

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy



COOMBE HOUSE
SCHOOL

Policy owner:	Designated Safeguarding Lead	Adoption Date: October 2022
Approved by:	Board of Directors	
Review cycle:	Annual	
Last reviewed on:	April 2025	
Changes made:	Removed Jemma Taylor as Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	
Next review due by:	September 2025	



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Useful Contacts

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Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership

[Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership - Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership \(pdscp.co.uk\)](http://pdscp.co.uk)

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If a child is at risk of immediate harm staff should not delay and should ring 999.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Preface

Coombe House School is an independent special school where the vast majority of pupils are and will continue to be Dorset residents and are therefore subject to the safeguarding procedures held by the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

As a result, this policy is primarily based upon the model policy provided by Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership to ensure efficient alignment with their local procedures.

The only significant deviation from the model policy is within the sections detailing procedures for the management of allegations against staff, including supply staff, volunteers, and other adults. Coombe House School is located in Wiltshire and as such follows the relevant guidance for the above from Wiltshire local authority.

Named Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Nominated Safeguarding Director	Chair of Board of Directors
Martin Marshall	Rebecca Smith*	Katie Kennedy	Ian Comfort

* Deb Gill, Kevin Coleman, Jodie Goodbody, Rachel Scott and Yvonne Sherlock are also trained as DSL's but are not nominated as such unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Personnel with designated responsibility in relation to allegations against staff

Designated Senior Manager	Deputy Designated Senior Manager	Chair of Board of Directors	Nominated Director
Darren Harte	Martin Marshall	Ian Comfort	Katie Kennedy

Dates the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is reviewed.

Review Date	Changes made/Details of action plan	Due Date	By Whom
October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy amended to more closely align with local procedures and model policies used by Dorset. • To use a simpler policy template to aid understanding by stakeholders. • To ensure that procedures with Wiltshire LA for allegation management are clear. • To ensure that changes put in place by the school following 'Keeping Children safe in Education' (KCSiE) 22 A (Annex F) are more clearly articulated. 	Next Review Aug 23 (Anticipating KCSiE 23 in Sept 23)	A. Holder (Managing Director) K. Kennedy (Safeguarding Director)
January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated with new Headteacher name and details. 	Next Review Aug 23 (Anticipating KCSiE 23 in Sept 23)	A. Holder (Managing Director) K. Kennedy (Safeguarding Director)
July 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates to reflect KCSiE 23. • Addition of Deputy Head as Deputy DSL. • Clarity re non-Dorset pupils. 		M. Marshall (DSL) A. Holder (Managing Director) K. Kennedy (Safeguarding Director)

April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated details of Deputy DSL. 		A. Holder (Managing Director) K. Kennedy (Safeguarding Director)
June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review and update to reflect changes to KCSiE 2024 and details of Deputy DSL included. 		M Marshall (DSL)

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1. Introduction

Everyone at Coombe House School who comes into contact with children and their families have a role to play in safeguarding children. School staff are particularly important in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as we are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children to prevent concerns from escalating. We will work with children's services, the police, health services and other relevant agencies to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

This policy applies to all staff, including the leadership team, teachers, volunteers, trainee teachers, non-teaching staff, contractors and/or apprentices, working in or on behalf of the school.

It provides information about the actions the school expects from all staff, it will be updated annually and known to everyone working in the school and the Board of Directors. It will be available to parents on request and via our website.

This policy is compliant with the following statutory guidance for schools and colleges:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015.
- the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2019.

Everyone working in or for our school must share the objective to help keep children and young people safe by:

- Providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn and develop in our school setting.
- Identifying and responding to 'early help' needs of children and families. As outlined in 'What schools should look out for' (para 18 KCSiE 2024)
- Identifying children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in our school setting.
- Maintaining a culture of vigilance and an attitude of 'It could happen here'.
- Being aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected and or recognise their experiences as harmful. (KCSiE 2024)
- Staff will demonstrate professional curiosity and consult with the DSL about their concerns.

2. Our school's commitment

All Staff at Coombe House School are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our pupils. Each pupil's welfare is of paramount importance. Throughout this document 'children' includes everyone under the age of 18. We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility at our school regardless of their position within the team and all will ensure they use a child-centred approach to ensure that they consider what is in the best interests of the child at all times. In the academic year 2024/25, Coombe House School has no plans to work with pupils who are over 18 and therefore subject to procedures to safeguard adults. Whilst unlikely, if this changes, suitable policies and procedures shall be put in place prior to their admission.

2.1. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance 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 the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

(This definition is outlined in KCSIE 2023/2024)

2.2. Child Protection

Refers to procedures and actions undertaken regarding children who are at risk of Significant harm or have been significantly harmed.

We recognise that:

- Some children may be especially vulnerable to abuse including those missing education, those experiencing extra-familial risk or with a special educational need or disability.
- Children who are abused or neglected may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way; subsequently whilst at school their behaviour may be disruptive and/or challenging.
- Children can be both victims and perpetrators of abuse.
- Children who harm others may have been maltreated themselves.
- Allegations against staff should be taken seriously, however careful and safe our recruitment practices are.

2.3. Our Approach to Safeguarding Children

- We will ensure all staff are aware of their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities.
- All staff have appropriate training to ensure they can identify children and young people where concerns about their safety and welfare arise.
- All staff will be aware of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm.
- All staff will be aware that certain behaviours such as (but not limited to) those linked to drug taking and or alcohol misuse, unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines) radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) should be considered as safeguarding concerns. (KCSiE 2024)
- All staff and pupils will know they can raise issues with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (or Deputy DSL's) and that their concerns will be taken seriously.
- There will always be a DSL (or a nominated Deputy DSL) on site.
- All DSL's (or Deputy DSL's) will have appropriate training and understanding of how to manage concerns in an effective way with the welfare of children and young people as their primary focus.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. All staff and volunteers will:

- Fully comply with the school's policies and procedures, attend appropriate training, including mandatory annual training, and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead of any concerns.
- Contribute towards procedures that ensure that where a child is suffering or is likely to suffer from harm, a referral to Children's social care will be made Read and indicate they understand the sections of KCSiE 2024 that are relevant to their role.

3.2. Those in certain roles:

- The Senior Leadership team, DSL's, Deputy DSL's and the Board of Directors will read and sign to say they have read the full guidance of 'Keeping Children safe in Education 2024'.
- The Board of Directors will ensure that the mechanisms are in place to support all staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities to safeguarding all pupils in our school.
- The Board of Directors will undertake annual safeguarding training.

4. Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (DSL)

4.1. Referrals

The DSL will:

- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise within our school and have access to the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (PDSCP), guidance, and procedures and for allegations management and Wiltshire's Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP).
- Consult with and/or refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to Children's Social Care and maintain a record of all referrals.
- Liaise with the Headteacher to advise of any issues and ongoing investigations and ensure there is always cover for the DSL role.
- Attend and contribute to safeguarding and child protection meetings as appropriate.
- Monitor and support Child in Need, Child Protection plans and Early Help, Team around the family (TAF) and Team around the child (TAC) plans.
- Keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA (Local Authority) children's social care or the Prevent program etc. (KSCiE 2024)
- Shall keep the leaders and the Board up to date with safeguarding matters as appropriate. Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at all School Quality Committee meetings.

4.2. Training

The DSL will ensure that all adults:

- Recognise how to identify signs of abuse and know when it is appropriate to make a referral to children's social care.
- Have knowledge of the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership and Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP) Escalation Policies and the role of the Wiltshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Have a clear understanding of the process involved for a child protection case conference and be prepared prior to attending and contributing to these.
- Have access to and understand the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Have safeguarding induction training and receive regular updates.
- Access resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses at least every two years.

4.3. Raising Awareness/Communication with Stakeholders

- Everyone in the organisation, including visitors, will be familiar with how to raise safeguarding concerns and will be reminded via visitor inductions, regular briefings, staff training and signage around school.
- The DSL will ensure the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is up to date and reviewed annually and work with the Board of Directors regarding this.
- Parents and carers shall be made aware of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which will alert them to the fact that referrals may be made by the DSL or a member of school staff, to ensure they are clear of the schools safeguarding responsibilities and to reduce the risk of conflict occurring later.
- Where a child leaves the school, the DSL shall ensure the child protection file is copied for the new setting in a timely manner and transferred to the new school separately from the main pupil file, as well as ensure the pupil's Social Worker (where applicable) is informed. .
- The DSL will complete the Annual Audit return for the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership, to ensure that the school is meeting its requirements under statutory guidance.
- If requested, the DSL will complete the Annual Audit return for the Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership, to ensure that the school is meeting its requirements under statutory guidance.
- The Nominated Safeguarding Director shall work with the DSL to undertake an additional audit annually. This shall typically be the audit recommended by the NSPCC.

5. Role of the Headteacher

Our Headteacher will ensure that:

- The policies and procedures adopted by the Board of Directors are implemented and followed by all staff.
- All pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online, sex and relationship education and extra-familial risks including exploitation.
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the DSL and the deputy to carry out their roles effectively, including the attendance at initial and review child protection conferences, core group and other necessary meetings.
- All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice regarding children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with the agreed Whistleblowing procedures.

- They complete Safer Recruitment training as soon as is practicable upon appointment and will subsequently maintain this training.
- The procedure for managing allegations against staff is known to all staff and displayed clearly around the school.
- Operate the procedure for managing allegations effectively and refer relevant concerns to the Wiltshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the DBS and any other relevant professional body, in line with guidance from KCSiE 2024.
- A senior manager is appointed to deal with allegations against staff in the absence of the Headteacher.
- They undertake regular monitoring and quality assurance of the work of the DSL/DDSL.

6. Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors will ensure that:

- The school has a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy with procedures in place that are in accordance with statutory guidance and locally agreed inter-agency procedures.
- The policy is made available to parents and carers on request and via the school website.
- The school operates safer recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers who work with children.
- The school follows the Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership guidance, and the statutory guidance within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers.
- A senior member of the school's leadership team is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding (and deputy).
- There is a Nominated Safeguarding Director and a suitable DSL and DDSL within the school.
- Ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction.
- Staff comply with the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (PDSCP) guidance.
- They remedy, without delay, any deficiencies, or weaknesses regarding safeguarding arrangements.

- The Nominated Safeguarding Director is responsible for overseeing the liaison with the Wiltshire LADO and/or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Headteacher, ensuring appropriate action to minimise any further possible risk to the children in the school.
- Where services or activities are provided on the school premises by another group or individual, the school will check they have appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard children and have 'hire agreements' with external groups and individuals, in line with KCSiE 2024.
- Where the school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs (para 171 KCSiE 2024)
- PREVENT guidance will be followed to ensure any hire agreements with external groups and individuals are not promoting extremist ideologies.
- Policies and procedures are reviewed annually and provide information to the Local Authority as part of the Annual Audit about how the above duties have been discharged.

7. Supporting Children and Working in Partnership with Parents

- Staff at the school recognise that children's welfare is paramount. Good safeguarding, child protection practice and securing good outcomes for children rely on a positive, open, and honest working partnership with parents/carers.
- Whilst we may, on occasion, need to make referrals to Children's Social Care without consultation with parents, we will make every effort to maintain a positive working relationship with them by acting transparently whilst fulfilling our duties to protect children, where this is appropriate and in line with guidance.
- Children will be given an explanation, appropriate to their age and understanding of what action is taken on their behalf and why.
- We will endeavour to preserve the privacy, dignity and right to confidentiality of the child and parents/carers whilst discharging our statutory duties.
- The DSL will determine which members of staff 'need to know' personal information for the purpose of supporting and protecting the child on the principle of those working directly with children will need to know, in accordance with our data protection procedures.
- Staff will not be enabled to share any relevant information further without the expressed permission of the DSL.

8. Information about Safeguarding for Pupils

Through the curriculum and lessons pupils are taught to understand and manage risks they may encounter during school life and work out with staff how these risks may be overcome, considering their wishes and feelings.

- They are regularly reminded about online safety and bullying procedures and taught how to conduct themselves and behave in a responsible and respectful manner.
- Opportunities are provided for children to learn about democracy and the rule of law, positive relationships, and safe choices.
- All pupils know there is a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) responsible for their safety and welfare, who this is and that they have a right to speak to this member of staff, or any other, if they are worried or concerned.
- Pupils are reminded that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, but that they will be listened to and informed of what steps can be taken to protect them from harm and that feedback will be sought, so that their views about actions are known.
- There is a display in the school identifying the DSLs and children are made aware of this.

9. A Partnership Approach

We recognise that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies that are partners of the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership, the Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership and other home local authorities for the minority of pupils who are not Dorset residents.

There is a joint responsibility on all these agencies to share information to ensure the safeguarding of all children, working together to secure positive outcomes.

10. Identifying children who may be at risk or may have been significantly harmed

There are four core categories of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. Teachers, staff, and volunteers in school are well placed to observe any physical, emotional, or behavioural signs which indicate that a child may be at risk of or is suffering significant harm. Relationships between staff, pupils, parents/carers, and the public which foster respect, confidence and trust can encourage the early disclosure of abuse, and/or school staff being alerted to concerns.

10.1. Definitions and Indicators of Abuse

- **Harm** means ill-treatment or impairment of health and development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- **Development** means physical, intellectual, emotional, social, or behavioural development.
- **Health** includes physical and mental health.

- **Ill-treatment** includes sexual abuse and other forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.
- **Abuse, Neglect** and Exploitation (KCSiE 2024) are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, another child, children, or young people.

10.2. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, 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.

10.3. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 as far 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.
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability,
- Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- Serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

10.4. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse. 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).

- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caretakers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

10.5. Sexual Abuse

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 or watching sexual activities.
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- Grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Adult males do not solely perpetrate sexual abuse, women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

11. Taking action to ensure that children are safe at school and home

All staff must read and follow the statutory guidance for schools and colleges, [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSiE\) 2024](#)

It is not the responsibility of school staff to investigate or determine the likely truth of any concerns. Accordingly, all concerns regarding the welfare of pupils are recorded and discussed with the DSL or the Deputy DSL prior to any discussion with parents/carers.

11.1. All School Staff Must Immediately Report

- Any suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play.
- Any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious.
- Behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered harm.
- Any concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment.
- Concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect.

- Any significant changes in a child's presentation, including non-attendance.
- Any hint or disclosure of abuse about or by a child or young person.
- Concerns that the child is showing an interest in topics / themes of concern (e.g. radicalisation / extreme views / online influencers).
- Concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g., those living in a household with children present).
- Information which indicates that the child is living with someone who does not have parental responsibility for them for a period of more than 28 days (this is known as private fostering).

12. Responding to Concerns

Concerns or information that a child has been harmed or may be at risk of harm may be received from pupils, parents/carers, other professionals, or members of the public. The school recognises that those who communicate such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully with whom they will share. Accordingly, all staff will manage concerns with sensitivity.

Such information cannot remain confidential, and staff will immediately communicate what they have learned to the DSL and make a record using clear, straightforward language.

Staff will not investigate but will, wherever possible, listen, record, and pass on information to the DSL in order that they can make an informed decision of what to do next.

12.1. In the event of a concern, staff will:

- Listen to and take seriously any communication or information that a child may be at risk of harm.
- Clarify the information without asking leading or probing questions.
- Verbally notify the DSL/DDSL of the concern and make a prompt written record of what the child has said using MyConcern.
- Try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature using 'TED' (tell me, explain to me, describe to me) rather than 'Did x hit you?'.
- Try not to show signs of shock, horror, or surprise.
- Will not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the child.
- Explain sensitively to the child or young person that they have a responsibility to pass the information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- Reassure and support the child or young person as far as possible.
- Not promise secrecy.
- Explain that only those who 'need to know' will be told.
- Explain what will happen next and that the child will be involved and updated as appropriate.

13. Confidentiality

Information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It is a key factor identified in many Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR) where poor information sharing has resulted in missed opportunities to take action that keeps children and young people safe. (Ref: 2018. Information sharing. Advice for practitioners providing Safeguarding Services to children, young people, parents, and carers. HM Government).

The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 does not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe. (Ref: 2018. Information sharing. Advice for practitioners providing Safeguarding Services to children, young people, parents, and carers. HM Government).

In addition (Para 92 KCSiE 2024), see the DfE (Department for Education) Data Protection guidance for schools, which will help school staff, governors and trustees understand how to comply with data protection law, develop their data policies and processes, know what staff and pupil data to keep and follow good practices for preventing personal data breaches.

Our School has clear confidentiality procedures. However, where there is a concern that the child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration (as stated above).

The school will ensure:

- information is shared with Children's Social Care and/or Police where the child/young person is or may be at risk of significant harm.
- pupil's and/or parent's/carer's confidentiality is respected.
- that any information shared is necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure.

14. Pupil Information

The school's record-keeping procedures for child welfare and child protection is consistent with the requirements of the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership guidance.

To keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, our school requires accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives.
- Names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above).
- Emergency contact details (if different from above).
- Details of any persons authorised to collect the child from school (if different from above).
- Any relevant court orders in place including those, which affect any person's access to the child (e.g., Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions etc.).
- If the child is or has been subject to a Child in Need, Child Protection or Care Plan
- Name and contact detail of GP.
- Any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will collate, store, and agree appropriate access to this information. All child protection documents will be kept separately from the child's main school file. The child protection file will be stored securely and only accessible to the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. These records will be transferred when a child moves to another school or setting, clearly marked 'Child Protection, Confidential, for attention of Designated Safeguarding Lead'.

15. Action by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in their absence)

Following any information raising concern, the DSL will:

- Consider the child's wishes and feelings, but not promise confidentiality.
- Consider any urgent medical, safety and welfare needs of the child.
- Make an immediate referral via a discussion **with Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD)** if there has been a disclosure and/or allegation of abuse or are clear grounds for concerns about the child's safety and well-being (for non-Dorset residents, their local authority equivalent will be contacted).
- Wherever possible, talk to parents / carers, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place a member of staff or others at risk.
- Consider whether to make a referral to social care because a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and if this needs to be an immediate action.

- Contact the social worker if that agency is working with the family.

OR

- Decide not to make a referral at this stage but retain the information in written notes on the child's safeguarding file.
- Consider if Early Help support will be helpful to the child and family at this time. If this is appropriate referrals will also be progressed via the **Dorset - Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD)** (for non-Dorset residents, their local authority equivalent will be contacted).

All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented.

15.1. Action following a Safeguarding Referral

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or other appropriate member of staff will:

- Maintain contact with the child's allocated Social Worker (where applicable).
- Contribute to any Strategy Discussion and/or Strategy Meeting as required.
- Provide a report for, attend, and contribute to any initial or review Child Protection Conference.
- Provide a written report to the conference organiser, 3 days prior to the Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) or 5 days prior to the Review Child Protection Conference (RCPC).
- Where appropriate, share the content of this report with the parent/carers, prior to the meeting.
- Attend Core Group Meetings for any child subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- Attend TAF meetings to be part of a plan for the child/children.
- When a child on a Child Protection Plan moves from the school or goes missing, immediately inform the child's Social Worker.

15.2. Dealing with Disagreements and Escalation of Concerns

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies and professionals. Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard children. Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the actions, or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard a child. Dependent on the circumstances, the relevant local authority escalations policy should be used.

Professional disagreements can arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around:

- Levels of need.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- The need for action.
- Progressing plans and communication.

Where school staff consider that the practice of other professionals is placing children at risk of harm, they must be assertive, act swiftly and ensure that they challenge the relevant professionals in line with this policy and be aware that:

- The safety of children and young people are the paramount consideration in any professional activity.
- Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child is protected.
- As a guide, professionals should attempt to resolve differences through discussion within one working week or a timescale that protects the child from harm (whichever is shortest).
- Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or other appropriate member of staff will:

- Contact the relevant line manager in Children's Social Care if they consider the response to a referral has not led to the child being safeguarded.
- Contact the relevant line manager in Children's Social Care if they consider that the child is not being safeguarded by the child protection plan.
- Use the relevant local authority escalation policy if this does not resolve the concern.

16. Safer Recruitment and Selection

16.1. Coombe House School pays full regard to the statutory guidance for schools and colleges, Keeping Safe in Education 2024 - Part three, Safer Recruitment. We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the school and who is therefore likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult. This includes volunteers, supervised volunteers and staff employed by contractors.

16.2. Safer recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic/vocational qualifications, obtaining professional references, checking employment history, undertaking an appropriate online search and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would

make them unsuitable to work with children. The shortlisted candidates will also be subject to an online search alongside undertaking interviews and checks with the Disclosure and barring service (DBS).

16.3. We will ensure our compliance with statutory regulations and guidance as follows:

- Enhanced DBS and barred list checks will be undertaken for all posts that are deemed regulated activity, and for all other posts an enhanced DBS check will be undertaken unless they are supervised roles that are deemed not to meet the definition of regulated activity.
- Our school is committed to keeping an up-to-date Single Central Record which details the range of checks conducted on our staff.
- All new appointments to our school workforce who have lived outside the UK will be subject to additional checks as appropriate.
- Our school ensures that supply staff have undergone the necessary checks and will be made aware of this Safeguarding Policy.
- Identity checks must be conducted on all appointments to our school workforce before the appointment is made as part of the recruitment process.
- Staff responsible for recruiting and appointing must be suitably qualified and have completed training on recruitment and selection, with a minimum of one safer recruitment trained staff member sitting on interview panels.

The school has separate recruitment and selection procedures that outline its approach in greater detail.

17. Safe Practice

Our school will comply with the current 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings' (2022) ensuring that its guidance regarding conduct is known to all staff, visitors and volunteers who come into the school.

<https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/>

Safe working practice ensures that pupils are safe and that all staff:

- Are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Work in an open, honest, and transparent way.
- Work with other colleagues where possible in situations that could otherwise be open to question.
- Discuss and/or take advice from the Headteacher or DSL over any incident which may give rise for concern.

- Record any incidents or decisions made.
- Apply professional standards respectfully in relation to diversity issues.
- Be aware of information-sharing and confidentiality policies.
- Are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

18. The use of 'Reasonable force'

We do not routinely use any form of physical contact to manage our pupils however there may be occasions when the school staff have to physically intervene using 'reasonable force' solely to prevent them from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

This may include guiding a child to safety by the arm or breaking up a fight to prevent violence or injury and this action should be taken using no more force than is needed. (Pg.42 KCSiE 2023).

Physical restraint is used a last resort, and plans are put in place to ensure that alternatives strategies to restraint are known to staff.

School staff will familiarise themselves with the Department for Education's guidance regarding use of reasonable force in school. 'Use of Reasonable force, Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies' July 2023 and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2024.

School staff will follow the school's Behaviour Policy, which offers additional guidance regarding reasonable force.

The school will offer training to staff in appropriate use of physical intervention and/or restraint that is proportionate to the needs of the pupils that attend at the time.

19. School Safeguarding, Child Protection Training and Staff Induction

The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and Nominated Safeguarding Director will undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and refresher training at two yearly intervals. All other school staff, including non-teaching staff, will undertake appropriate induction training and child safeguarding training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities in full. All staff will refresh their child safeguarding training annually.

The school will maintain a register of who has undertaken training and when.

All staff (including temporary staff, volunteers, supervised volunteers, and staff who are contractors) are provided with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and informed of school's safeguarding arrangements on induction. The school will maintain a register of who has received this information and when.

20. Extended School and Off-Site Arrangements

Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures continue to apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site, we will ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and/or other activities, we will ensure that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place.

We will also undertake appropriate and robust risk assessments for the venue, location, and activity to be undertaken in accordance with the school's Risk Assessment protocol.

In line with KCSiE 2024, the school shall deal with allegations relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using the school premises.

21. Allegations made against/Concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors

We adhere to the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) Part 4. Where an allegation is made against any person working in, or on behalf of, the school that he or she has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.
- Behaved or may behave in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

We will respond as set out in the following paragraphs 21.3 – 21.5.

21.1. Action on receiving or identifying an allegation or concern

Any employee or volunteer receiving or identifying an allegation or concern will:

- Treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind.
- As soon as practicable, make a written record of the information including the time, date and place of incident/s, persons present and what was said and sign and date this.
- Immediately report the matter to the Headteacher (unless the allegation or concern is against the Headteacher).
- Where the allegation or concern is about the Headteacher, it must be reported to the Chair of the Board of Directors (Ian Comfort) or the Nominated Safeguarding

Director (Katie Kennedy), whose contact details are published on the first page of this document.

- Where the allegation is about the Headteacher, staff may also discuss the matter with the Managing Director, if that aids the safe management of the immediate situation, as long as it does not unreasonably delay their report to the individuals above.
- If at this stage, the allegation is considered to be a 'low-level concern,' the Managing Director may lead on the management of the matter directly, in line with Para 21.5, but will always notify the Chair of the Board and / or the Nominated Safeguarding Director promptly to ensure there is agreement about the threshold of the concern.
- If the Chair of the Board and / or the Nominated Safeguarding Director are also implicated /conflicted, or if they cannot be contacted promptly, staff should report the allegation directly to Wiltshire LADO. Their contact details are published on the first page of this document.

21.2. Initial Action by the Headteacher (or designated person)

Once informed, the Headteacher will:

- Obtain written details of the concern or allegation as soon as practicable.
- Follow guidance from KCSiE 2024 (para 369 around 'basic enquiries' whilst being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation.
- Contact the Wiltshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 1 working day.
- Inform the Chair of the Board or the Nominated Safeguarding Director of the allegation.

21.3. Subsequent Action by the Headteacher (or designated person)

The Headteacher or designated person will:

- Contribute to the child protection process by attending professional strategy meetings as and when required.
- Maintain contact with relevant agencies, the relevant members of the Board and the HR department.
- Ensure clear and comprehensive records regarding the allegation, any action taken, and the outcome are recorded in incident logs and retained on the staff member's personnel file.
- In consultation with the HR department and LADO, conduct an investigation and if necessary disciplinary procedures, if an allegation indicates the need for this.

- Consider along with Human Resources and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whether a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) should be made and the TRA if the allegation relates to a member of the teaching staff.

Make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity whilst the investigation is being investigated or considered. Whilst we acknowledge that some allegations may be false, malicious, or misplaced, we also acknowledge that they may be well-founded. It is, therefore, essential that all allegations are investigated properly, in line with agreed procedures and that outcomes are recorded. All school staff will maintain a culture of vigilance based on the notion that 'it could happen here'.

21.4. Concerns and or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold

We will ensure that any concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns) will be managed in an open and transparent way to ensure they are dealt with appropriately.

A low-level concern is not insignificant and will be acted on if:

- A member of staff has acted in a manner that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.
- Does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Being over friendly with the children.
- Having favourites.
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy.
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.
- Humiliating pupils.

Staff will be encouraged to use whistleblowing procedures if they have concerns regarding the conduct or behaviour of a colleague and they feel that matter has not been addressed appropriately by the school.

22. Children with special educational needs and disabilities

All schools have a duty to use their 'best endeavours' to identify and support pupils with SEN and meet their educational needs. This is particularly important at Coombe House School, where all pupils have special educational needs.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges, both online and offline. We will

ensure a culture of vigilance that reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's SEND without further exploration.
- The potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, (including prejudice-based bullying) without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these issues.
- They may also be unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content.

The school will consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place. Further information can be found in

- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Services (SENDIASS). SENDIASS offer information, advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. All local authorities have such a service: Find your local IAS service (councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk).
- Mencap - Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people.
- NSPCC - Safeguarding children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and NSPCC - Safeguarding child protection/deaf and disabled children and young people (As outlined in KCSiE 2024).

23. Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT)

This section remains under review, pending the outcome of the gender questioning children guidance consultation, and final gender questioning guidance documents being published (due in 2024).

Whilst staff at our school know that a child or young person may be LGBT it is not itself an inherent risk factor, however we recognise that LGBT children may be targeted by other children. We will ensure that we respond immediately to any reported concerns and will ensure the child has a trusted member of staff (stated on every young person's Support Plan) they can go to if they are worried.

As such, when supporting a gender questioning child, schools should take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with the child's parents (other than in the exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child), including any clinical advice that is available and how to

address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying. The School would refer to the Guidance for Schools and Colleges in relation to Gender Questioning Children (Dec 2023), when deciding how to proceed. (KCSiE 2024)

24. Mental Health

All of the staff, through their safeguarding training, are aware that mental health problems can in some cases be an indicator that a child is or has suffered abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Staff should not attempt to make a mental health diagnosis. However, they are in a good position to observe the children daily and therefore identify those whose behaviour indicates they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

When children have suffered adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) this may impact on them throughout their lives. This can also then have an impact on their behaviour, their ability to learn and affect their mental health.

If staff have a concern about the mental health of a child, they will follow school policy and report their concerns to the DSL.

[Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](#) is a good source of additional guidance.

25. Further Information on Safeguarding Issues

Safeguarding covers more than the contribution made to child protection processes in relation to individual children. It also encompasses issues such as pupil health and safety, bullying, arrangements for meeting the medical needs of children, including first aid, school security, drugs and substance misuse, gang related activity and promoting positive behaviour.

Below are some of the issues that all staff at our school take seriously and will act in line with the safeguarding policy to ensure children are safe.

25.1. Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences, or perceived differences by children. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level bullying can have a significant effect on a child's wellbeing and in rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people.

All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying must be reported and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents receive a copy of the anti-bullying procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in the (PSHE) curriculum. If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the Headteacher and the DSL will consider implementing safeguarding procedures.

For further information please see the DFE guidance, 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying', ([Preventing bullying - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying)), [Cyber bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/publications/cyber-bullying-advice-for-headteachers-and-school-staff) and our school's Anti-bullying Policy.

25.2. Online Safety

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful material.
- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users.
- **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm.
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

The school recognises that its pupils will use mobile devices and computers at some time. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication, and education. However, we know that some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, behaviours, web cam photography or face-to-face meetings. Cyber-bullying by pupils via emails and texts will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

Chatrooms and social networking sites are the most obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful content and behaviour, which pupils are not allowed to access in school. Some pupils will undoubtedly 'chat' on mobiles or social networking sites at home and the school encourages parents to consider measures to keep their children safe when using social media.

The school has an Online Safety Procedures that is known to all staff and pupils.

25.3. Filters and monitoring

The Board of Directors will do all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school IT system. As part of this process, the Board of Directors will ensure there are appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and have reviewed procedures to reflect KCSiE 2024 and the new filtering and monitoring standards called 'Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges' (updated May 2024).

Whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, taking into consideration the age range and number of pupils, and how often they access the IT system. The appropriateness of any filters and monitoring systems will be informed in part by the school's consideration of the Prevent Duty.

A source of additional guidance is (<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>).

Whilst filtering and monitoring are an important part of the online safety picture for schools and colleges to consider, it is only one part. The Board of Directors consider a whole school approach to online safety which involves education through PSHE and guidance for staff when supporting pupils when using mobile technology.

The Board of Directors will ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place, ensuring that "over blocking" does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught regarding online teaching and safeguarding.

The Board of Directors will ensure that, as part of the requirement for staff to undertake regularly updated safeguarding training and the requirement to ensure children are taught about safeguarding including online, that online safety training for staff is integrated, aligned, and considered as part of the overarching safeguarding approach.

The Board of Directors must complete safeguarding training promptly upon appointment to their role and the Chair and Safeguarding Lead Director must undertake training every 2 years.

25.4. Information and support

There is a wealth of information available to ensure our school/college keep children safe online.

These include:

- The UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) promotes online safety in schools and Colleges. It has developed a series of Questions that School Governors should ask to help ensure their school leaders are keeping children safe online.
- The NSPCC, which provides online advice regarding online safety arrangements.
- The South West Grid for Learning, which provides advice on all aspects of a school or college's online safety arrangements.
- KCSiE 2024 Annex B.
- More detail on the types of content and activity that is now illegal is outlined in the Online Safety Act 2023. [Online Safety Act: explainer - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/online-safety-act-2023-explainer)

25.5. Photography and Images

Most of the people who take, or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely understandable and acceptable reasons. However, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have safeguards in place.

To protect pupils, we will:

- Seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for e.g., on our website or in newspapers or publications).
- Seek parent/carer consent for the same.
- Use only the pupil's first name when publishing an image.
- Ensure pupils are appropriately dressed when photographed.
- Only use school equipment to make images of children (no personal devices are permitted for this purpose).
- Encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

25.6. Children absent from care, home, and education

All staff **understand** that a child who is persistently absent from school may be at risk of a range of safeguarding issues, criminal exploitation, including neglect child sexual abuse, child sexual and criminal exploitation.

School staff will follow the local guidance available on the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership website and where reasonably possible, the school will hold at least two emergency contact numbers for each pupil.

The DSL is aware of changes within KCSiE 2024 regarding management of absent and missing children.

25.7. Elective Home Education (EHE)

Where parents or carers inform our school that they wish to educate their child at home, they must do so in writing. Our school will then inform the Elective Home Education administrator (EHE) at Dorset Council who will implement the 'Elective Home Education' procedure. For non-Dorset pupils, their local authority equivalent shall be contacted.

Where a pupil has an EHCP (which will typically be the case), the school will also consider this as a prompt to initiate an Annual Review.

25.8. Child on child abuse

Our school recognises that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse) and it can take many forms. It can happen both inside and outside of school/college and

online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports. This can include (but is not limited to):

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- Abuse in an intimate personal relationships between children.
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this can include an online element which facilitates/threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
- Upskirting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment (see below).

Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

Staff must also be aware that even if they have had no reports of these incidents, it may be the case it is just not being reported and should therefore remain alert to the fact it can happen in our school.

26. Sexual violence and harassment between children in schools and colleges

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any sex. They 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 sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to find the experience stressful and distressing. This may adversely affect their educational attainment.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

In developing our response, we are aware that despite the above, it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and more likely that sexual harassment will be perpetrated by boys.

Coombe House School ensures that all staff are aware of the importance of:

- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter,” “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”.

- Challenging behaviours (which are potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts, vaginas, and penises. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.
- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can be especially vulnerable. Disabled and deaf children are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in SEND children.

We will ensure we have plans in place to support all of the children at our school, that they are protected, and any additional needs are taken into consideration as part of this process.

In developing our response to emerging issues of sexual violence and harassment between children we will seek support from our children's social care and safeguarding partners and will always take action in accordance with the guidance within KCSiE 2024. 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.

27. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Staff have regular training to ensure they recognise and understand that both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse. This abuse can occur when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, which may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

Coombe House School is aware that due to its rural location and the local geographical context around CCE and CSE, the risks of exploitation are higher than might be present in other settings. The school is therefore particularly proactive in its approach to ensure high quality safeguarding practices are followed for this area of risk.

27.1. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting, or pickpocketing.

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

Both girls and boys are victims CCE however the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys.

27.2. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse 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 clothing.

It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex.

Some children may not realise they are being exploited for example they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

We will ensure that we work with children's social care, the police, and any other professionals, following local processes and procedures to ensure we are meeting the needs of the child.

27.3. County Lines

As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

28. Assessment of risk outside the home (previously contextual safeguarding)

Assessment of risk outside of the home is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm and risk beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.

Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Therefore, children's social care practitioners and school staff need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices.

Assessment of risk outside of the home, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.

If we are concerned a child is being exploited in an extra-familiar context, as previously outlined, we will follow the local procedures and if necessary, consult or refer to children's social care.

29. So-called 'honour-based' Abuse (HBA)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) includes incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, which includes female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Staff in our school will remain alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or may have already suffered HBA.

The DSL is aware of the legislation updated in February 2023, referred to in KCSiE 24 regarding forced marriages and the management thereof.

If staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they will speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead).

29.1. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Mandatory Reporting Duty for Teachers

Staff will remain aware of the risks of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), which comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. Concerns regarding this should always be made to the DSL/Deputy DSL.

There is a statutory duty for teachers to report to the police where they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under eighteen. Whilst the teacher would pass this information to the DSL it is their individual responsibility to report this to the police.

30. Domestic abuse/violence and Operation Encompass

Coombe House School are an Operation Encompass School.

We ensure that all staff have up to date training and understanding of the impact of domestic abuse/violence. Staff are aware of the wide range of behaviours and that this may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents that may occur. Abuse can be, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional.

We recognise that children can be victims of domestic abuse/violence. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse/violence at home and/or suffer domestic abuse/violence in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. (ACES)

Operation Encompass operates in all police forces across the UK, it assists the police and schools to work together to provide emotional and practical help to children who are victims of Domestic abuse/violence. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse/violence, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult of the incident, before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that our school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and we can put immediate support to be put in place, to meet the child's needs, this can vary from providing equipment for use in school and school uniform, meals etc.

31. Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism

Note: Care will be taken to consult latest guidance following a number of updates that are likely to come following the publication of a new definition of extremism on the 14 March 2024.

From 1 July 2015 all schools must have regard to the statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, paragraphs 57-76 of the guidance are in relation to schools and childcare providers, and states that schools should have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

We will fulfil our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty. It is essential that staff can identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and know what to do when they are identified. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of schools' wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g., drugs, gangs, neglect, sexual exploitation), whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences.

We aim to build pupils' resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views. The Prevent Duty is not intended to stop pupils debating controversial issues. On the contrary, the school will provide a safe space in which children, young people and staff can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments. We will be mindful of the risk of children being exposed to extremist materials via the internet.

If we are concerned, we will follow safeguarding procedures and refer to the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership's guidance on Prevent.

https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/p_sg_ch_extremism.html?zoom_highlight=prevent+duty

31.1. Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the

individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the school or college may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

32. Children with Family members in Prison

There are around 200,000 children in England and Wales who have a parent sent to prison each year. This places the children at risk of poor outcomes, including poverty, stigma, and isolation. They may also suffer from poor mental health.

The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO) provides information for professionals who work with the offender and their children to assist in mitigating the negative consequences for the children.

33. Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) will make a referral into the local housing authority should they be concerned that a child in our school is about to become or has become homeless (this does not replace the referral to Children's Social Care when a child/children are at risk).

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse, and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live.

In most cases school and college staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. When a child of 16/17 years is homeless and is estranged from parents a referral should be made to Children's Social Care immediately.

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