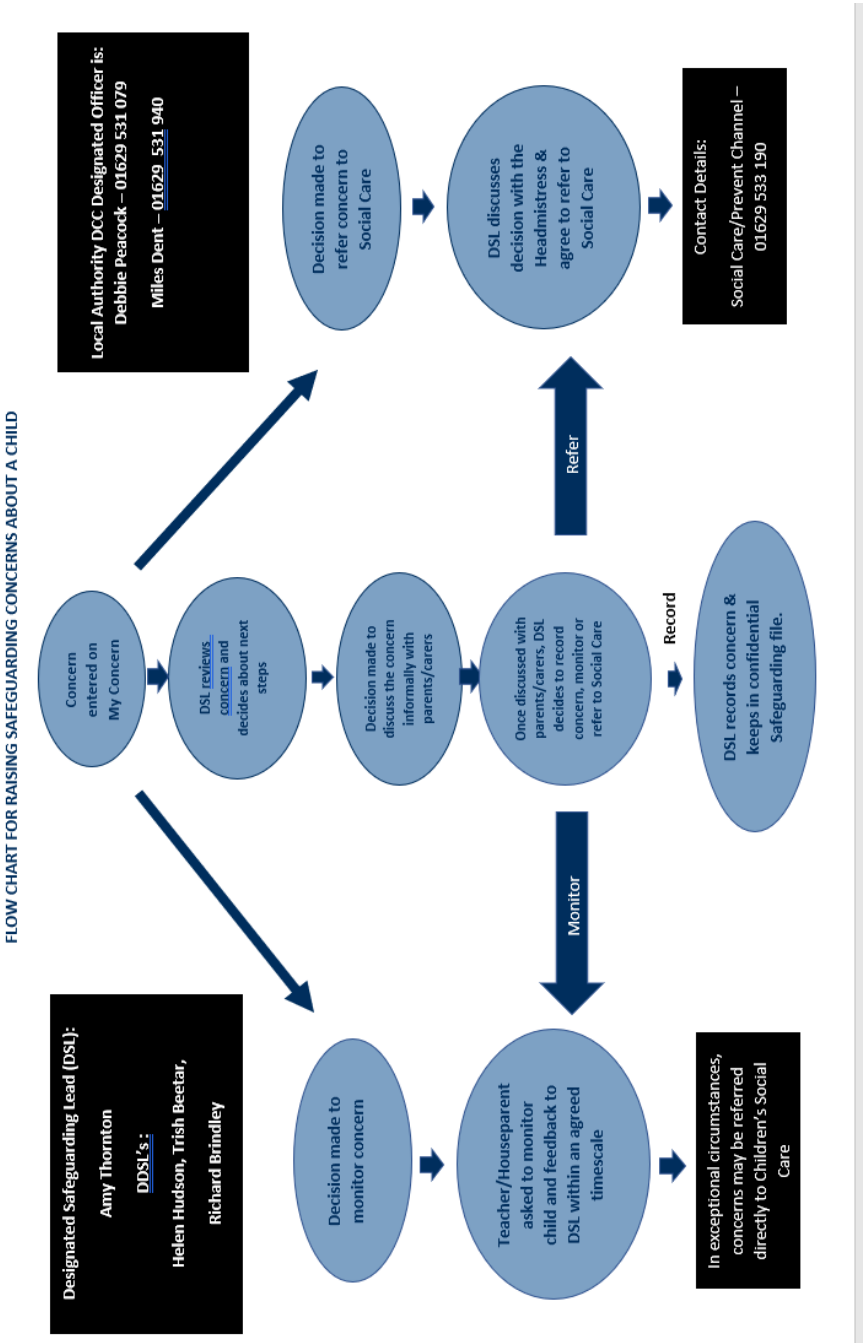
- Procedures for allegations against staff
- Confidentiality Policy (Staff)
- Physical contact, Use of force and restraint policy
- Use of cameras, mobile phones and personal electronic devices in school including EYFS by staff and visitor's policy
- Staff behaviour policy
- ICT policy
- Acceptable Pupils Use of Mobile Phones and E Devices Policy
- Missing Pupil Procedure

The following flow diagrams in Appendix 1 and 2 are used in support of the above policy:

Safeguarding Raising Concerns and Safeguarding Flow Chart.

ABBOTSHOLME SCHOOL

Appendix 1



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Appendix 2

