



TRUST IN LEARNING (ACADEMIES)

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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Approval By: Trust Board	Lead: Director of SEND, Safeguarding and Inclusion	Review date: Autumn 2026
As part of the review process, this policy/procedure has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.		



History of Policy Changes:

Date	Page	Change	Reason for Change
01/09/2020		Updated and re-written	To reflect Covid-19, new statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, and for ease of reading To reflect new statutory guidance
01/02/2021		Updated and re-written	To reflect new statutory guidance
01/09/2022		Updated and re-written	To reflect new statutory guidance
01/09/2023		Updated and re-written	To reflect new statutory guidance
01/01/2025		Updated and re-written	To reflect new statutory guidance
16/09/2025	All	Wording changed throughout to 'the school'	To reflect Trust-wide use of policy
16/09/2025	29	Multi agency contacts now hyperlinked	To ensure the policy uses up-to-date multi agency contact information provided by Bristol City Council's Safeguarding in Education.
20/11/25	All	School-specific procedural information moved to the Annex	To support Trust publishing of policies
20/11/25	8	Amended online safety responsibility of board	To reflect new statutory guidance
20/11/25	10, 30	Harm Outside the Home (HOTH) replacing Child Exploitation. New detail added on HOTH.	To reflect new BCC guidance
20/11/25	11	School Performance Board replacing governing board	To reflect TILA terminology
20/11/25	14	Additional safer recruitment preventative actions added.	To reflect updated EYFS statutory guidance
20/11/25	16, 31	Forced Migration added as a key safeguarding area. New detail added in Part 2.	To reflect new BCC guidance
20/11/25	17	Reference to Flow Chart Appendix 1	Clarity of information
20/11/25	18	Detail added around increased safeguarding risks of vulnerable pupils	To reflect new statutory guidance
20/11/25	18	Updated local partnerships detail	To reflect new statutory guidance
20/11/25	all	'Safer Options' changed name to 'Safer Connections'	To reflect local update
20/11/25	20	Consideration of vulnerability when assessing risk of absence	To reflect new statutory guidance
20/11/25	21	Additional detail added around child-on-child abuse	To reflect new statutory guidance
20/11/25	23	Additional information on the role of the Mental Health Lead and impact of vulnerability on mental health.	To reflect new statutory guidance
20/11/25	25	Addition of section on mobile phones and smart technology	To reflect new statutory guidance
20/11/25	27	Updated flow charts	To reflect updated BCC guidance
20/11/25	28	Updated link to BCC contacts	To reflect updated BCC guidance
20/11/25	32	Updated Serious Youth Violence section	To reflect updated BCC guidance

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Part 1: POLICY

1. Statement of Intent

This document sets out the policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection within Trust in Learning Academies (the Trust).

Trust In Learning (Academies) (TILA) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. We believe that all children have the right to grow up in a safe, caring environment, free from harm and abuse. We will always act in the best interests of the child.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and this policy outlines the principles and procedures which ensure that all children within Trust in Learning Academies are effectively safeguarded and that any concerns about a child's safety or well-being are addressed promptly and effectively.

2. Values and Principles

This Trust Policy is set out with the following principles at its core:

Trust in Learning Academies is a family of schools each with a distinctive identity, collaborating to strengthen and support each other. We deliver high quality education with evidence-informed approaches to teaching, learning and the curriculum. Inclusion is at the heart of all we do. We actively listen to the voices of our pupils, staff and communities. Every school makes deliberate choices to be sustainable and globally-focused.

The Trust vision is to:

- Inspire pupils to trust in learning and achieve their full potential
- To empower pupils to have confidence in their successes to make a positive contribution to the world
- To remove barriers to learning and help transform the lives of our pupils

This Policy has been framed in accordance with the guidance on best practice from the Department for Education (DfE). Any data collected, stored or managed as a result of this policy is in accordance with UK and EU law, and in line with the Trust's ethos and values.

3. Objectives and Scope

This policy applies to all staff, governors, volunteers, and anyone working on behalf of TILA, covering both primary and secondary school children.

The specific aims of this policy are to outline:

1. **Clear expectations:** define what safeguarding means for everyone in the school community, including staff, governing body, pupils, and their families.
2. **Safe culture:** contribute to the establishment of a robust safeguarding culture built on shared values across the Trust; where pupils are listened to and treated with dignity.
3. **Awareness of risks:** support a contextual safeguarding approach, recognising that each setting's site can be a location where harm can occur.
4. **Knowledge and skills:** set expectations for developing knowledge and skills within the Trust's community (staff, pupils, parents/carers) to the signs and indicators of safeguarding issues and how to respond to them.
5. **Early intervention:** support early identification and help for vulnerable pupils to ensure their safety and well-being.
6. **Partnerships:** promote working together with pupils, parents/carers and local agencies to keep children safe.

Trust In Learning (Academies) works with Local Safeguarding Partnerships (Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership and South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership). This policy sets out its statutory duty to co-operate, follow and comply with published arrangements as set out by local safeguarding partnerships.

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2025) Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Looked After and Previously Looked After Policy
- Low Level Concerns Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

4. Responsibilities and Accountabilities

4.1 Role of the Trust Board

The Board of Trust in Learning (Academies) holds a strategic role in ensuring that safeguarding is a core priority across all schools within the trust. Their responsibilities include:

- **Named Trust board member:**
A named Trust board member oversees safeguarding and child protection, ensuring compliance with laws and guidance, including online safety, and ensures this policy is updated annually or when significant changes occur.
- **Ensuring there is a named Link Governor in each school with the following safeguarding duties:**
 - Collaborate with the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure production of an annual safeguarding report and the required biennial safeguarding audit.
 - Ensure the DSL is a senior leader and has the necessary time, resources, and support to:
 - Address any identified weaknesses in safeguarding promptly
 - Provide robust and effective training for the school community.
 - Ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, in line with statutory guidance on relationships, sex, and health education.
- **Staff and contractor checks:**
 - Ensure that the Trust performs appropriate checks on all staff, volunteers, and contractors as per statutory guidance.
 - Ensure the Trust has robust procedures for managing concerns or allegations against staff, including low-level concerns.
- **Online safety standards:**
 - Ensure that the Trust implements filtering and monitoring practice, in line with Department for Education statutory standards. This should be reviewed at least annually, or if DfE standards are updated.
 - By communication with Central IT, have an understanding of what schools require in order to meet DfE filtering and monitoring standards.
- **Student Support Systems:**
 - Ensure that there are effective systems in place for pupils to report safeguarding concerns, express their views, and provide feedback.
 - Ensure that each school has systems in place to prevent and address child-on-child harm and mental health concerns.
 - Regularly review the effectiveness of online safety practices.
- **Designated Teacher**
 - Ensure a designated teacher is appointed in each school to support the educational achievement of children in care and other care arrangements.

4.2 Responsibilities of the Trust Central Team

- To ensure that the policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- To ensure the policy is well communicated to all Headteachers.
- To ensure that the policy is regularly reviewed.

4.3 Responsibilities of the Headteacher

- To ensure the implementation of and compliance with current policy and procedures at school level
- To monitor systems, resources, impact and actions related to the policy
- To ensure the policy is well communicated and staff understand their role in its implementation
- To handle any complaints at school level which arise through this policy.

4.4 Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL's contact details are found in the Annex.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is senior staff member with lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the setting. They work in collaboration with the headteacher and strategic leads to address welfare, safeguarding and child protection concerns affecting pupil's attendance, engagement, and achievement.

Their responsibilities include:

- **Leadership and oversight:** The DSL is responsible for leading safeguarding initiatives and ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are understood and implemented across the school. They manage the work of any Deputy DSLs. They provide guidance and direction to all staff on safeguarding matters.
- **Managing referrals:** The DSL must ensure that any concerns about a child's safety are appropriately reported and managed. This includes making referrals to children's social care and other relevant agencies when necessary, and ensuring prompt action is taken to protect children.
- **Record Keeping:** The DSL is responsible for maintaining detailed, accurate, and secure records of all safeguarding concerns and referrals. This includes documenting any discussions, decisions, and actions taken in response to concerns.
- **Transitions and file transfer:** The DSL is responsible for transferring safeguarding/child protection files within 5 days of a pupil moving to a new setting.
- **Liaison with external agencies:** The DSL serves as the main point of contact for external agencies, including children's social services and the police. They must build and maintain effective working relationships with these agencies to support the safety and well-being of children.

- **Supporting staff:** The DSL provides support and advice to staff on safeguarding issues, ensuring they feel confident and competent in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities. This includes offering supervision and guidance on challenging cases.
- **Training and development:** The DSL must ensure that they, along with their deputies, receive appropriate training to remain competent in their role. They are also responsible for facilitating safeguarding training for all staff, ensuring it is up-to-date and aligned with current legislation and guidance.
- **Raising awareness:** The DSL should promote a culture of safeguarding within the school, ensuring that safeguarding is a priority in all school activities. This includes raising awareness of specific safeguarding issues such as harm outside the home (HOTH), radicalisation, and online safety.
- **Policy development and review:** The DSL collaborates with the board and senior leadership team to develop and review safeguarding policies and procedures, ensuring they are fit for purpose and effectively implemented.
- **Ensuring a child-centred approach:** The DSL must ensure that all safeguarding actions are child-centred, in the best interests of the child and promoting their safety and welfare at all times.

By fulfilling these responsibilities, the DSL plays a critical role in safeguarding pupils and ensuring a safe and supportive environment within TILA.

4.5 Responsibilities of school leadership

- To ensure staff are inducted into the procedures surrounding this policy and any updates
- To provide training to ensure policy compliance
- To hold sessions for parents and pupils as required, to ensure the policy is understood

4.6 Responsibilities of all staff

- To uphold the whole school approach to the policy through modelling expected standards and utilising appropriate procedures
- To keep up to date with policy changes over time
- To promote a collaborative and inclusive ethos where all pupils can thrive
- To feed back to school leaders where concerns may arise in the implementation of the policy.

4.7 Responsibilities of parents

- To support the implementation of the policy with the child, as appropriate
- Where a parent has feedback on the implementation of the policy, to raise this directly with the school while continuing to work in partnership with the school.

4.8 Responsibilities of pupils

- To uphold school rules and expectations and thereby comply with the implementation of the policy
- To feed back on the implementation of the policy through appropriate means, such as school council, to school staff.

5. Safeguarding Definitions

Safeguarding is defined 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.

Child Protection is defined in the Children Act 1989 (s.47) as when a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. Under statutory guidance and legislation action must be taken to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

6. Professional Safeguarding Expectations

All staff members play a crucial role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Understanding the statutory guidance:**
 - All staff must read and understand Part 1 of "Keeping Children Safe in Education". Staff working directly with children should also read Annex B.
 - Staff must be familiar with this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and other associated policies.
 - Staff must know the safeguarding response for children missing from education.
 - Staff must understand the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- **Contact information:**
 - Staff must know how to contact the DSL, any deputies and the Chair of the School Performance Board (SPB).
- **Identifying and protecting vulnerable learners:**
 - Staff must be able to identify vulnerable pupils and take action to keep them safe, following school safeguarding procedures. Staff should adopt a mindset of professional curiosity, questioning and exploring any behaviours or situations that do not seem right. This involves being vigilant and attentive to any signs of distress or harm.
 - All staff are responsible for creating a safe, supportive, and respectful environment where children feel valued and listened to. This includes maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.
 - Staff should be aware of the risks associated with online activities and provide guidance and support to pupils on how to stay safe online.

- **Implementing support:**
 - As required, staff will need to participate in support for vulnerable pupils.
- **Recording, reporting and information sharing:**
 - Staff must record concerns accurately and promptly using the school's safeguarding procedures.
 - Any concerns about safeguarding practice must be reported following TILA's Low Level Concerns and Whistleblowing Policies.
 - While maintaining confidentiality is important, staff must understand that safeguarding concerns must be shared with the appropriate individuals, such as the DSL, even if the child requests confidentiality.
- **Engagement in training and development:**
 - Staff should actively participate in safeguarding training and development opportunities to keep their knowledge and skills up to date.

7. Safeguarding Training

7.1 All staff

In addition to reading this policy at least annually, all staff must have the following training:

- **Induction training:** all staff must undergo safeguarding and child protection training during induction, which includes understanding expectations, roles and responsibilities around online safety including in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- **Annual refresher training:** staff must receive annual updates on safeguarding and child protection, including online safety, through formal training, email bulletins, and staff meetings.
- **FGM awareness:** all staff must complete training on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and understand the legal duty for mandatory reporting.
- **Prevent Duty training:** all staff must complete PREVENT awareness training to meet legal expectations under the PREVENT Duty.
- **Whistleblowing and escalation:** staff training must include guidance on the Whistleblowing Policy, the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer, and how to escalate concerns.

7.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies

The DSL and any deputies will receive formal training to equip them with necessary knowledge and skills, including online safety. This training will be updated every two years.

The DSL and deputies will keep their knowledge current by:

- Liaising with the Local Safeguarding Partnership.
- Receiving updates via e-bulletins.
- Attending DSL network meetings.
- Reviewing safeguarding bulletins.

7.3 Additional Training

Safer recruitment training: at least one person on every hiring panel must have completed safer recruitment training, as per School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT): SLT members must understand their roles in local safeguarding to ensure they consider safeguarding in managing behaviour, inclusion, SEND, attendance, and exclusions.

Designated Teacher for children in care: must receive appropriate training to support the educational achievement of looked after and previously looked after children.

Mental Health Lead: should have access to suitable training.

Whole school safeguarding approach: training on safeguarding topics in Part B, including online safety and filtering responsibilities, should be part of the overall school safeguarding strategy.

Reasonable force and positive handling: appropriate staff should receive training on the use of reasonable force and positive handling.

8. Safeguarding in the Curriculum

Trust in Learning (Academies) is dedicated to teaching pupils about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. We understand that some pupils may need a more personalised or contextualised approach, especially vulnerable learners, abuse victims, and some pupils with SEND.

Key components include:

- **Statutory guidance:** follow guidance on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and health education; and where applicable, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.

- **PSHE Education:** explore topics including self-esteem, emotional literacy, assertiveness, resilience to radicalisation, e-safety, and bullying.
- **Online safety:** implement filters and monitoring systems that ensure that ‘over-blocking’ does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what learners can be taught about online teaching and safeguarding.
- **Responsive curriculum:** adjust the curriculum based on safeguarding incident patterns identified by the DSL and safeguarding team.
- **Parental engagement:** involve parents and carers in curriculum discussions.
- **Pupil input:** allow pupils to contribute to the curriculum through platforms such as the school council.

9. Safer Recruitment and Safer Working Practice

9.1 Safer Recruitment – see *TILA Safer Recruitment Policy*

Trust in Learning (Academies) follows the safer recruitment guidelines from ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (Part 3). The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework contains its own requirements for safer recruitment (p24-27). TILA’s safer recruitment processes include:

- **Application scrutiny:**
 - Verifying identity and academic/vocational qualifications.
 - Obtaining professional and character references, which cannot be from a family member, and including for volunteers.
 - Checking previous employment history.
 - Ensuring candidates have the necessary health and physical capacity for the role.
 - Resolving any concerns about references before confirming an appointment.
- **Safety checks:**
 - Conducting online safety checks for shortlisted candidates.
 - Performing appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), including barred list and prohibition checks. Overseas checks are done if needed, depending on the role.
- **Recruitment materials:**
 - Including a statement about Trust in Learning (Academies) commitment to safeguarding and promoting learner wellbeing in all recruitment materials.

9.2 Use of Reasonable Force – see *De-escalation and Positive Handling Policy*

'Reasonable force' involves using minimal physical contact to restrain and control pupils, based on the staff member's professional judgement and the situation. It will be determined by individual circumstances and the vulnerability of any pupil with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) will be considered.

The use of reasonable force will be minimised through positive, proactive behaviour support and de-escalation and will follow government guidance.

Any use of positive handling is thoroughly documented. Incidents are reviewed to find ways to prevent recurrence, involving the pupil and their family.

Procedures for dealing with concerns where a professional may pose a risk to pupils and handling low-level concerns are detailed in Appendix 2 and in the Low-Level Concerns Policy.

9.3 Whistleblowing Procedures – see *TILA's Whistleblowing Policy*

Staff have access to the following whistleblowing channels if they cannot raise issues with the senior leadership team or feel their concerns aren't addressed:

- **General Guidance:** [Advice on Whistleblowing](#).
- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline:** for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally they can call 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk

10. Key Safeguarding Areas

The following topics are themes that can impact on children and families. Trust in Learning (Academies) has a statutory duty to ensure that they are addressed in each school:

- Child-on-child abuse:
 - **Bullying** (includes cyberbullying and discriminatory types)
 - Abuse in intimate relationships between children (also known as **teenage relationship abuse**)
 - **Physical abuse** including hitting, shaking, biting, hair pulling and kicking or otherwise causing physical harm. This may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse.
 - **Sexual violence** such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault. This may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual abuse.
 - **Sexual harassment** such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment,

which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.

- **Non-consensual sexual activity:** forcing sexual actions without consent. For example, forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
 - **Image sharing:** involves consensual and non-consensual sharing of explicit images (sexting).
 - **Upskirting:** taking intrusive photos under clothing without consent with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm.
 - **Initiation/hazing** type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).
- Children in the court system
 - Children affected by parental offending/imprisonment
 - Children Missing from Education (CME) including persistent absence
 - Cybercrime
 - Domestic abuse
 - Forced migration
 - Harm outside the Home (including Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation, county lines, modern day slavery and trafficking)
 - Homelessness
 - Honour-based abuse (Including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)
 - Online safety
 - Mental health and wellbeing
 - Preventing radicalisation (The Prevent Duty).
 - Serious youth violence.
 - Substance misuse.
 - Private fostering.
 - Young Carers.

Further information can be found in:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Annex B)
- NSPCC website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>
- Bristol Safeguarding in Education website for local resources: <https://www.bristolsafeguardingineducation.org/>

Part 2: PROCEDURE

11. Reporting concerns

All staff should record and report concerns to the DSL/Deputy DSL in a timely way, using the school reporting procedure, detailed in the Safeguarding Annex. In the case that a pupil is in immediate danger, staff should phone the police.

The flow charts in Appendix 1 detail the decision-making process to take in deciding how to report a concern. All **staff** are aware of and follow the procedures to respond to a concern about a child. This includes responses to child-on-child harm and learners who present with a mental health need. Staff record concerns on CPOMS.

The school will treat all safeguarding concerns seriously and will ensure an appropriate response is implemented in a timely manner.

12. Information sharing

The school is committed to having due regard to relevant data protection principles which allow for sharing (and withholding) personal information as provided for in the [Data Protection Act 2018](#) and [UK General Data Protection Regulations](#). This includes how to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal and should be treated as 'special category personal data'.

Staff are aware that:

- 'Safeguarding' and 'individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data.
- Practitioners will seek consent to share data where possible in line with [Information Sharing for Safeguarding Practitioners 2024](#).
- It is recommended that staff should read the [Department for Education Data Protection Guidance for Schools](#).

There may be times when it is necessary to share information without consent for example:

- when to gain consent would place the child at risk,
- by doing so will compromise a criminal investigation,
- when it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent,
- or, if by sharing information it will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner, but it is not possible to gain consent.

There are also times when the school will not provide pupil's personal data, where the serious harm test under legislation is met (by sharing the information the child may be at further risk). When in doubt the school will seek legal advice.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulations do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

13. Monitoring and supporting vulnerable students

The Trust recognises that some pupils are disproportionately vulnerable to an increased risk of abuse (online and offline) and some pupils may face additional barriers in identifying and reporting of abuse. For example, some may be more at risk of harm from specific issues such as sexual violence, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination. This includes pupils with SEND, pupils with certain physical or medical conditions and pupils who have English as an Additional Language (EAL).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs will regularly check on pupils identified as vulnerable. They will triangulate information including attendance, behaviour, academic outcomes, safeguarding records, pupil, staff and family voice to ensure:

- **Early intervention:** quick and suitable actions are taken to keep pupils safe and prevent further harm.
- **Information sharing:** information about vulnerable pupils is shared with teachers and school leaders to support their education.
- **Support for pupils with social workers:** pupils who have or have had a social worker will have their academic progress reviewed and receive extra support to help them achieve their potential.
- **Adjustments for school interventions:** in response to analysis of data and pupil information, appropriate changes are made in how the school responds to challenges pupils are facing.

14. Referral for social care assessment and multi-agency working

The school is part of their local authority's partnership, either Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership or South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership, where they collaborate with other agencies to protect and support children, following the guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. The school follows local protocols for referral and action.

Occasions that warrant a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989:

- If a child is in need (e.g. a young carer or in a private fostering arrangement) under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

- If a child needs protection from significant harm under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Where the DSL is concerned that a pupil meets the threshold for a statutory assessment, they will refer the child to the local authority's children's social care, using the local authority's referral process. If any member of staff is concerned that a pupil meets the threshold for statutory assessment and the DSL/DDSL is unavailable, they can refer to the local authority's children's social care, using the local authority's referral process. Contact details for safeguarding and key agencies can be found in the Annex.

If the pupil already has a social worker, referrals should be made directly with the social worker, or if unavailable, their team manager. For children in care, notification should also be made to the virtual school.

The school will participate in any statutory safeguarding assessments by children's social care, including attending inter-agency meetings such as integrated support plan meetings, child protection conferences, and core group meetings.

Additional considerations:

- **Child protection plans:** if a pupil or their family is involved in a child protection plan or MARAC meeting, the school will help prepare, implement, and review the plan as needed.
- **Reduced timetables for children in care:** if a child in care is placed on a reduced timetable, the school will consult with the virtual school, following local guidelines.
- **Offensive weapons on school site:** if an offensive weapon is suspected or found on school grounds, the school will work with the local authority violence reduction unit (Safer Connections) for an appropriate response.
- **Reporting crime and harm:** staff will call 999 if there is a risk of immediate harm. For other criminal concerns, the DSL/Deputy DSL will refer to the NSPCC's 'When to Call the Police' guidance or contact the local PCSO or School Officer.
- **Serious incidents:** in the rare case of a child death or serious harm, the school will notify the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership as soon as possible.

15. Suspensions, exclusions and commissioning of Alternative Provisions

This section should be read in conjunction with the TILA Suspension and Exclusion Policy, TILA Behaviour Policy and TILA Alternative Learning Provision Guidance.

When deciding to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil, especially if they are identified as vulnerable, the child's welfare must be a top priority. The Headteacher will consider their legal responsibilities and should be aware of the need for early help for pupils who:

- frequently go missing from school, home, or care.

- have had multiple suspensions, are at risk of permanent exclusion, or are in alternative provision.

The school will exercise their legal duties in relation to their interventions. This includes:

- whether a statutory assessment should be considered in line with the principles of Children Act 1989
- that decisions are made in an anti-discriminatory manner in line with the Equality Act 2010 (including having regard to the SEND Code of Practice) and takes into consideration the learner's rights under the Human Rights Act 1998.
- interventions will be consistent with statutory guidance ([School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk))

When suspending or excluding, the following actions will be taken:

- An assessment of need should be undertaken with multi-agency partners where necessary, with a view to mitigate any identified risk of harm (see 13. Monitoring and Supporting Vulnerable Students)
- If the pupil is subject to a child protection plan or where there is an existing child protection file, the school will call a multi-agency risk-assessment meeting prior to making the decision to exclude.
- In the event of a one-off serious incident resulting in an immediate decision to exclude, a risk assessment *must* be completed prior to convening a meeting with governance.

When commissioning Alternative Provision:

The school will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of the pupil and, following TILA's ALP Guidance, will make necessary due diligence checks on the provider to meet the needs of the pupil. Written confirmation from the alternative provider will be obtained including the checks on staff that the school would otherwise perform for our own staff.

16. Absence from school

This section should be read in conjunction with TILA's Attendance Policy.

A pupil missing from education might indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation, or a need for early help. Staff should follow the procedures for handling unauthorised absences and missing children, especially if it happens repeatedly. Following the school's reporting procedures, these incidents should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure an effective safeguarding response. In implementing their response, the safeguarding team will consider vulnerabilities of pupils that mean they are disproportionately at risk of abuse.

The school will adhere to the guidance in Children Missing Education (2016) and from the local authority's education welfare service. This includes notifying the local authority in which the child lives if:

- a pupil regularly fails to attend school
- a pupil is absent without permission for 10 consecutive school days or more, following an agreed schedule with the local authority.

16.1 Elective Home Education

The school will notify the local authority of every pupil where a parent/carer has exercised their right to educate their child at home. Safeguarding files should be shared with the local authority's elective home education service and consideration of whether additional support from children's social care should be made in line with the Children Act 1989.

17. Response to incidents of child-on-child abuse

See flow diagram in Appendix 1 that illustrates this section.

Staff should understand that children can abuse other children, including online. Such incidents must be handled in conjunction with the safeguarding and behaviour policies, with records kept on the child's safeguarding file. Child-on-child abuse can occur inside or outside school or online. Staff must be vigilant to indicators of potential child-on-child abuse; even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, it may still be taking place but not be being reported.

At the school:

- There is a **'zero tolerance'** approach to abuse. Incidents are taken seriously and not dismissed as 'banter', 'having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.
- Even with a zero-tolerance approach, the school educates and takes action to mitigate against a culture that normalises abuse.
- It is understood that child-on-child harm may reflect equality issues as those who may be targeted are more likely to have protected characteristics.
- There is recognition that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators, but that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.
- Early identification of vulnerability to child-on-child harm is made by regular triangulation of information including attendance, behaviour, academic outcomes, safeguarding records, pupil, staff and family voice.

17.1 Reporting concerns about child-on-child abuse

The school has clear systems for learners to report abuse confidently, knowing their concerns will be addressed (see 11. Reporting Concerns).

When a report is made, the school:

- ensures the immediate safety of all involved and provides support for any pupils affected.
- staff listen carefully without judgment, clarifying boundaries and procedures, not asking leading questions and only prompting the pupil, where necessary, with open questions – tell, explain, describe
- assures victims that they're not causing a problem by reporting abuse and must never feel ashamed

- ensures that the pupil's wishes are taken into consideration and any action is taken to ensure safety of the targeted pupil/pupils and other members of the wider setting cohort
- understands children may not feel ready or know how to report abuse or exploitation, and they might not recognise their experiences as harmful. This is particularly the case for pupils with some vulnerabilities including SEND, some physical or medical conditions and EAL.
- does not promise confidentiality, as it is highly likely that information will need to be shared with others.

17.2 Actions to take in relation to sexual violence and sexual harassment

The school takes the following steps when dealing with sexual violence and harassment:

- **Immediate Reporting:** incidents are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL for assessment. The Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool (<https://www.brook.org.uk/education/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool/>) helps assess risk and decide next steps.
- **Proportionate action:** the DSL decides if the case can be handled internally, through early help, or needs other agencies to be involved (14. Referral for social care assessment and multi-agency working).
- **Serious incidents:** regardless of age, sexual violence (rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault) is reported to the police immediately and via 101 (this is on the understanding that the police will take a welfarist approach rather than a criminal justice one). A concurrent referral to social care must also be made. A strategy meeting can be requested where education can explicitly voice concerns of criminalisation in a multi-agency context.
- **Statutory assessments:** as required, referrals for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989 (s.17 or s.47) are made to social care.
- **Online elements:** for reports involving online elements, staff follow government guidance ([Searching, screening and confiscation at school](#) and [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)). Staff should not view or forward illegal images. These documents give guidance on what staff should do when viewing an image is unavoidable.
- **Risk assessments:** safety plans are developed for individual pupils who have been involved in an incident, including for any bystanders. They are reviewed at least every 3 months or every time there is an occurrence of an incident. These involve the pupil and parents/carers and address contextual risks.

17.3 Contextual safeguarding approach to child-on-child abuse

The school will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by taking a contextual approach to safeguarding by

increasing safety in the contexts of which harm can occur – this can include the school environment itself, peer groups and the neighbourhood.

Following any incidents of child-on-child harm, the DSL/DDSL will review and consider whether any practice or environmental changes should be made. This can include making changes to staffing and supervision, making changes to the physical environment and considering the utilisation and delivery of safeguarding topics on the curriculum.

18 Mental health and wellbeing

See flow diagram in Appendix 1 that illustrates this section.

Schools and colleges have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils. Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a pupil has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation, and or may require support.

The school commits to:

- Where possible, appointing a **mental health lead** who can support the development of knowledge and act as a point of expertise, to promote the wellbeing and mental health of pupils. This colleague will have sufficient training in mental health and safeguarding for them to carry out their role effectively.
- **Early identification of vulnerability** to mental health problems by regular triangulation of information including attendance, behaviour, academic outcomes, safeguarding records, pupil, staff and family voice.
- Ensure that **pupils**, including those with additional barriers to reporting concerns, **can report** and share concerns as outlined in 11. Reporting Concerns.
- Ensure that staff follow the **reporting process** outlined in 11, Reporting Concerns and illustrated in *Appendix 1*, to notify the DSL/DDSL, and other relevant inclusion leaders such as the SENCO. This allows them to identify concerns, vulnerabilities and implement appropriate support.
- Staff ensuring the **immediate health and safety** of a pupil who is displaying acute mental health distress. This may require support from emergency services via 999 if the pupil is at risk of immediate harm.
- The DSL deciding if the case can be handled internally or needs other agencies to be involved (14. Referral for social care assessment and multi-agency working).
- Communicating and working with the **pupil and parents/carers** to ensure that interventions are in the best interests of the pupil.
- The DSL will liaise with staff to ensure **reasonable adjustments** are made and develop ways to enable positive educational outcomes.
- Ensure that only appropriately trained professionals attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. **Specialist advice** will be accessed through targeted services or through the locality primary mental health specialists.

19 Responding to allegations of abuse made against professionals

This section should be read in conjunction with the Low-Level Concerns Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

Staff must report any concerns or allegations about a professional's behaviour (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors) where they may have met the harm threshold:

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

Immediate action must be taken:

- Do not speak to the individual it concerns.
- Allegations or concerns about colleagues, visitors, volunteers and contractors must be reported directly to the Headteacher who will follow guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 4).
- If the concern relates to the headteacher, it should be reported to the Chief Executive of Trust in Learning (Academies) who will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and decide on any action required.
- If there is a conflict of interest which inhibits this process of reporting, staff report directly to the LADO.
- If allegations are regarding a member of supply staff, the school will take the lead and progress enquiries with the LADO whilst continuing to engage and work with the employment agency.
- Allegations regarding foster carers or anyone in a position of trust working or volunteering with children should be referred to the LADO on the day that the allegation is reported. The allocated social worker should also be informed on the day. The school should not undertake any investigation unless the LADO advises this.

19.1 Low Level Concerns

This section should be read in conjunction with the Low-Level Concerns Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct and Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 4).

A low-level concern is not insignificant: this process should be used in events where a concern about professional conduct does not meet the harm threshold.

The school creates an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation.

- Reports should be made in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Low-level Concerns Policy.
- The DSL will address unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct it at an early stage providing a responsive, sensitive, and proportionate handling of concerns raised.

- In response, the DSL will review and correct any deficits in the setting's safeguarding system.

20 Online Safety

This section should be read in conjunction with the Online Safety Policy

Online safety is a key part of TILA's overall safeguarding approach. The DSL leads efforts to ensure effective interventions, collaborating with colleagues from Central IT for technical support.

The school is dedicated to tackling online safety issues related to content, contact, conduct, and commerce by:

- Including online safety in relevant policies and procedures.
- Incorporating online safety into staff safeguarding training and the curriculum for learners.
- Recognising that child-on-child abuse can occur through mobile and smart technology between individuals and groups. Such incidents are handled according to our process for responding to child-on-child harm (Section 17).
- Provision of education via remote learning complying with current governmental advice ([Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and Providing remote education: guidance for schools](#))
- Annually reviewing the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems, information security, and access management, following digital and technology standards for schools and colleges ([Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges - Guidance](#)).

20.1 Use of mobile phones and smart technology

TILA understands the value of access to the internet but recognises the growing body of evidence that smartphones negatively affect children's physical and emotional wellbeing, their learning, and expose them to serious safeguarding risks. Smartphones are designed to be highly addictive, and excessive screen time can reduce opportunities for play, social interaction, and creative exploration. Research increasingly links smartphone use in children to:

- lower self-esteem, anxiety, and depression
- impaired attention and focus
- sleep deprivation
- loneliness and reduced social interaction
- cyberbullying, grooming, and exposure to misogynistic or pornographic content.

The Trust recommends that parents consider delaying their child's first smartphone until at least the age of 14. The objective of this is:

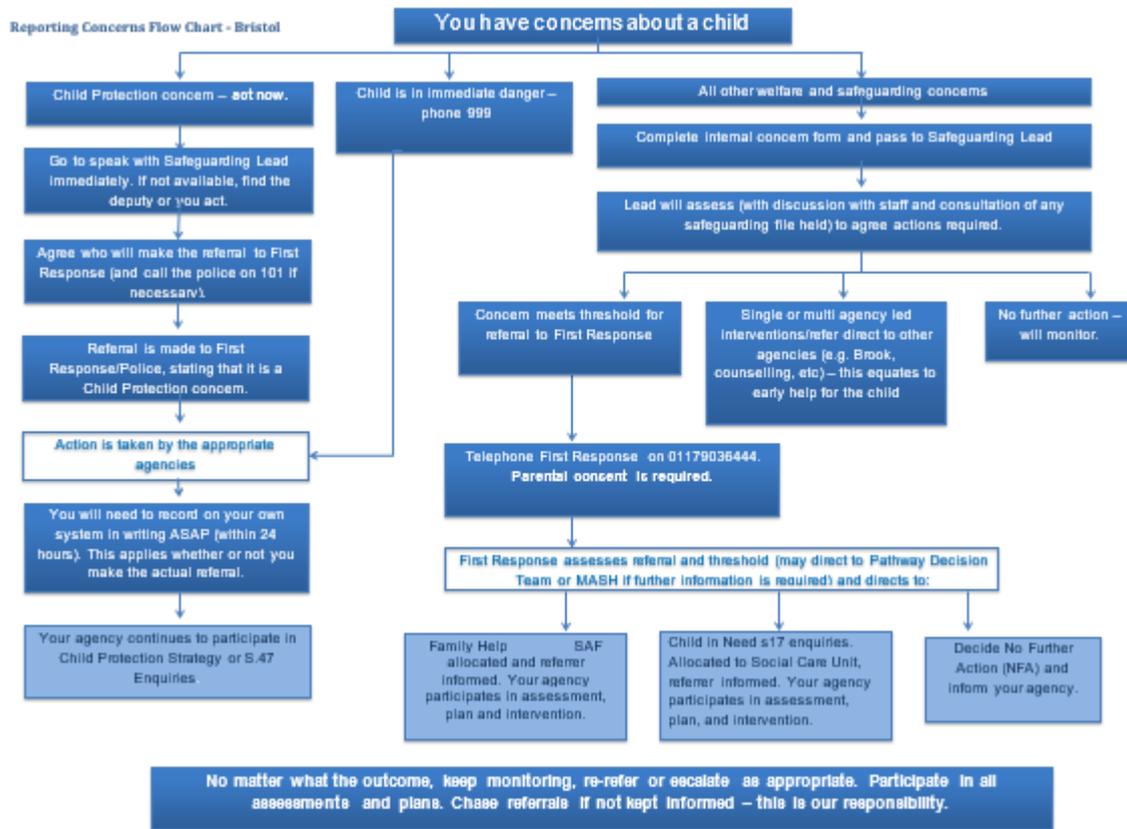
- to encourage more play,

- strengthen face-to-face friendships,
- support more effective learning,
- improve physical and mental health,
- reduce children's exposure to online harm.

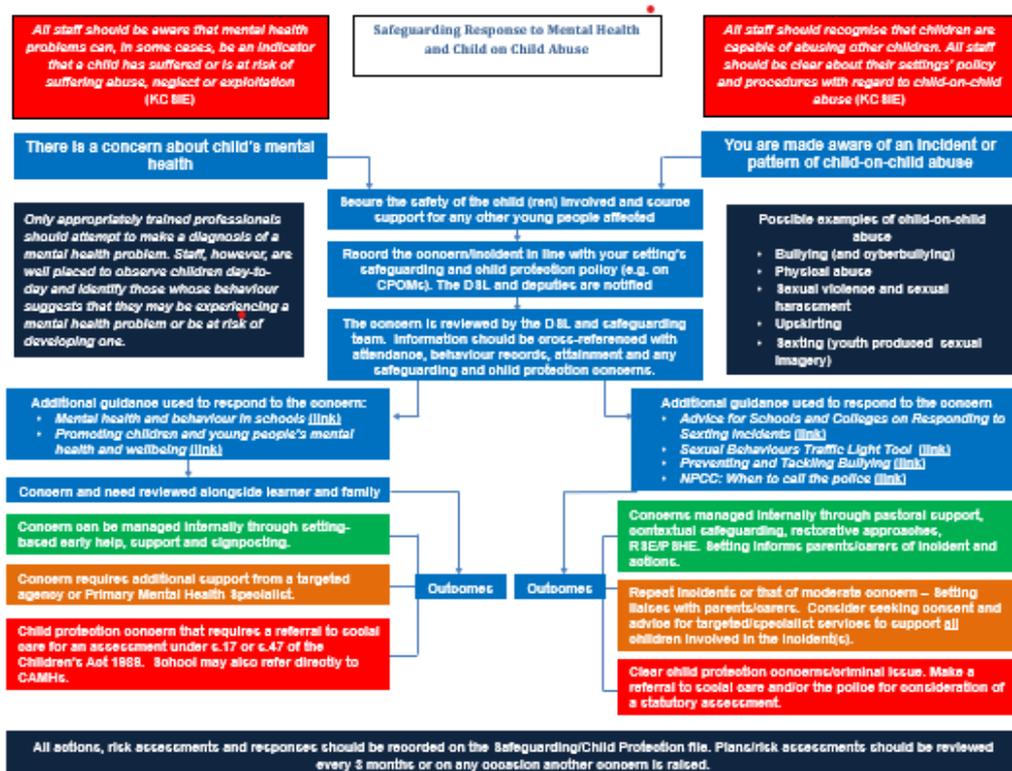
If children do have smartphones, the Trust suggests that parents remove the web browser and app store to limit access to harmful content and addictive apps. If pupils need to communicate with parents on their way to and from school, parents should consider a basic phone with no internet access.

TILA secondary schools have a ban on smartphone usage during the school day, using Yondr pouches to enforce this.

Appendix 1: School Information Bristol Reporting Concerns Flowchart



Bristol Response to Mental Health and Child on Child Abuse



Appendix 2: Multi-agency contacts

If you have concerns about a child/young person in Bristol - [Bristol-safeguarding-contacts-poster-2025-26.pdf](#)
(Bristol Safeguarding in Education)

Other Local Authorities Contacts:

Local Authority in which the child is resident	Contact details	Out of hours/ Weekend
South Gloucestershire	<p>Access and Reponses Team T: 01454 866000 - Monday to Thursday 9.00 – 5.00, 4.30 on Friday E: accessandresponse@southglos.gov.uk W: Access and Response Teams (ART) South Gloucestershire Council (southglos.gov.uk)</p>	<p>Emergency Duty Team 01454 615165</p>
North Somerset	<p>Single Point of Access T: 01275 888 808 –Monday-Thursday 8.45am-5pm, Friday 8.45am-4.30pm W: Children, young people and families North Somerset Council (n-somerset.gov.uk)</p>	
Bath and North East Somerset (BANES)	<p>Children’s Social Work Services T: 01225 396312 or 01225 396313 Mon-Thurs 8:30am to 5pm, Friday 08:30-4:30pm E: ChildCare Duty@bathnes.gov.uk W: Report a concern about a child Bath and North East Somerset Council (bathnes.gov.uk)</p>	

Appendix 3: Dealing with a disclosure of abuse

What to do when a pupil tells me about abuse, neglect or exploitation they have suffered:

- Stay calm.
- Do not communicate shock, anger or embarrassment.
- Reassure the pupil. Tell them you are pleased that they are speaking to you.
- Never promise confidentiality. Assure them that you will try to help but let the pupil know that you may have to tell other people in order to do this. State who this will be and why.
- Encourage the pupil to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information. Use 'Tell Me, Explain to me, Describe to me' (TED) questioning.
- Listen and remember.
- Check that you have understood correctly what the pupil is trying to tell you.
- Praise the pupil for telling you. Communicate that they have a right to be safe and protected.
- It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged perpetrator.
- Be aware that the pupil may retract what they have told you. It is essential to record all you have heard.
- At the end of the conversation, tell the pupil again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know.
- As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the pupil's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations.

NB It is not education staff's role to seek disclosures. Their role is to observe that something may be wrong, ask about it, listen, be available and try to make time to talk.

- The 5 'R's are helpful in understanding what professional's duties are in relation to responding to an incident.

Recognise – Respond – Reassure – Refer - Record

Appendix 4: Specific actions to take on topical safeguarding issues

General or national guidance will not be included here. A summary of specific duties are in [Keeping Children Safe in Education Annex B](#) and access to local guidance can be found in Appendix 2 of this document.

In recognition that the threshold of child protection is 'likely to suffer' significant harm, the school may need to make a referral to children's social care. Where possible, this will involve notifying the parent/carer if it does not place the learner at further risk of harm. In all other circumstances information will be shared in line with Section 12: Sharing Information.

It is also important to recognise the importance of liaising with other education settings who may have siblings attending. It is likely that they may hold additional information which will support early identification of harm and in turn develop your assessment of need.

Harm Outside the Home (HOTH), including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

The school will ensure that early help intervention is provided as soon as a concern of HOTH is identified. Discussion and advice will be sought from targeted services to consider what support may be available. The learner and their families will be part of any planning and interventions.

- If there is evidence that a child is experiencing HOTH, the school will make a referral to First Response on 0117 903 6444.
- If there is intelligence or information which indicates that the child or group of children are at risk of or involved in criminality, the school will share information with the police via 101 or online via Avon and Somerset Police's online reporting form: <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/vul> This information will support proactive activity to disrupt criminal activity in relation to exploitation or harm outside the home more broadly.
- The school will contact Safer Connections for inter-agency support, consultation, and advice about responding to HOTH and for guidance in implementing contextual safeguarding strategies to improve safety for vulnerable learners. saferconnections@bristol.gov.uk

Domestic Abuse

Operation Encompass is a national information sharing scheme where education settings are notified when the police are called to an incident of domestic abuse. This scheme enables the school to take proactive action and make reasonable adjustments in relation to behaviour management and achieving positive educational outcomes.

Under the current information sharing protocol, professionals are **not permitted** to share information without first seeking consent from Avon and Somerset police in case this will put victims and children at further risk of harm. The only exception to this when information is shared with new education setting

(part of statutory duties in relation to transfer of the Safeguarding/ Child Protection file, Keeping Children Safe in Education).

The school will follow their local authority's partnership boards procedures (Bristol's Local Safeguarding Partnerships or South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership) when receiving and managing information through Operation Encompass. Our setting will promote an open culture of safeguarding to enable learners and families to disclose and feel safe to talk about their experiences and what support may be required.

Further information can be accessed through the local authority websites.

Female Genital Mutilation

Mandatory reporting duty:

This is a legal duty for all professionals undertaking teaching work to report known cases of FGM to the police via 101. This is when they:

1. Are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
2. Observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out

These cases must be referred to the DSL who will support them to carry out their duty. It is also advised any referrals made to the police under the mandatory reporting duty is followed up with children's social care so an assessment of need and support is concurrently considered.

Travel:

National guidance has highlighted going on holiday to a risk affected country is cause for concern, local guidance has been developed to prevent discriminatory action against families from risk affected communities.

- Families are encouraged to notify the education setting when they are looking to travel during term time dates.
- This will prompt a conversation with the DSL/ specialist trained member of staff to discuss and explain what FGM is in that; it is significantly harmful and illegal to practise this.
- The setting will complete an FGM Referral Risk assessment (available on the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership website or through South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership) with the family to identify any support that the family may require in relation to FGM.
- Proportionate action is taken. Referrals to social care should NOT be automatically made – however should be made if there are high risk concerns identified from the FGM Referral Risk Assessment.
- These assessments should be saved onto the pupil's Safeguarding/Child Protection file to avoid duplication with new incidents of travel.

Forced migration

Children with a forced migration background may be more vulnerable to criminal or sexual exploitation or may have been trafficked. It is important that staff understand what signs to look out for, and understand the [National Referral Mechanism](#) procedures.

There are other specific safeguarding issues relating to this group for example adultification, age assessments, No Recourse to Public Funds, and coming from countries where practices such as underage or forced marriage or FGM may be more prevalent.

The school will support staff to develop and embed a proactive whole school anti-racist approach and adopt a trauma informed approach when supporting these children and their families.

There are a range of specialist support services available in the city that can be accessed for further information visit the [Resources for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Bristol - Bristol City of Sanctuary web pages](#)

Online Safety

- **Annex D of Keeping Children Safe in Education highlights additional actions schools should take to keep learners safe online.**
- For concerns around individual cases where a child has been harmed through online mediums, advice and guidance can be made through the **Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline**, T: 0344 381 4772, E: helpline@safernet.org.uk
- Where there have been established cases of online abuse or grooming, the school settings should alert - [Child Exploitation and Online Protection command \(CEOP\)](#)

Serious Youth Violence

To be read in conjunction with the above section around Child Criminal Exploitation. There has been local guidance issued on the issue of [Offensive Weapons in Education Settings Guidance for Education Settings](#)

It is important to note that should a weapon be used or there is threat of use, the police should be called immediately.

- The same day a weapon is found Safer Connections should be called for a multi-disciplinary assessment of risk. A Safer Connections Advisor will determine whether the young person meets the criteria for the 'Weapons in Schools Pathway' and coordinate the response with the Police and Youth Justice Service. If the criteria for a Weapons in School intervention is not met (in situations where there is evidence of threat or direct harm), a Safer Connections Advisor will support the school to take the appropriate measures for reporting and mitigating ongoing risk.
- Whilst it is acknowledged that the decision to exclude remains with the Headteacher, it is recommended that consultation with the Safer Connections Team is made so as not to further put the child at further risk of harm if they are excluded.
- Alternatives to exclusions should be considered first in recognition that by doing so a learner may be at further risk of harm out in the community.
- Police will be notified through the multi-agency discussion held at the 'Out of Court Disposals Panel' to prevent students unnecessarily getting a criminal record.

Preventing Radicalisation - The Prevent duty

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. DSL's and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the revised 'Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales', especially paragraphs 57-76, which are specifically concerned with schools (and also covers childcare). Where there is a concern about radicalisation of a pupil, Prevent referrals must be made through the Prevent Referral form found at: <https://www.bristolsafeguardingineducation.org/local-safeguarding-services/>

The guidance is set out in terms of four general themes:

- risk assessment,
- working in partnership,
- staff training, and
- IT policies.

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child:

- under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled)
- by someone other than a parent or close relative (*Close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.)
- with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

Cases of private fostering arrangements must be reported to children's social care to ensure that needs are adequately made.

Statutory guidance states that this should be done at least 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to start or as soon as you are made aware of the arrangements. Not to do so is a criminal offence.

Further support and reasonable adjustments should be made by the education setting to promote achievement of positive educational outcomes.

Young Carers

A young carer is a person under 18 who regularly provides emotional and/or practical support and assistance for a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally unwell or who misuses substances.

The setting will support learners who are young carers to appropriate support. To find out what is available locally visit the local authority website.

The Carers Support Centre can undertake an assessment of need and provide bespoke support. For further information and to make a referral visit the [Carers Support Centre website](#).

Appendix 5: Types of abuse and neglect

The Department for Education's Tackle Child Abuse campaign has accessible videos to watch <https://tacklechildabuse.campaign.gov.uk/>

Abuse and neglect are defined as the maltreatment of a child or young person whereby someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

All school and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another. For children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) additional barriers can exist when identifying abuse and neglect, these include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

To address these additional challenges, schools and colleges should consider extra pastoral support for children with SEND.

The following are the definition of abuse and neglect as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children however, the ultimate responsibility to assess and define the type of abuse a child or young person may be subject to is that of the Police and Children's Services – our responsibility is to understand what each category of abuse is and how this can impact on the welfare and development of our children and where we have concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of abuse and neglect (one or more categories can apply) to take appropriate action as early as possible.

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

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 abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

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

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