

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY



HARTFORD
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
HIGH SCHOOL

Mission Statement:

Our mission at Hartford Church of England High School is to provide an outstanding, inclusive and ambitious education for all. Children develop and thrive both within and beyond the classroom. They are known, with their talents embraced and promoted. They develop into young people who will make a substantial contribution to the world. They enjoy an education rooted in a shared set of Christian values that radiate the love and truth of Jesus Christ.

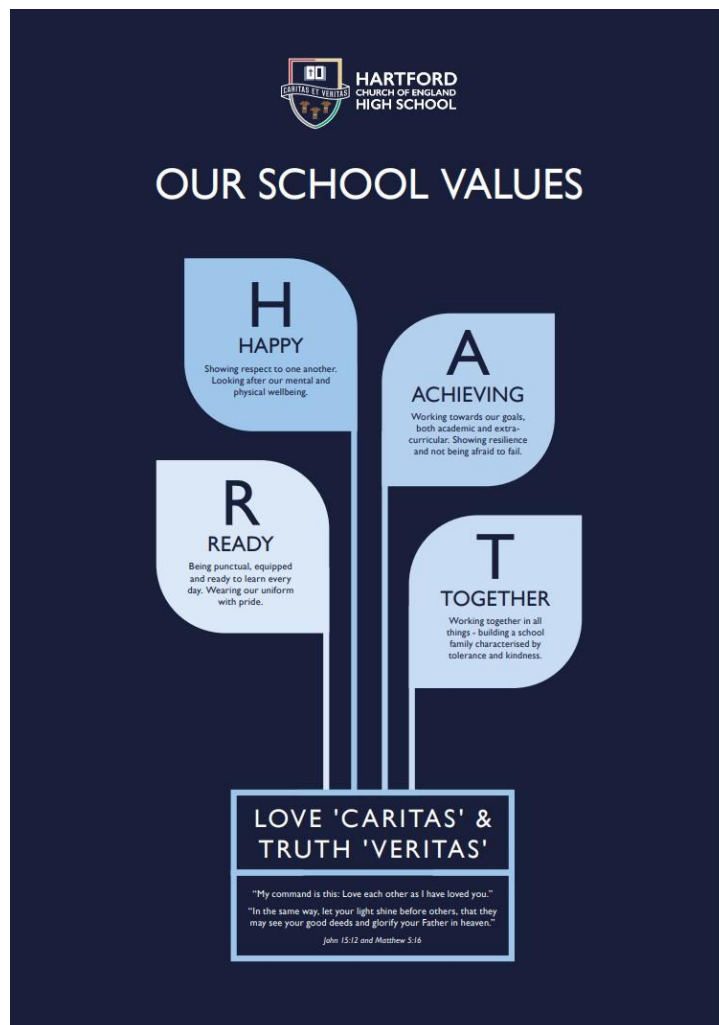
Everything we do at Hartford Church of England High School as students, staff, Governors and wider stakeholders, centres on the core values of our school:

Happy: Showing respect to one another. Looking after our mental and physical wellbeing.

Achieving: Working towards our goals, both academic and extra-curricular. Showing resilience and not being afraid to fail.

Ready: Being punctual, equipped and ready to learn every day. Wearing our uniform with pride.

Together: Working together in all things - building a school family characterised by tolerance and kindness.



"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

John 15:12 and Matthew 5:16

Equally, the educational offer at Hartford Church of England High School is based on the Church of England's four key principles for education:

- Educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills
- Educating for hope and aspiration
- Educating for community and living well together
- Educating for dignity and respect

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for Hartford Church of England High School fully embodies our values, our mission statement and the key principles for education set out by the Church of England.

Contents

Section	Page
1. Safeguarding Statement	5
2. Aims, Principles and Values	5-6
3. Legal Framework	6-7
4. Terminology	8-10
5. Safe Environment	11
6. Roles and Responsibilities	11-14
a. The Governing Board	11-12
b. The Headteacher	12
c. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSSL)	12-13
d. Staff	13-14
e. Parents/Carers	14
7. Confidentiality	14
8. Recognising and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns	14-16
a. Recognising Safeguarding Concerns	14-15
b. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns	15
c. Flowchart A	16
d. Students Making A Disclosure	16-17
9. Early Intervention and Prevention within Safeguarding	18
10. The Continuum of Need	18
11. Children who are Particularly Vulnerable	18-19
12. Students who need Social Workers	19
13. Home-Educated Children	19
14. Looked-After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC)	20
15. Students with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)	20
16. LGBTQ+ Students	20
17. Students requiring Mental Health Support	20
18. Students at an Alternative Provision	21
19. Students on Work Experience	21
20. Whistleblowing	21
21. Allegations Against Staff	21-22
22. Physical Intervention	22-23
23. Photographing Children	23
a. Staff and Volunteers	23
b. Parents/Carers or Members of the Public	23
24. Confidentiality, Information Sharing and GDPR	23-24
25. Contact Arrangements and Parental Responsibility	24
26. Complaints and Compliments	24-25

Contents Continued

Appendices	Page
1. Categories of Abuse	26-29
2. Bullying and Racist Incidents	29
3. Radicalisation and Extremism	30-32
4. Domestic Abuse (including Operation Encompass)	32
5. Exploitation (including CSE, CCE and County Lines)	32-34
6. Female Genital Mutilation	34-36
7. Forced Marriage	36
8. So-Called Honor-Based Abuse	36-37
9. One Chance Rule	37
10. Mental Health	37
11. Private Fostering Arrangements	37-38
12. Looked-After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC)	38
13. Children Missing Education	38
14. Child on Child Abuse (including Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and HSB)	38-41
15. Online Safety	41-42
16. Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (Sexting)	43-44
17. Additional Resources	44
18. Safeguarding Children – Key Points	44-45
19. Assessment Triangle	46
20. Essential Contacts	47-48
21. Roles and Responsibilities of Single Point of Contact (Radicalisation and Extremism)	48-49
22. Transfer of Records	49

1. Safeguarding Statement

At Hartford Church of England High School we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students and expect all staff, Governors, and volunteers to share this commitment. We recognise that all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or SEND have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection, and justice. We listen to our students and take seriously what they tell us; children are aware of the adults they can talk to if they have a concern. When there are concerns for a child's welfare, we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies. We will ensure concerns are discussed with parents/carers first unless we have reason to believe that doing so would be contrary to the child's welfare. This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy underpins and guides our safeguarding procedures and protocols.

2. Aims, Principles and Values

The welfare of the child is paramount:

- All children regardless of age, gender, culture, language, race, ability, sexual identity or religion have equal rights to protection, safeguarding and opportunities.
- We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff¹, volunteers and governors, all have a duty to protect our students from harm and have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.
- All staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical, mental wellbeing and moral development of the individual child.
- Students and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support and supervision.

This policy aims to:

- Raise the awareness of all staff of the need to safeguard children.
- Provide all staff with guidance on the procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child/young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of experiencing, harm. Including (by DSL/DDSL) consideration to the use of appropriate assessments, resources and agency support.
- Provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued, and respected, and that they will be listened to should they make a disclosure.
- Raise awareness that abuse can be both Familial and/or Contextual; and abusers can be both adult/s to child/ren or child/ren to child/ren.
- Demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding and child protection to students, parents/carers and other partners.
- Provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm.
- Emphasise the need for high levels of communication between staff and the school's DSL/DDSL and with external agencies and partners, including our contribution to assessments, referrals, and support plans.
- Develop and promote effective working relationships with other partnership agencies, particularly Children's Social Care, Police and Health.
- Support children's development in ways that will foster security, confidence, and independence.

Supporting and Protecting Children:

- We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated and could experience barriers to making a disclosure. We understand that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal, to aggressive or withdrawn, as well as exhibiting signs of mental health problems. We understand the impact on a child's mental health,

¹ Wherever the word "staff" is used, it covers ALL staff on site, including ancillary supply and self-employed staff, contractors, volunteers working with children etc. and Governors.

behaviour, and education from familial and/or contextual abuse. School may not only provide stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm, but it plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our children.

Our school will support all children by:

- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as our relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying (incl. cyber bullying).
- Promoting a caring, safe, and positive environment within the school and providing children with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.
- Responding sympathetically to any requests for time out to deal with distress and anxiety.
- Offering details of helplines, counselling, or other avenues of external support.
- Liaising and working together with all other settings, support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
- Notifying Children's Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern.
- Ensuring appropriate information is shared confidentially at key transition points in a child's journey to ensure continuous support (incl. school medical records).
- Ensuring children are taught to understand and manage risk through our Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and through all aspects of school life. This includes online safety.
- Accessing and utilising the necessary resources, guidance and toolkits to support the identification of children requiring mental health support, support services and assessments.
- Reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

The school community will protect children by:

- Working to establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are always listened to.
- Ensuring that all children know there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Regularly consulting with children, parents/carers, and staff, gathering their voice.
- Embedding safeguarding across the curriculum to equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help; in particular this will include anti-bullying work, information about child on child abuse (sexual harassment and sexual violence, consent), and online-safety.
- Providing focussed activities for key year groups and targeted groups of students in response to themes emerging, or for transition to new settings and/or key stages.
- Ensuring all staff, students and parents/carers are aware of school guidance for the use of mobile technology and the safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies, including the use of social media and their associated risks.

3. Legal Framework

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

Legislation

- The Children Act 1989
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by the Serious Crime Act 2015)
- The Children Act 2004
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

- The Apprenticeships, Children and Learning Act 2009
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)
- The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022

Statutory Guidance

- Home Office (2023) 'Prevent duty guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales'
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023'
- DfE (2018) 'Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- HM Government (2020) 'Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation'
- HM Government (2023) 'Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting people susceptible to radicalisation'
- Home Office and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (2023) 'Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage and Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage'

Non-Statutory Guidance

- DfE (2015) 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'
- DfE (2017) 'Child sexual exploitation'
- DfE (2025) 'Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges'
- DfE (2024) 'Information sharing'
- DfE (2024) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'
- DfE (2021) 'Teachers' Standards'
- DfE (2024) 'Recruit teachers from overseas'
- DfE (2024) 'Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges'
- Department of Health and Social Care (2024) 'Virginity testing and hymenoplasty: multi-agency guidance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Behaviour and Attitudes Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Medical Needs Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy
- Data Protection/GDPR Guidance

4. Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children 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 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.
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023)

Child Protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Child/student includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parents/carers refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step parents, foster carers, adoptive parents and LA corporate parents.

Acronyms

This policy contains a number of acronyms used in the Education sector. These acronyms are listed below alongside their descriptions.

Acronym	Long form	Description
AI	Artificial intelligence	Computer systems and software that are able to perform tasks that ordinarily require human intelligence, such as decision-making and the creation of images.
CCE	Child criminal exploitation	A form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, for the financial advantage or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.
CSCS	Children's social care services	The branch of the local authority that deals with children's social care.
CSE	Child sexual exploitation	A form of sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, for the financial advantage, increased status or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service	The service that performs the statutory check of criminal records for anyone working or volunteering in a school.
DfE	Department for Education	The national government body with responsibility for children's services, policy and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.
DPO	Data protection officer	The appointed person in school with responsibility for overseeing data protection strategy and implementation to ensure compliance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act.
DSL	Designated safeguarding lead	A member of the senior leadership team who has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection throughout the school.
EEA	European Economic Area	The Member States of the European Union (EU) and three countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; excluding Switzerland).
EHC plan	Education, health and care plan	A funded intervention plan which coordinates the educational, health and care needs for students who have significant needs that impact on their learning and access to education. The plan identifies any additional support needs or interventions and the intended impact they will have for the student.
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency	An agency sponsored by the Department for Education with accountability for funding education and skills training for children, young people and adults.
FGM	Female genital mutilation	All procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.
UK GDPR	UK General Data Protection Regulation	Legislative provision designed to strengthen the safety and security of all data held within an organisation and ensure that procedures relating to personal data are fair and consistent.
HBA	'Honour-based' abuse	So-called 'honour-based' abuse involves crimes that have been committed to defend the honour of the family and/or community.
HMCTS	HM Courts and Tribunals Service	HM Courts and Tribunals Service is responsible for the administration of criminal, civil and family courts and tribunals in England and Wales. HMCTS is an executive agency, sponsored by the Ministry of Justice.
IICSA	Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse	The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse is analysing case files from the Disclosure and Barring Service to learn more about the behaviours of perpetrators who have sexually abused children in institutions, and to understand institutional responses to these behaviours.

KCSIE	Keeping children safe in education	Statutory guidance setting out schools and colleges' duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
LA	Local authority	A local government agency responsible for the provision of a range of services in a specified local area, including education.
LAC	Looked-after children	Children who have been placed in local authority care or where children's services have looked after children for more than a period of 24 hours.
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer plus	Term relating to a community of people, protected by the Equality Act 2010, who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, or other protected sexual or gender identities.
NPCC	The National Police Chiefs' Council	The National Police Chiefs' Council is a national coordination body for law enforcement in the United Kingdom and the representative body for British police chief officers.
PLAC	Previously looked-after children	Children who were previously in local authority care or were looked after by children's services for more than a period of 24 hours. PLAC are also known as care leavers.
PSHE	Personal, social and health education	A non-statutory subject in which students learn about themselves, other people, rights, responsibilities and relationships.
RSHE	Relationships, sex and health education	A compulsory subject from Year 7 for all students. Includes the teaching of sexual health, reproduction and sexuality, as well as promoting positive relationships.
SCR	Single central record	A statutory secure record of recruitment and identity checks for all permanent and temporary staff, proprietors, contractors, external coaches and instructors, and volunteers who attend the school in a non-visitor capacity.
SENCO	Special educational needs coordinator	A statutory role within all schools maintaining oversight and coordinating the implementation of the school's special educational needs policy and provision of education to students with special educational needs.
SLT	Senior leadership team	Staff members who have been delegated leadership responsibilities in a school.
TRA	Teaching Regulation Agency	An executive agency of the DfE with responsibility for the regulation of the teaching profession.
VSH	Virtual school head	Virtual school heads are in charge of promoting the educational achievement of all the children looked after by the local authority they work for, and all children who currently have, or previously had, a social worker.

5. Safe Environment

The school is committed to creating and maintaining a safe learning environment for children and young people, identifying where there are child welfare concerns and taking action to address them in partnership with families and other agencies. This policy reflects the policies of Cheshire West's Safeguarding Children Partnership, [Cheshire West SCP](#) and is in line with [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) and [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#).

6. Roles and Responsibilities

We will follow the statutory guidance as set out in the latest [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (and associated documents and guidance), adhering to the roles, responsibilities and expectations identified for:

- Governing bodies, proprietors and management committees.
- The Headteacher.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Staff.

6a. The Governing Board

All members of The Governing Board understand and fulfil their responsibilities, namely, to ensure that there is a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy together with a Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that all Governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training should be regularly updated.

Roles and responsibilities of the Governing Board will include ensuring that:

- Child protection, safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations policies and procedures, including the Staff Code of Conduct Policy are consistent with the Local Authority and statutory requirements, are reviewed annually and that the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is publicly available on the school website or by other means.
- All staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, are provided with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct Policy.
- All staff have read Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1* and Annex B, and those mechanisms are in place to assist staff in understanding and discharging their roles and responsibilities as set out in the guidance. (*or Annex A if not working directly with children)
- The school operates a safer recruitment procedure that includes statutory checks on staff, disqualification by association regulations and by ensuring that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel who has completed safer recruitment training.
- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff (including the Headteacher), supply staff, volunteers and against other children. A referral is made to the DBS if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns or would have had they not resigned.
- A member of the Governing Board, usually the Chair, is nominated to liaise with the Local Authority on Child Protection issues and in the event of an allegation of abuse made against the Headteacher.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team has been appointed as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) by the Governing Board who will take lead responsibility for safeguarding in school.
- On appointment, the DSL and DDSL undertake appropriate Level 3 identified training offered by the Cheshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership every two years, or full DSL training provided by an independent qualified trainer every two years.
- All other staff undertake safeguarding training.

- At least one member of the Governing Board has completed safer recruitment training.
- Children are taught about safeguarding (including online safety) as part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues to meet their needs, including children who have recognised vulnerabilities.
- Appropriate safeguarding responses are in place for children who go missing (are absent) from education.
- Appropriate online filtering and monitoring systems are in place.
- Enhanced DBS checks at the appropriate level are in place for all Governors.
- Any weaknesses in Child Protection are remedied immediately.
- The external contractor in charge of the lettings of the school facilities is fully compliant with all safeguarding policies and legislation.
- Ensuring that they have read KCSiE Part 1 and Annex B.
- A member of the Governing Board has been appointed as the Safeguarding Governor. This person will have read all of KCSiE.
- They are aware of the key safeguarding personnel and the school's approach to safeguarding, ensuring that the school's ethos reflects a safeguarding culture.
- They are appropriately trained from a safeguarding perspective for their role on the Governing Board.

6b. The Headteacher

Roles and responsibilities will include:

- Ensuring the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures are implemented and followed by all staff.
- Enabling sufficient time, training, support, resources, including cover arrangements where necessary, are allocated to the DSL and DDSL to carry out their roles effectively,
- Supporting and promoting a positive safeguarding culture and ethos in school so that child/ren's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.
- Ensuring systems are in place for children to express their views and give feedback.
- Following the Whistleblowing Policy and procedures if an allegation is made against a member of staff, supply staff or volunteer staff, including liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and referring anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Ensuring that students are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online.

6c. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety). This should be explicit in the role holder's job description. (They must be a member of SLT).

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will be trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, in the absence of the DSL, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of students. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL the Deputy will assume all of the functions above, however the Headteacher will take over the role of DSL.

Whilst the activities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection, as set out above, remains with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, this lead responsibility should not be delegated.

Roles and responsibilities of the DSL and DDSL will include:

- Availability – being available during school hours.
- Managing referrals – to e.g., Children's Social Care, Channel Programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, the Police.
- Working with others – e.g., being a point of contact with safeguarding partners, a source of support and advice for staff, promoting supportive engagement with parents/carers and the SLT/Governing Board.

- Information sharing and managing the child protection/safeguarding records.
- Raising Safeguarding and Child Protection Awareness.
- Updating training, knowledge and skills required to carry out the role of DSL e.g., identifying additional training on topics such as neglect, exploitation etc.
- Providing support to staff.
- Holding and sharing information.
- Overseeing and acting upon filtering and monitoring reports and checks to these systems.
- Maintaining an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.
- identifying concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare, and prevent concerns from escalating.
- To provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
- Knowing what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected.
- being able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Recognising the barriers for children when wanting to make a disclosure (verbal or non-verbal).
- Identifying children who may benefit from early help, (providing support as soon as a problem emerges) and the part they play in these support plans.
- Raising any concerns for a child following the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Being aware of local authority referral processes and supporting social workers and other agencies following any referral.
- Adhering to Teachers' Standards 2012 (latest terminology update December 2021) - that teacher (which includes Headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
- Being aware of systems within school which support safeguarding e.g., safeguarding policy, behaviour policy, code of conduct, CME, online filtering, and monitoring.
- Attending regular safeguarding and child protection training.
- Recognising that children missing or absent from education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

6d. Staff

Roles and responsibilities will include:

- Maintaining an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.
- Identifying concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare, and prevent concerns from escalating.
- To provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
- Knowing what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected.
- Being able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Recognising the barriers for children when wanting to make a disclosure (verbal or non-verbal).
- Identifying children who may benefit from early help, (providing support as soon as a problem emerges) and the part they play in these support plans.
- Raising any concerns for a child following the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Being aware of local authority referral processes and supporting social workers and other agencies following any referral.
- Adhering to Teachers' Standards 2012 (latest terminology update December 2021) - that teacher (which includes Headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
- Being aware of systems within school which support safeguarding e.g., safeguarding policy, behaviour policy, code of conduct, CME, online filtering, and monitoring.
- Attending regular safeguarding and child protection training.
- Recognising that children missing or absent from education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Ensuring that they have read KCSiE Part I and Annexe B.

- Being aware of their role in safeguarding, early help, and the implementation of child protection support plans.

6e. Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring that they understand the school's child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures and support their children in adhering to them.

7. Confidentiality

- Hartford Church of England High School recognises that in order to effectively meet a child's needs, safeguard their welfare and protect them from harm, the school must contribute to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and share information between professionals and agencies where there are concerns.
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and that the Data Protection Act 2018² is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would place a child at risk of harm.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.
- However, we also recognise that all matters relating to child protection are personal to children and families. Therefore, in this respect they are confidential and the Headteacher or DSLs will only disclose information about a child to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis.
- We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to I-ART with their parents/carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation.
- In line with KCSiE, all children's safeguarding records will be kept confidential and stored securely. Physical safeguarding files will be kept separate from students' schools' files in a securely locked cabinet, whilst the school holds all safeguarding concerns and subsequent records on CPOMs.

8. Recognising and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

8a. Recognising Safeguarding Concerns

Any child, in any family, in any school, could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of **"It could happen here"**. We also recognise that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are complex and are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. Staff are aware that in most cases multiple issues will overlap one another.

- Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in the family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.
- Abuse and neglect may also take place outside of the home; contextual safeguarding is a way of recognising and responding to risks to children and young people that come from outside of their families. This may include, but is not limited to, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence and/or radicalisation.
- Staff are aware that behaviours linked to drug taking, alcohol abuse, poor attendance and harmful online behaviours put children in danger and that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse.

² The Data Protection Act 2018 is the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
[Data Protection in Schools Gov.UK DfE Feb 2023](#)

Further information about the four categories of abuse; physical, emotional, sexual and neglect, (familial and contextual) and indicators that a child may be being abused can be found in the appendices and in Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1: Annex A and Annex B. There are also a number of specific safeguarding concerns that we recognise our students may experience. These are categorized by the following:

• Child missing or absent from education. • Child missing from home or care. • Child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE). • Bullying including cyberbullying. • Domestic abuse. • Drugs and alcohol misuse. • Fabricated or induced illness. • Faith abuse. • Female genital mutilation (FGM). • Forced marriage. • Gangs and youth violence.	• Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG). • Mental health difficulties. • Private fostering. • Radicalisation. • Youth produced sexual imagery (sexting). • Teenage relationship abuse. • Trafficking. • Child on child abuse. • Up skirting. • Serious violence. • Sexual harassment.
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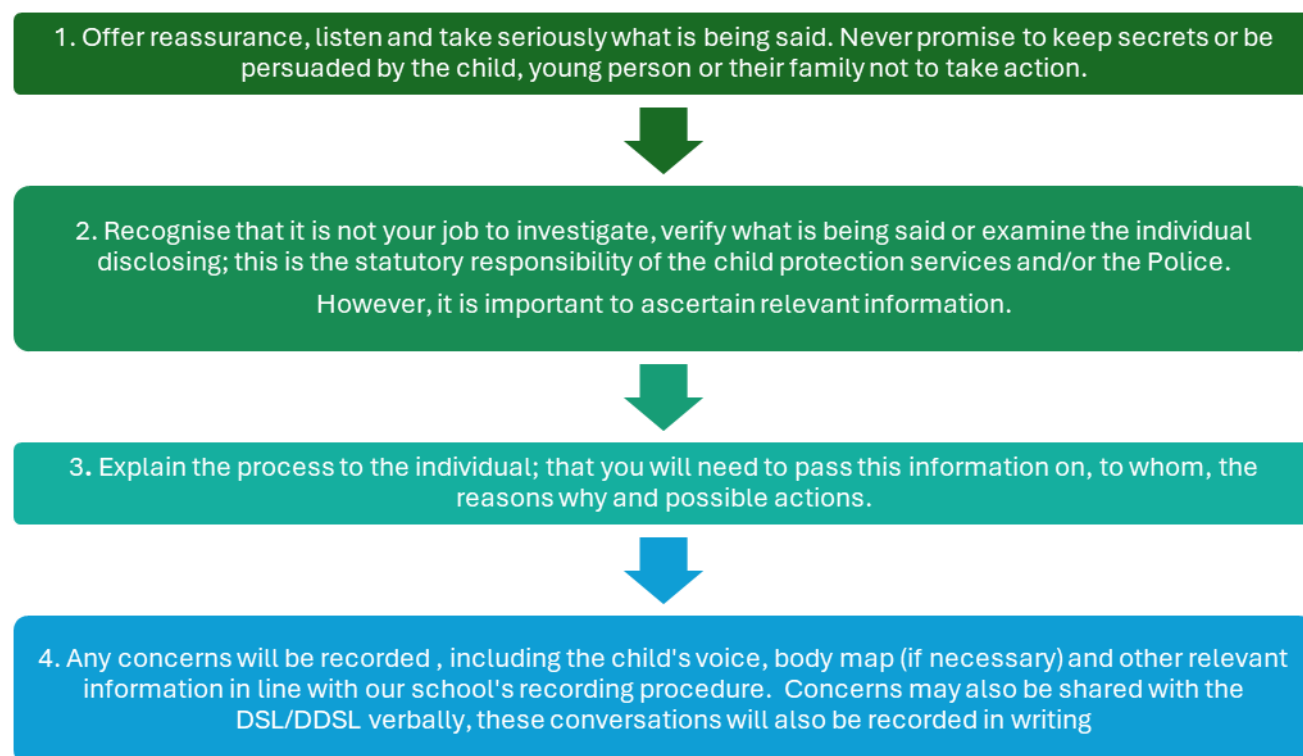
- There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a student may be at risk but have no 'real' evidence. The student's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, and they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical or inconclusive signs may have been noticed.
- We recognise that the signs of safeguarding concerns may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill, or an accident has occurred. However, they may also indicate a child is being abused or is in need of safeguarding.
- In these circumstances staff will try to give the child the opportunity to talk. It is fine for staff to ask the student if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Further information on the different types of safeguarding concerns and schools' response can be found in Flowchart A, below.

8b. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

- Following an initial conversation with the student, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL/DDSL and put them in writing on CPOMS. If the concerns are urgent, the member of staff should alert the DSL/DDSL verbally and write up their concerns at the first available opportunity. The DSL/DDSL will then record any actions. Records should include:
 - A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern.
 - Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved.
 - A note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
- If the student does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice in FLOW CHART A and in the table below 'student making a disclosure'.
- All concerns however small must be recorded and shared with the DSL/DDSL as this information could provide the 'missing' piece of the bigger picture of the lived experience of a child.

8c. Flowchart A



8d. Students Making a Disclosure

If a student makes a disclosure to a member of staff:

- We recognise that it takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, guilty, or scared, their abuser may have threatened that something will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults or believe that what has happened is their fault. Sometimes, they may not be aware that what is happening is abuse.
- A child who makes a disclosure may have to tell their story on a number of subsequent occasions to the police and/or social workers. Therefore, it is vital that their first experience of talking to a trusted adult is a positive one.

During their conversation with the student staff will:

- Listen to what the child has to say and allow them to speak freely.
- Remain calm and not overreact or act shocked or disgusted – the student may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting the listener.
- Reassure the child that it is not their fault and that they have done the right thing in telling someone.
- Not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how difficult it is for the student and allow them time to talk.
- Take what the child is disclosing seriously.
- Ask open questions and avoid asking leading questions.
- Avoid jumping to conclusions, speculation or make accusations.
- Not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who is being abused.

- Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing sooner. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about it when it started’ may be the staff member’s way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean they have done something wrong.
- Tell the child what will happen next, that they cannot keep secrets, and that information will be shared to ensure the right level of support is given.

Notifying parents and carers:

- The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a student with their parents/carers. This must be handled sensitively and normally the DSL/DDSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure of abuse that the child has been harmed in some way.
- However, if the school believes that notifying parents/carers could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, I-ART will be contacted first e.g., familial sexual abuse.
- Where there are concerns about FGM, forced marriage or so-called honour-based abuse, parents/carers should not be informed a referral is being made, as to do so may place the child at a significantly increased risk.

Making a referral:

- Concerns about a child or a disclosure should be immediately raised with the DSL/DDSL who will help decide whether a referral to I-ART or other support is appropriate in accordance with the Continuum of Need.
- If school are uncertain about whether a concern raised should be referred to I-ART, a consultation will be sought with the Local Authority SCIE team to seek further support and guidance. If there is a TAF in place, the school will consult the TAF advisor.
- If a referral is needed, the DSL/DDSL should make this rapidly and have the necessary systems in place to enable this to happen. However, anyone can make a referral and if for any reason a staff member thinks a referral is appropriate and one hasn’t been made, they can, and should, consider making a referral themselves.
- The child (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents/carers will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.
- If after a referral the child’s situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL/DDSL (or the person that made the referral) should press for re-consideration to ensure their concerns have been addressed, and most importantly the child’s situation improves (using the local authority’s escalation and resolution policy).
- If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to I-ART and/or the police immediately. Anybody can make a referral.
- Where referrals are not made by the DSL or DDSL, the DSL/DDSL should be informed as soon as possible.

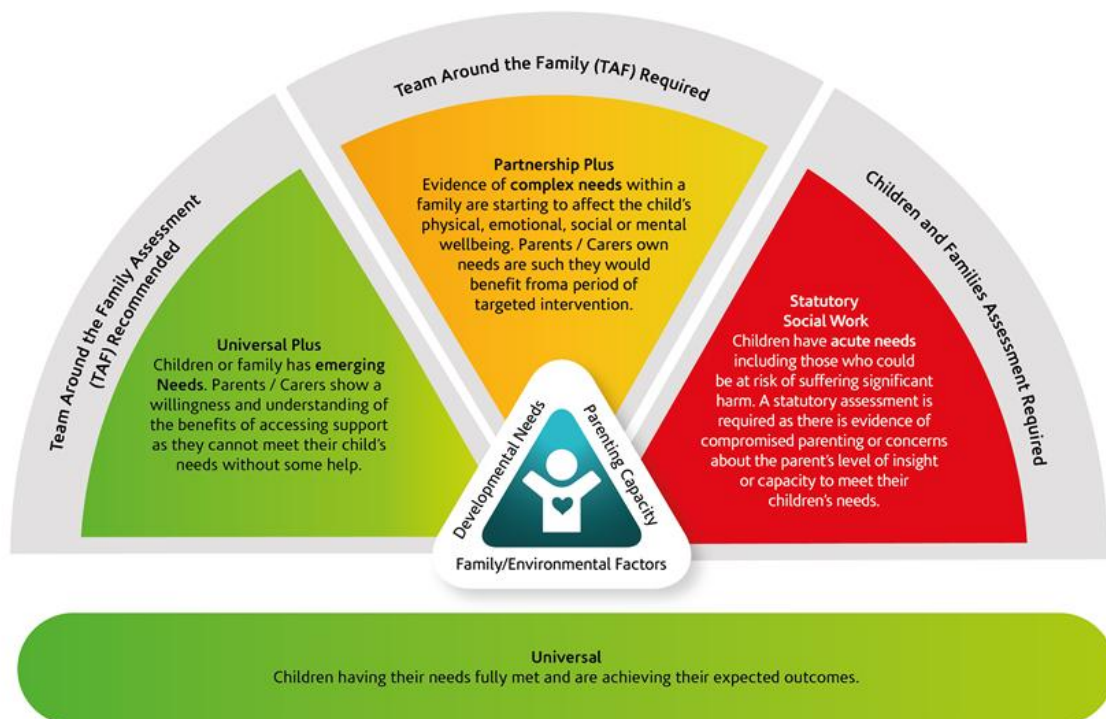
Supporting our staff:

- We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting.
- We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSL/DDSL and to seek further support as appropriate.

9. Early Intervention and Prevention within Safeguarding

All school staff must be aware of their responsibility to raise any concerns they have about a child as early as possible in order to prevent the situation worsening. This may present as a change in a child's behaviour, appearance or from a conversation with the family about home conditions, financial difficulties, speech and language, toileting issues etc. Where this concern does not identify a safeguarding issue but could lead to more serious concerns if left, staff need to follow the procedures set out in the **Team around the Family (TAF)** guidance to fulfil their duties at Universal Plus and Partnership Plus on the **Continuum of Need**. This may involve signposting to or involving more appropriate agencies for support and may involve the school acting as Lead Person on a child's TAF. In the event of complex needs, a referral to Integrated access and referral team (**I-ART**) for support from the Early Help and Prevention service should be made.

10. The Continuum of Need



11. Children who are Particularly Vulnerable

Hartford Church of England High School recognises that some children are more vulnerable to abuse, neglect and contextual safeguarding concerns and that additional barriers exist when recognising abuse for some children. We understand that this increase in risk is due more to societal attitudes and assumptions or child protection procedures which fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances, rather than the individual child's personality, impairment, or circumstances.

In some cases, possible indicators of abuse such as a child's mood, behaviour or injury might be assumed to relate to the child's impairment or disability rather than giving a cause for concern. Or a focus may be on the child's disability, special educational needs, or situation without consideration of the full picture. In other cases, such as bullying, the child may be disproportionately impacted by the behaviour without outwardly showing any signs that they are experiencing it.

Some children may also find it harder to disclose abuse due to communication barriers, lack of access to a trusted adult or not being aware that what they are experiencing is abuse.

Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs.
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan).
- Is a young carer.
- Is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups.
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home.
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation.
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse.
- Has returned home to their family from care.
- Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect and/or exploitation.
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- Is a privately fostered child.
- Has an imprisoned parent.
- Is experiencing mental health, wellbeing difficulties.
- Is persistently absent from education (including persistently absent for part of the school day).
- Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a student referral unit.
- Is at risk of 'honour' based abuse such as FGM or Forced Marriage

I 2. Students who need Social Workers

Students may need social workers due to safeguarding or welfare needs. These needs can leave students vulnerable to further harm and educational disadvantage.

As a matter of routine, the DSL/DDSL will hold and use information from the LA about whether a student has a social worker in order to make decisions in the best interests of the student's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes.

Where a student needs a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence, and promoting welfare, e.g. considering the provision pastoral or academic support.

I 3. Home-Educated Children

Parents/Carers may choose elective home education (EHE) for their children. In some cases, EHE can mean that children are less visible to the services needed to safeguard and support them.

In line with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2023, the school will inform the LA of all deletions from the admissions register when a student is taken off roll.

Where a parent has expressed their intention to remove a student from school for EHE, the school, in collaboration with the LA and other key professionals, will coordinate a meeting with the parent, where possible, before the final decision has been made, particularly if the student has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker.

I 4. Looked-After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC)

Children most commonly become looked after because of abuse and/or neglect. Because of this, they can be at potentially greater risk in relation to safeguarding. PLAC, also known as care leavers, can also remain vulnerable after leaving care.

The Governing Board will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and PLAC safe. This includes ensuring that the appropriate staff have the information they need, such as:

- Looked after legal status, i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents/carers, or on an interim or full care order.
- Contact arrangements with parents/carers or those with parental responsibility.
- Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the student.

The DSL/DDSL will be provided with the necessary details of students' social workers and the VSH, and, for PLAC, personal advisers.

I 5. Students with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

When managing safeguarding in relation to students with SEND, staff will be aware of the following:

- Certain indicators of abuse, such as behaviour, mood and injury, may relate to the student's disability without further exploration; however, it should never be assumed that a student's indicators relate only to their disability.
- Students with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by issues such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers may exist, as well as difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

When reporting concerns or making referrals for students with SEND, the above factors will always be taken into consideration. When managing a safeguarding issue relating to a student with SEND, the DSL/DDSL will liaise with the school's SENDCO, as well as the student's parents/carers where appropriate, to ensure that the student's needs are met effectively.

I 6. LGBTQ+ Students

The fact that a student may be LGBTQ+ is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm; however, staff will be aware that LGBTQ+ students can be targeted by other individuals. Staff will also be aware that, in some cases, a student who is perceived by others to be LGBTQ+ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as students who identify as LGBTQ+.

Staff will also be aware that the risks to these students can be compounded when they do not have a trusted adult with whom they can speak openly with. Staff will endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced by these students and provide a safe space for them to speak out and share any concerns they have.

I 7. Students requiring Mental Health Support

All staff will be made aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a student has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

18. Students at an Alternative Provision

The school will remain responsible for a student's welfare during their time at an alternative provider. When placing a student with an alternative provider, the school will obtain written confirmation that the provider has conducted all relevant safeguarding checks on staff and will satisfy itself that the placement is meeting the student's needs.

Those responsible for the commissioning of alternative provision will be aware that students in alternative provision will often have complex needs – they will be mindful of the additional risk of harm that these students may be vulnerable to.

School staff will visit students at their alternative provision on a regular basis to ensure the school's safeguarding duties are fulfilled and that the student is safe and settled in their environment.

19. Students on Work Experience

When a student is sent on work experience, the school will ensure that the provider has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place. Further to this, a team of school staff regularly visit students in their work placements to ensure that they are properly safeguarded. Where the school has students conduct work experience at the school, an enhanced DBS check will be obtained if the student is over the age of 16.

20. Whistleblowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should speak in the first instance, to the LADO following the Whistleblowing Policy.

Whistleblowing in relation to the Headteacher should be made to the Chair of Governors, Maurice McBride. Mr McBride can be contacted via the Clerk to the Governing Board – jwhite@hartfordhigh.co.uk.

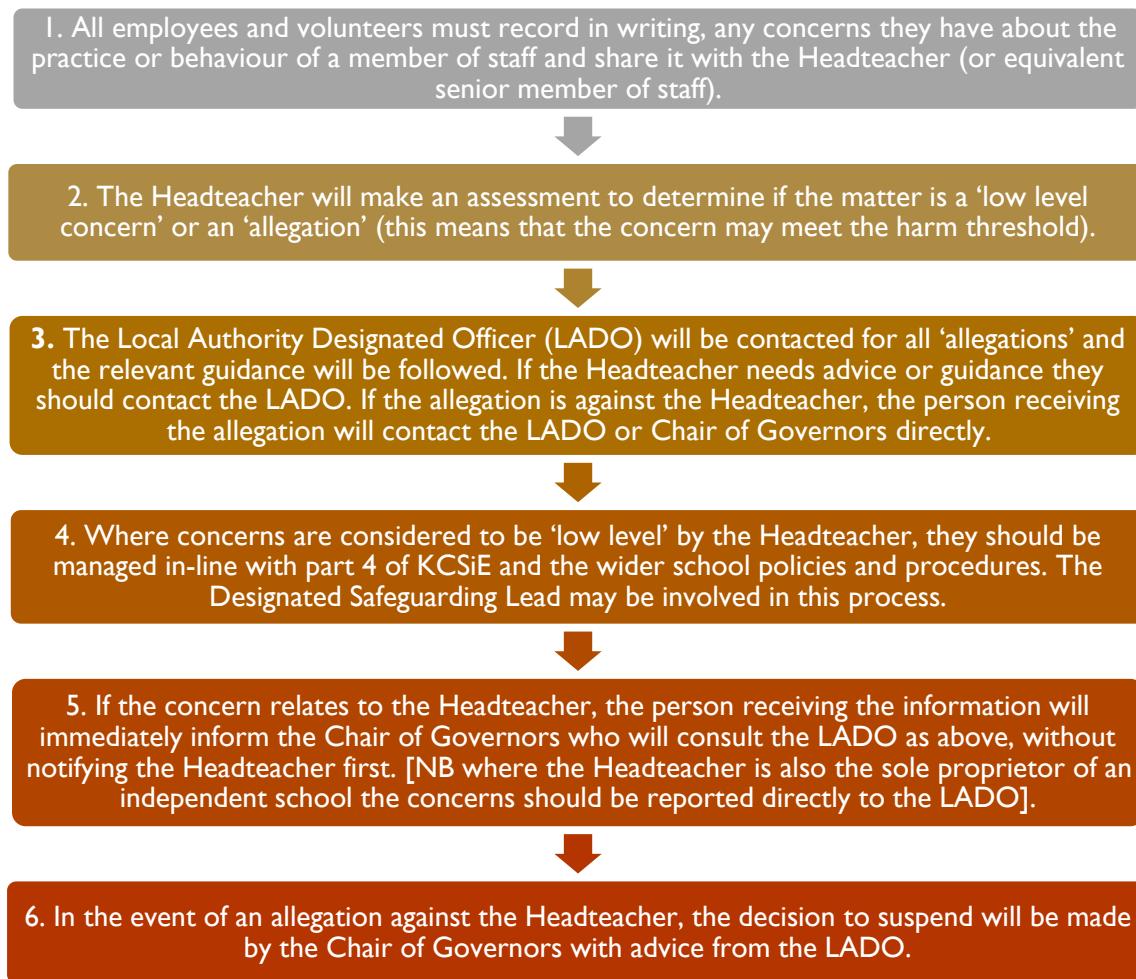
(N.B. - The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk).

21. Allegations Against Staff

All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents/carers to be conducted in view of other adults. Guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by staff and volunteers will be given at induction³ and are available in the school's Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

³ Refer to "Guidance for Safe Working Practice"

In line with KCSiE part 4 guidelines:



In the case of allegations, suspension of the member of staff, excluding the Headteacher, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration, and the Headteacher will seek the advice of the LADO and an HR Consultant in making this decision.

Staff, parents/carers, and Governors are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing including content placed on social media sites.

School will ensure that students are aware of how they can raise a concern should they be worried about a member of staff's conduct, this may be for example by talking to a trusted adult, using the online HART email, and anonymous reporting slips.

22. Physical Intervention

We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, when a child is endangering themselves or others, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary, to prevent injury to themselves or another person.

Such events should be recorded and submitted to the Headteacher or DSL/DDSL at the earliest opportunity. Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained.

We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with children, and all staff have been given 'Safe Practice' guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundary in the Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

23. Photographing Children

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. We acknowledge, however, that some people abuse children through taking, using or circulating images.

23a. Staff and Volunteers

- As part of the transition to Hartford Church of England High School, parents/carers will be asked to give consent for their child to be photographed. They have the right to withdraw this permission at any time by contacting head@hartfordhigh.co.uk. A register is kept of all children with and without permission for their photographs to be taken.
- Staff and volunteers must seek the authorisation of the Headteacher prior to taking photographs/videos of children and must only use school equipment to do so unless given specific authorisation by the Headteacher.
- Students will only be photographed where they are wearing full school uniform, PE or Dance kit, or appropriate clothing for extra-curricular activities or trips and visits.
- Students are encouraged to tell us if they are worried or unsure about any photographs that are taken of them.

The Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who work with Children and Young People provides detailed guidance on the taking of photographs and the storage of images.

23b. Parents/Carers or Members of the Public

We understand that parents/carers like to take photos or video of their children at school events. This is a normal part of family life, and we will not discourage parents/carers from celebrating their child's successes. However, we will always advise parents/carers that images should not be circulated on social media.

If there are Health and Safety issues associated with photography (e.g. the use of a flash when taking photos could distract or dazzle a child, causing an accident), we will encourage parents/carers to use film or settings on their camera that do not require flash.

Professional images of students will be taken annually for the website, publicity and other reasons. Only students with permission from parents/carers will be photographed for these purposes.

The school cannot be held accountable for the use of photographs or video footage taken by parents/carers or members of the public at school functions where parental permission has been given.

24. Confidentiality, Information Sharing and GDPR

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the student and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence to be used in formal proceedings.

Staff should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to children's social care or other external agencies.

Staff should only discuss concerns about a member of staff with the Headteacher, or Chair of Governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in school had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, Keeping Children Safe in Education emphasises that any member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018⁴, the [HM Government Information Sharing and Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers](#) and [DfE Data Protection in Schools](#). Hartford Church of England High School will consider where appropriate, information sharing prior to the child's formal transfer to their new setting. This could also include key staff from their new setting being invited to meetings e.g. Child Protection, Core Group or Team Around a Family (with consent of parents/carers and professionals).

At the point a child formally transfers to their new setting, their safeguarding file will be transferred securely in line with GDPR expectations as soon as possible, but within 5 working days.

Information sharing is guided by the following principles:

- Necessary and proportionate
- Relevant
- Adequate
- Accurate
- Timely
- Secure

Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

25. Contact Arrangements and Parental Responsibility

We recognise that a relationship breakdown can be very distressing for all involved, however, any contact arrangements must be agreed outside of school and school should not be put in a position where they are placed in the middle of contact disputes. We aim to make the school environment a calm and safe place for parents/carers and their children, as well as the whole school community, and we would be unable to do this if we are placed at the centre of disputes. Hartford Church of England High School is also unable to prevent anyone with parental responsibility (PR) from picking up a child from school unless there is a court order in place stating that the person with PR is not allowed to do so. This being said, the school will attempt to seek permission from the primary carer before releasing the child to an additional adult with PR.

26. Complaints and Compliments

Our Complaints Policy will be followed where a student or parent/carer raises a concern about poor practice towards a student that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a student, using sarcasm or humiliation as a form of control, bullying or belittling a student or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by the Headteacher and Governors. An explanation of the full procedure can be found in the Complaints Policy.

⁴ The Data Protection Act 2018 is the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
[Data Protection in Schools Gov.UK DfE Feb 2023](#)

Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's Complaints, Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.

Appendices

Appendix I – Categories of Abuse

Ia. Categories of Abuse

The four categories of abuse are:

- Physical Abuse.
- Emotional Abuse (including Domestic Abuse).
- Sexual Abuse (including child sexual exploitation).
- Neglect.

Ib. Signs of Abuse in Children

The following non-specific signs may indicate something is wrong:

- Significant change in behaviour.
- Extreme anger or sadness.
- Aggressive and attention-needing behaviour.
- Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations.
- Lack of self-esteem.
- Self-injury.
- Depression and/or anxiousness.
- Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Criminality.
- Substance abuse.
- Mental health problems.
- Poor attendance.
- Unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education.

Ic. Risk Indicators

The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:

- Must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm.
- Justifies the need for careful assessment and discussion with the school's designated safeguarding leads.
- May require consultation with and / or referral to Children's Services.

The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse or neglect has not occurred.

Where a child is experiencing an abusive relationship with their parent(s)/carer(s) the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parents/carers.
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different upbringings).

The parent or carer may:

- Persistently avoid child health promotion services and treatment of the child's episodic illnesses.
- Have unrealistic expectations of the child.

- Frequently complain about/to the child and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism/low warmth environment).
- Be absent or misusing substances.
- Persistently refuse to allow access on home visits.
- Be involved in domestic abuse.

Staff should be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals, previously known or suspected to have abused children, move into the child's household.

Id. Recognising Physical Abuse

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury.
- Several different explanations provided for an injury.
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment.
- The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury.
- Parents/carers are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment.
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a "cry for help" and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury).
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments.
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.

Bruising

Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as non-accidental unless there is evidence, or an adequate explanation provided:

- Bruising in or around the mouth.
- Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive).
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally.
- Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times.
- The outline of an object used e.g. belt marks, handprints or a hairbrush.
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting.
- Bruising around the face.
- Grasp marks on small children.
- Bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs may be an indicator of sexual abuse.

Birth marks, especially Mongolian Blue Spots, can mimic bruising. Mongolian Blue Spots can be identified (see below), however if in any doubt as to the cause of a bruise, the school will refer to the local authority guidance.

- Areas of skin hyperpigmentation – flat, not raised, swollen or inflamed.
- Not painful to touch.
- Usually present at birth or soon afterwards.
- Will not change in shape or colour within a few days.
- Normally uniform blue or grey in colour across the mark.
- Common in African, Middle Eastern, Mediterranean and Asian children.
- While most occur at the lower back and buttocks, they can appear anywhere (e.g. back of shoulder or limb). The scalp or face are rarely affected.
- Can be single or multiple, vary in size, but mostly are a few centimetres in diameter.
- Gradually fade over the years.

Bite Marks

Bite marks can leave clear impressions of teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3 cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child.

A medical opinion should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

Burns and Scalds

It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.:

- Circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine).
- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements.
- Burns of uniform depth over a large area.
- Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water of their own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks).
- Old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation.

Scars

A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

Fractures

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint. There are grounds for concern if:

- The history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent with the fracture type.
- There are associated old fractures.
- Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement.

I e. Recognising Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse. The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Developmental delay.
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent or carer.
- Indiscriminate attachment or lack of attachment.
- Aggressive behaviour towards others.
- Scapegoated within the family.
- Frozen watchfulness.
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence.
- Withdrawn or seen as a “loner” – has difficulty relating to others.

I f. Recognising Signs of Sexual Abuse

Children of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. Sexual abuse is particularly difficult for a child to talk about, and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities and home circumstances of any individual child or family. Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indicators are likely to be emotional or behavioural.

Some behavioural indicators associated with sexual abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct.
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age.
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation.
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts.
- Involvement in child sexual exploitation.
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g. for PE lessons or sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties).

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain or itching of genital area.
- Blood on underclothes.
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed.
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing.
- Frequently needing to go to the toilet.

Ig. Recognising Neglect

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include:

- Failure by parents/carers or carers to meet the basic essential needs of a child e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical care.
- A child is seen to be listless, apathetic and irresponsive with no apparent medical cause.
- Failure of a child to grow within a normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss.
- A child thrives away from the home environment.
- A child is frequently absent from school.
- A child is left with adults who are intoxicated or violent.
- A child is abandoned or left alone for excessive periods.
- A child is regularly left in charge of younger siblings for excessive periods of time.

Appendix 2 – Bullying and Racist Incidents

Our school policy on anti-bullying is clear. Children are explicitly told that the school will never condone bullying. This includes all forms of bullying e.g. cyber, racist, homophobic, gender related bullying and any form of hate crime. We keep a record of known bullying incidents which is shared with and analysed by the governing board. All staff are aware of the vulnerabilities of children and especially those with SEND.

If any form of bullying is particularly serious or constitutes a crime, the Headteacher and the DSL will inform relevant agencies, e.g. police and social care.

The subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in the PSHCE curriculum and through the school's behaviour curriculum, tutor time and collective worship activities.

Our policy on racist incidents is set out separately and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. We keep a record of racist incidents and provide them to Ofsted on request.

Appendix 3 – Radicalisation and Extremism

The Prevent Duty for England and Wales (2023) under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on education and other children's services to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Extremism is defined as 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs'. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

Some children are at risk of being radicalised; adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous.

Hartford Church of England High School is clear that the exploitation of vulnerable children and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern, and we follow the Department for Education guidance for schools and childcare providers on preventing children and young people from being drawn into terrorism⁵.

Hartford Church of England High School seeks to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right/ Neo Nazi /White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

Hartford Church of England High School staff receive training to help identify early signs of radicalisation and extremism. Indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation are detailed below.

Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable students to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the DfE advice Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014)⁶.

The school Governors, Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will assess the level of risk within the school in regard to radicalisation and put actions in place to reduce that risk.

When any member of staff has concerns that a student may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the designated safeguarding leads. They should then follow normal safeguarding procedures e.g. a referral to Channel. If the matter is urgent, then the Police must be contacted by dialling 999. In non-urgent cases where police advice is sought they should dial 101. The Department of Education has also set up a dedicated telephone helpline for staff and governors to raise concerns around Prevent (020 7340 7264).

The Prevent duty ensures schools and colleges have 'due regard' to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Channel is the voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to individuals that have been identified as being vulnerable to radicalisation. Prevent referrals may be passed to the multi-agency Channel panel to determine whether individuals require support.

[The Prevent Duty can be accessed via this link.](#) (School specific paragraphs 57-76)

[Summary of The Prevent Duty for Schools and Childcare Providers](#)

[The Prevent Duty, for Further Education Institutions](#)

Guidance on Channel <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance>

Further information can be obtained from the Home Office website.

⁵ [The Prevent Duty](#)

⁶ [Promoting Fundamental British Values](#)

Definitions

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy as:

Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as the demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:

- Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs.
- Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts.
- Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts; or
- Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.

There is no such thing as a “typical extremist”: those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.

Students may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.

Indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation and extremism include:

- Identity Crisis – the student is distanced from their cultural or religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society.
- Personal Crisis – the student may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging.
- Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student or student’s country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy.
- Unmet Aspirations – the student may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life.
- Experiences of Criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement or reintegration.
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – the student may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

However, this list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all children experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism. More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters.
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element.
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature.
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage.
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues.
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations.
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour.

- Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and/or personal crisis.

Appendix 4 - Domestic Abuse (including Operation Encompass)

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognised the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be “personally connected” (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).

Domestic abuse represents one quarter of all violent crime. It is actual or threatened physical, emotional, psychological, financial (economic) or sexual abuse. It involves the use of power and control by one person over another. It occurs regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, age, and religion, mental or physical ability. Domestic abuse can also involve other types of abuse.

We use the term domestic abuse to reflect that a number of abusive and controlling behaviours are involved beyond violence.

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse 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. In some cases, children may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Children who witness domestic abuse are at risk of significant harm.

Children affected by domestic abuse reflect their distress in a variety of ways. They may change their usual behaviour and become withdrawn, tired, start to wet the bed and have behavioural difficulties. They may not want to leave their house or may become reluctant to return. Others will excel, using their time at school as a way to escape from their home life. None of these signs are exclusive to domestic abuse so when staff are considering changes in behaviours and concerns about a child, they must think about whether domestic abuse may be a factor.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help for children. Police will inform the designated safeguarding leads within school if they have been called to a child's home.

As the key contact for Operation Encompass at Hartford Church of England High school, Stuart Cuthill (DDSL) has undertaken appropriate training [Online Key Adult Training : Operation Encompass](#)

Appendix 5 - Exploitation (including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and County Lines)

Child Criminal Exploitation 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.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in the exporting of illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line.'

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model, with children and vulnerable adults being exploited to move (and store) drugs and money. The same grooming models used to coerce, intimidate and abuse individuals for sexual and criminal exploitation are also used for grooming vulnerable individuals for county lines.

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence. 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.

Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative 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 children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. This power imbalance could be due to age, gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and/or access to economic or other resources. The abuse could be linked to an exchange for something the victim perceives that they need or want and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increase status) of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and adults or children (who themselves may be experiencing exploitation). The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It may involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Victims can be exploited even when the activity appears consensual, and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online. The experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different from boys, the indicators may not be the same and both boys and girls that are being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Where there are concerns that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually or criminally exploited staff should pass these to the designated safeguarding leads without delay. We are aware there is a clear link between regular school absence, CSE and CCE. Staff should consider a child to be at potential CSE/CCE risk in the case of regular school absence and make reasonable enquiries with the child and parents/carers to assess this risk.

The DSL/DDSL will use the Cheshire Contextual Safeguarding Assessment tool on all occasions when there is a concern that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually or criminally exploited or where indicators have been observed that are consistent with a child who is being or who is at risk of being sexually or criminally exploited. These assessments will indicate to the DSL/DDSL the potential level of risk and a referral to I-ART will be made for discussion at the Contextual Safeguarding Hub. If the DSL/DDSL is in any doubt, they will contact the SCiE team.

Hartford Church of England High School is aware that a child is often not able to recognise the coercive nature of the abuse and does not see themselves as a victim. As a consequence, the child may resent what they perceive as interference by staff. However, staff must act on their concerns as they would for any other type of abuse.

Hartford Church of England High School includes the risks of sexual and criminal exploitation in the PHSCE and RSE curriculum. Students will be informed of the grooming process and how to protect themselves from people who may potentially be intent on causing harm. They will be supported in terms of recognising and assessing risk in relation to CSE and CCE, including where this is online. They will be taught about how and where to get help.

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive or definitive, but it does highlight common signs which can assist professionals in identifying children or young people who may be victims of sexual or criminal exploitation.

Signs include (but are not limited to):

- Going missing from home or school.
- Regular school absence.
- Underage sexual activity.
- Inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour.
- Sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex.
- Repeat sexually transmitted infections.
- In girls, repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage.
- Receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources.
- Having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile.
- Online safety concerns such as youth produced sexual imagery or being coerced into sharing explicit images.
- Having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- changes in the way they dress.
- Going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends.
- Seen at known places of concern.
- Moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are.
- Getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults.
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends.
- Contact with known perpetrators.
- Involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations.
- Hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers.
- Associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation.
- Recruiting other young people to exploitative situations.
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual).
- Mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress.
- Self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders.
- Drug or alcohol misuse.
- Getting involved in crime.
- Police involvement, police records.
- Involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership.
- Injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault.

For further information on signs of a child's involvement in sexual exploitation: [Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners.](#)

For further information on County Lines: [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance](#)

Appendix 6 - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM. If a member of staff, in the course of their work, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, the member of staff must report this to the Police.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003 ("the 2003 Act"). It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.

Section 5B of the 2003 Act¹ introduces a mandatory reporting duty which requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s which they identify in the course of their professional work to the police. The duty came into force on 31 October 2015.

FGM involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

4 types of procedure:

- Type 1 Clitoridectomy – partial/total removal of clitoris.
- Type 2 Excision – partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora.
- Type 3 - Infibulation entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia.
- Type 4 - All other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising and scraping the genital area.

FGM may be carried out for the following reasons:

- FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage.
- Preserves a girl's virginity.
- Part of being a woman or a rite of passage.
- Upholds family honour.
- Cleanses and purifies the girl.
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community.
- Fulfils a religious requirement.
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition.
- Helps girls be clean and/or hygienic.
- Is cosmetically desirable.
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier.

FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights of girls and women. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act (2003). It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. A mandatory reporting duty requires teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s, which are identified in the course of their professional work, to the police⁷.

At Hartford Church of England High School, this duty applies to all people who are employed or engaged to carry out 'teaching work' in the school, whether or not they have qualified teacher status. The duty applies to the individual who becomes aware of the case to make a report. It should not be transferred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead; however, the DSL/DDSL should be informed.

If a teacher is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her, or a teacher observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18, and they have no reason to believe the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth, the teacher should personally make a report to the police force in which the girl resides by calling 101. The report should be made by the close of the next working day.

Staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators of FGM identified in this section of the Appendix. Concerns about FGM outside of the mandatory reporting duty should be reported as per our school's child protection procedures. Staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female students about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period. There should also be consideration of potential risk to other girls in the family and practicing community.

Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm the teacher should report the case immediately to the police, including dialling 999 if appropriate.

There are no circumstances in which a teacher or other member of staff should examine a girl.

⁷ [FGM procedural information](#)

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening are:

- A child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony.
- Family taking a long trip abroad.
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan).
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM.
- A child talking about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage.

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities.
- Behaviour changes on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued.
- Bladder or menstrual problems.
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable.
- Complaining about pain between the legs.
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about.
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves.
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity.
- Repeated urinal tract infection.
- Disclosure.

The 'One Chance' rule

As with Forced Marriage (outlined below) there is the 'One Chance' rule. It is essential that the school takes action **without delay** and makes a referral to I-ART.

Appendix 7 - Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities cannot) consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

Forced marriage is an appalling and indefensible practice and is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights. Since June 2014, forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage which is common in several cultures. The families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Staff should never attempt to intervene directly either in representing the school or through a third party. If there are concerns that a child has been or is being subjected to a forced marriage, contact will be made with I-ART by the DSL/DDSL.

Appendix 8 - So-Called Honour-Based Abuse

So-called honour-based abuse (HBA) can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such abuse can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

Honour based abuse might be committed against people who:

- Become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion.
- Want to get out of an arranged marriage.
- Want to get out of a forced marriage.
- Wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture.

It is a violation of human rights to commit honour-based abuse and this may constitute a form of domestic and/or sexual abuse. There is no, and cannot be, honour or justification for abusing the human rights of others.

Staff should never attempt to intervene directly either in representing the school or through a third party. If there are concerns that a child has been or is being subjected to honour-based abuse, contact will be made with I-ART by the DSL/DDSL.

Appendix 9 - One Chance Rule

All staff are aware of the 'One Chance' Rule' in relation to forced marriage, FGM and HBA. Staff recognise they may only have one chance to speak to a student who is a potential victim and have just one chance to save a life.

Hartford Church of England High School is aware that if the victim is not offered support following disclosure that the 'One Chance' opportunity may be lost. Therefore, all staff know their responsibilities and obligations when they become aware of potential forced marriage, FGM and HBV cases.

Appendix 10 - Mental Health

Staff will be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Whilst Hartford Church of England High School recognise that only appropriately trained professionals can diagnose mental health problems, staff are able to make day to day observations of children and identify such behaviour that may suggest they are experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Adverse Childhood Experiences and experiences of abuse and neglect can impact on a child's mental health, behaviour and education through to adolescence and adulthood. If staff have a concern about a child's mental health that is also a safeguarding concern, they will share this with the DSL or DDSL. Hartford Church of England High School will also refer to the Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools' guidance⁸.

When supporting children experiencing mental health difficulties Hartford Church of England High School has an extensive programme of support led by the Senior Assistant Headteacher, Mrs Helen Turner.

Appendix 11 - Private Fostering Arrangements

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents/carers. It applies to children under the age of 16 or 18 if the child is disabled. Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in residential schools, children's homes or hospitals are not considered to be privately fostered.

Private fostering occurs in all cultures, including British culture and children may be privately fostered at any age.

Hartford Church of England High School recognises that most privately fostered children remain safe and well but are aware that safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases. Therefore, all staff are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that the child has been trafficked into the country.

⁸ [Mental health and behaviour in schools: guidance](#)

By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible. However, where a member of staff becomes aware that a student may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will raise this with the DSL/DDSL and the DSL/DDSL will notify I-ART of the circumstances.

Appendix 12 - Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and neglect. Hartford Church of England High School will ensure that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after and previously looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children, Helen Turner and the DDSL have details of any child's social worker and the name and contact details of the Local Authority Virtual School Heads for children in care.

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children works with the Virtual School Heads to discuss how Student Premium Plus funding can be best used to support the progress of looked after children in the school and meet the needs in each child's personal education plan. The Designated Teacher will follow the statutory guidance 'Promoting the education of Looked After Children'.

Appendix 13 - Children Missing Education

At Hartford Church of England High School, the attendance of students is closely monitored. Hartford Church of England High School will hold more than one emergency contact number for students where reasonably possible. A child going missing or being absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual or criminal exploitation.

The DSL/DDSL, alongside the senior leader in charge of attendance, will monitor unauthorised absences and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority of any concerns. Where children go missing on repeat occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day, relevant safeguarding procedures will be put in place by the DSL/DDSL in conjunction with 'Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities'.

Staff must be alert to signs of absence, particularly where children are at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Appendix 14 - Child on Child Abuse (including Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and HSB)

The DSL/DDSL, Governing Board and Headteacher will pay due regard to Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025.

In most instances, the conduct of students towards each other will be managed by the school's Behaviour and Attitudes Policy. However, some allegations may be of such a serious nature that they may raise safeguarding concerns. Hartford Church of England High School recognises that children are capable of abusing their peers. It will not be passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.

Any concerns, disclosures or allegations of child-on-child abuse of any form should be referred to the DSL/DDSL using the school's child protection procedures as set out in this policy. Where a concern regarding child-on-child abuse has been disclosed to the DSL/DDSL, advice and guidance will be sought from the SCiE team and appropriate referrals made, and where it is clear a crime has been committed or there is a risk of crime being committed, the Police will be contacted.

Working with external agencies, the school will respond to the unacceptable behaviour. If a student's behaviour negatively impacts on the safety and welfare of other students, then safeguards will be put in place to promote the well-being of the students affected, and the victim and perpetrator will be provided with support.

Forms of child-on-child abuse are outlined below:

- Domestic abuse – an incident or pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, financial and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent against a current or former dating partner regardless of gender or sexuality.
- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- Child sexual exploitation – children under the age of 18 may be sexually abused in the context of exploitative relationships, contexts and situations by peers who are also under 18.
- Harmful sexual behaviour – children and young people presenting with sexual behaviours that are outside of developmentally 'normative' parameters and harmful to themselves and others
- Upskirting – which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or causing 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); and
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery).

In some cases serious youth violence⁹ may occur. This may constitute any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime, where the victim is aged 0-19' i.e. murder, manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm. Where this is the case, police and other agencies will be involved and the permanent exclusion of a child may be issued by the Headteacher.

The term child-on-child abuse can refer to all of the definitions outlined above and a child may experience one or multiple facets of abuse at any one time. There are also different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse (i.e. girls being sexually touched/assaulted, or boys being subjected to initiation/hazing type violence).

Hartford Church of England High School aims to reduce the likelihood of child-on-child abuse through:

- The established ethos of the school and its associated values; Happy, Achieving, Ready, Together, based on a Christian foundation of Caritas (Love) and Veritas (Truth)
- High expectations of behaviour, with an embedded culture of mutual respect.
- Clear consequences for unacceptable behaviour.
- Providing a developmentally appropriate PSHCE and RSE curriculum which develops students' understanding of healthy relationships, acceptable behaviour, consent and keeping themselves safe.
- Systems for any student to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, valued and believed.
- Robust risk assessments and providing targeted work for students identified as being a potential risk to other students and those identified as being at risk.

Research indicates that young people rarely disclose child-on-child abuse and that if they do, it is likely to be to their friends. Therefore, Hartford Church of England High School will also educate students in how to support their friends if they are concerned about them, that they should talk to a trusted adult in the school and what services they can contact for further advice.

⁹ [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#)

Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence and Harmful Sexual Behaviour

The boundary between what is abusive and what is part of normal childhood or youthful experimentation can be blurred. The determination of whether behaviour is developmental, inappropriate or abusive will hinge around the related concepts of true consent, power imbalance and exploitation. Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. This may include children and young people who exhibit a range of sexually problematic behaviour such as indecent exposure, obscene telephone calls, fetishism, bestiality and sexual abuse against adults, peers or children.

Staff at Hartford Church of England High School must be vigilant to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying).
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery).
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.
- Upskirting.

Developmental Sexual Activity

Developmental sexual activity encompasses those actions that are to be expected from children and young people as they move from infancy through to an adult understanding of their physical, emotional and behavioural relationships with each other. Such sexual activity is essentially information gathering and experience testing. It is characterised by mutuality and by the seeking of consent.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour

Inappropriate sexual behaviour can be inappropriate socially, inappropriate to development, or both. In considering whether behaviour fits into this category, it is important to consider what negative effects it has on any of the parties involved and what concerns it raises about a child or young person. It should be recognised that some actions may be motivated by information seeking, but still cause significant upset, confusion, worry, physical damage, etc. It may also be that the behaviour is "acting out" which may derive from other sexual situations to which the child or young person has been exposed. If an act appears to have been inappropriate, there may still be a need for some form of behaviour management or intervention. For some children, educational inputs may be enough to address the behaviour.

Abusive sexual activity includes any behaviour involving coercion, threats, aggression together with secrecy, or where one participant relies on an unequal power base. In order to more fully determine the nature of the incident the following factors should be given consideration.

The presence of exploitation in terms of:

Equality – Considering differentials of physical, cognitive and emotional development, power and control and authority, passive and assertive tendencies.

Consent – Agreement including all the following:

- Understanding what is proposed based on age, maturity, development level, functioning and experience.
- Knowledge of society's standards for what is being proposed.
- Awareness of potential consequences and alternatives.
- Assumption that agreements or disagreements will be respected equally.
- Voluntary decision.
- Mental competence.

Coercion – A child who abuses may use techniques like bribing, manipulation and emotional threats of secondary gains and losses where loss is of love, friendship, etc. Some may use physical force, brutality or the threat of these regardless of victim resistance.

In evaluating the sexual behaviour of children and young people, the above information will be used only as a guide. Further information and advice will be sought from the SCiE Team or found in the Cheshire West SCP Child-on child Abuse Guidance and Model Policy Framework.

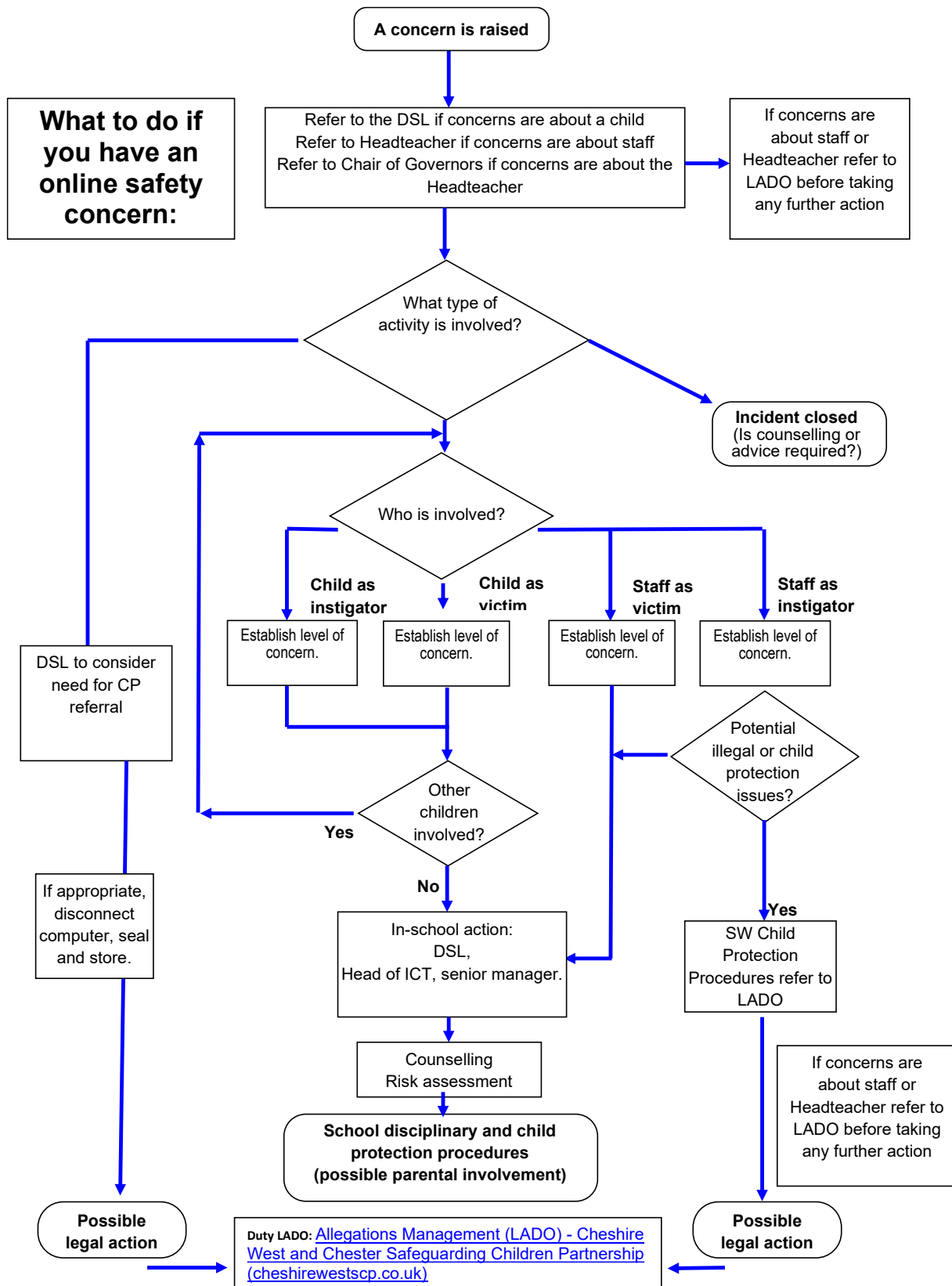
Appendix 15 - Online Safety

At Hartford Church of England High School, our students increasingly use electronic equipment on a daily basis to access the internet and share content and images via social media sites such as Facebook, twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and other social media.

Unfortunately, some adults and other children use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts or emails, to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexual behaviour such as webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. Students may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate material such as pornographic websites or those which promote extremist behaviour, criminal activity, suicide or eating disorders.

Hartford Church of England High School has an online safety policy which explains how we try to keep students safe in school and how we respond to online safety incidents (The following flowchart details Cheshire West and Chester SCiE Team's recommended course of action to take).

Hartford Church of England High School will also provide advice to parents/carers when students are being asked to learn online at home and consider how best to safeguard both students and staff through this medium. Students are taught about online safety throughout the curriculum and all staff receive online safety training which is regularly updated to include an understanding of the expectations, and their roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.



Appendix 16 - Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (Sexting)

The practice of children sharing images and videos via text message, email, social media or mobile messaging apps has become commonplace. However, this online technology has also given children the opportunity to produce and distribute sexual imagery in the form of photos and videos. Such imagery involving anyone under the age of 18 is illegal.

Youth produced sexual imagery refers to both images and videos where:

- A person under the age of 18 creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer under the age of 18.
- A person under the age of 18 shares sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 with a peer under the age of 18 or an adult.
- A person under the age of 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18.

At Hartford Church of England High School, all incidents of this nature will be treated as a safeguarding concern and staff will respond in line with the UKCIS guidance 'Sexting in Schools and Colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people'¹⁰, and 'Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes: how to respond to an incident.'¹¹ This also applies to 'deep fakes' and 'deep nudes', which refer to digitally manipulated and AI-generated nudes and semi-nudes.

Cases where sexual imagery of children under 18 has been shared by adults and where sexual imagery of a person of any age has been shared by an adult to a child is child sexual abuse and should be responded to accordingly.

If a member of staff becomes aware of an incident involving youth-produced sexual imagery, they should follow the child protection procedures and refer to the DSL/DDSL as soon as possible. The member of staff should confiscate the device involved and set it to flight mode or, if this is not possible, turn it off. Staff should not view, copy or print the youth produced sexual imagery.

The DSL/DDSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff and subsequent interviews with the children involved (if appropriate). Parents/carers should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is reason to believe that involving parents/carers would put the child at risk of harm. At any point in the process if there is concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral will be made to I-ART and/or the Police as appropriate.

Immediate referral at the initial review stage will be made to the I-ART/Police if:

- The incident involves an adult.
- There is good reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to special education needs and/or disabilities).
- What you know about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the child's development stage or are violent.
- The imagery involves sexual acts.
- The imagery involves anyone aged 12 or under.
- There is reason to believe a child is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example the child is presenting as suicidal or self-harming.

If none of the above apply then the DSL/DDSL will use their professional judgement to assess the risk to students involved and may decide, with input from the Headteacher, to respond to the incident without escalation to I-ART or the police. Such decisions will be recorded on CPOMS.

¹⁰ [Sexting in schools and colleges](#)

¹¹ [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident \(UCKIS\)](#)

In applying judgement, the DSL/DDSL will consider if:

- There is a significant age difference between the sender/receiver.
- There is any coercion or encouragement beyond the sender/receiver.
- The imagery was shared and received with the knowledge of the child in the imagery.
- The child is more vulnerable than usual i.e. at risk.
- There is a significant impact on the children involved.
- The image is of a severe or extreme nature.
- The child involved understands consent.
- The situation is isolated or if the image been more widely distributed.
- There other circumstances relating to either the sender or recipient that may add cause for concern i.e. difficult home circumstances.
- The children have been involved in incidents relating to youth produced imagery before.

At Hartford Church of England High School, if any of these circumstances are present the situation will be escalated according to our child protection procedures, including reporting to the police or I-ART. Otherwise, the situation will be managed within the school.

The DSL/DDSL will record all incidents of youth produced sexual imagery, including both the actions taken, actions not taken, reasons for doing so and the resolution on CPOMS.

Appendix 17 - Additional Resources

Further advice on child protection is available from:

NSPCC: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Childline: <http://www.childline.org.uk/pages/home.aspx>

Anti-Bullying Alliance: <http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

Beat Bullying: <http://www.beatbullying.org/>

Childnet International – Making the internet a great and safe place for children. This includes resources for professionals and parents/carers <http://www.childnet.com/>

Thinkuknow (includes resources for professionals and parents/carers) <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Safer Internet Centre <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>

Provision for transgender students: [Guidance for maintained schools and academies in England on provision for transgender students November 2022](#)

Appendix 18 - Safeguarding Children – Key Points

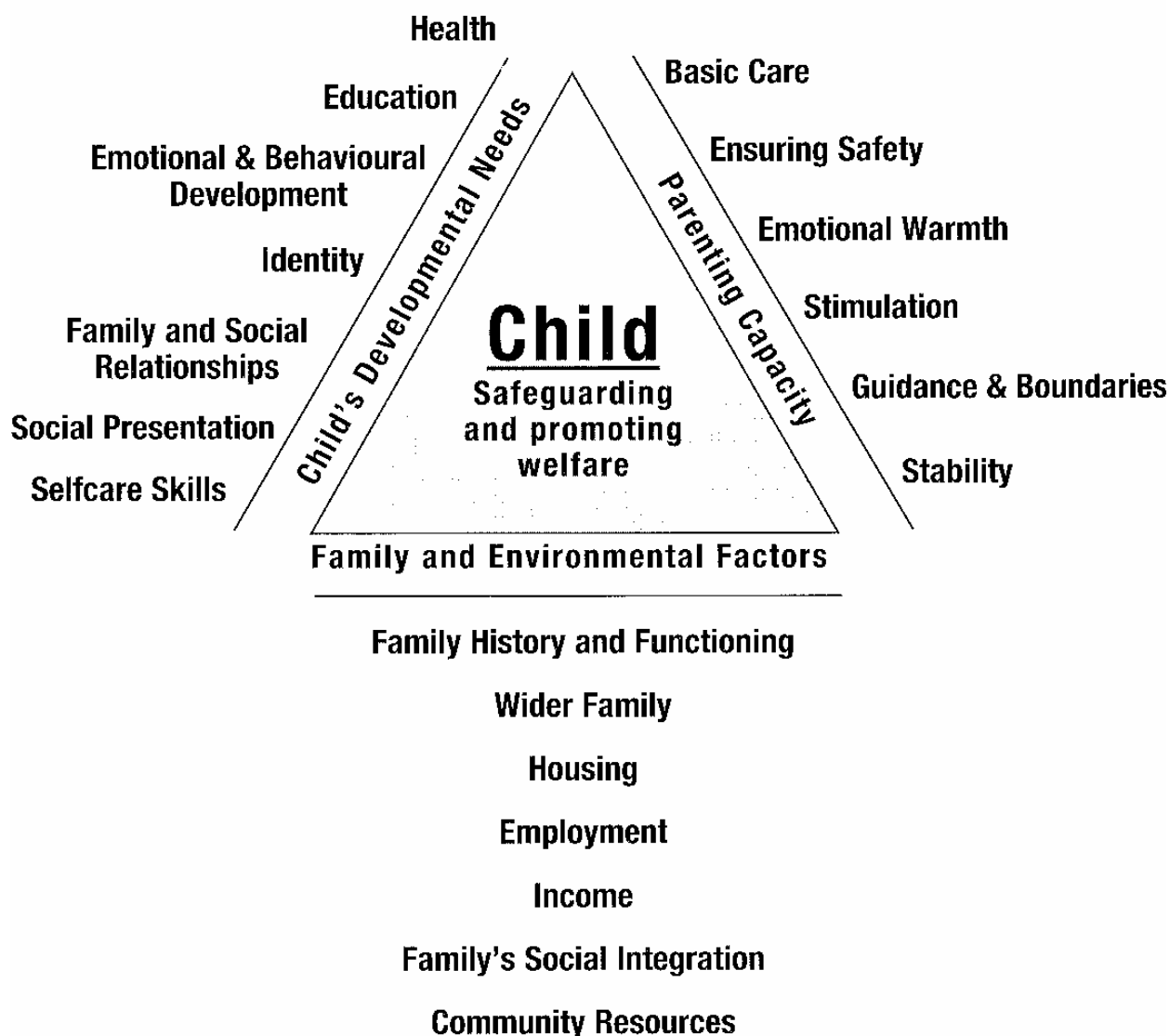
All adults in charge of or in contact with children or young people should know what to do if they suspect that someone is being physically, emotionally or sexually abused or neglected, or if someone tells them that this is happening. They must ensure that they are familiar with the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, a copy of which is located on the school's website. On request they will be provided with a printed copy.

In addition, the following key points give a guide as to what to do and not to do:

- **Always** stop and listen straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse.
- Make a note of what was said or observed as soon as possible and pass this to the DSL (Helen Turner) or DDSL (Stuart Cuthill) in person or on CPOMS at your earliest opportunity.

- Never make a promise that you will keep what is said confidential or secret. If you are told about abuse, you have a responsibility to tell the right people to get something done about it. You should explain that if you are going to be told something very important that needs to be sorted out, you will need to tell the people who can sort it out, but that you will only tell the people who absolutely have to know.
- Do not ask leading questions that might give your own ideas of what might have happened, e.g. "did he do X to you?" Just ask, "what do you want to tell me?" or "Is there anything else you want to say?"
- Immediately tell the DSL/DDSL unless they are the subject of the accusation. Don't tell other adults or young people what you have been told. If someone has made an accusation to you or you have concerns about the Headteacher, you should report your concerns to the Chair of Governors, Maurice McBride. Mr McBride can be contacted via the Clerk to the Governing Board - jwhite@hartfordhigh.co.uk.
- Discuss with the DSL/DDSL whether any steps need to be taken to protect the person who has told you about the abuse.
- **Never** attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected or alleged abuse by interviewing people etc. Children's Social Care and police officers are the people who have the authority to do this. You could cause more damage and endanger possible criminal proceedings. **It is your duty to refer concerns on, not investigate.**
- As soon as possible (and certainly the same day) the DSL/DDSL should refer the matter to the Integrated Access and Referral Team (I-ART) if a child is at risk of or suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Follow their instructions about what to do next. They will set up any necessary investigations. That is their statutory job. In the case of an allegation against an adult that works with children, the Headteacher, or the Chair of Governors where the allegation is against the Headteacher, should refer the matter to The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- **Never** think abuse is impossible in your organisation or assume that an accusation against someone you know well, and trust is bound to be wrong.
- Children and young people often tell other young people, rather than staff or other adults about abuse. Therefore, you may hear an allegation from another child. This should be acted upon in exactly the same manner as outlined above.

Assessment Framework Triangle



Appendix 20 - Essential Contacts

Role	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Helen Turner – hturner@hartfordhigh.co.uk
Headteacher	Rachel Pickerill – head@hartfordhigh.co.uk
Nominated Governor for Safeguarding	Tracey Lloyd – tlloyd@hartfordhigh.co.uk
Chair of Governors	Maurice McBride - Contact via the Clerk to the Governing Board – jwhite@hartfordhigh.co.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Stuart Cuthill – scuthill@hartfordhigh.co.uk
Named Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Paul Jenkins - https://www.cheshirewestlscb.org.uk/policy-and-procedures/allegations-management-lado/
Local Authority Safeguarding Children in Education Officer (SCiE)	Pam Beech – Northwich and Winsford - scie@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
Safeguarding Children in Education Manager (SCiE)	Kerry Williams – Kerry.williams@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
Local Authority Legal Services Helpline	Emma Sharples – Emma.Sharples@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
Local Authority Human Resources	Cheshire East HR Katie Dean Education HR Business Partner telephone: 01270 371427 mobile: 07786 686716 works: Mon - Wed and Friday Nuala Hadden Education HR Business Partner telephone: 01270 371427 mobile: 07885 189279 works: Tues - Fri
Integrated access and Referral Team 8.30-5pm Mon-Thurs 8.30-4.30 Fri	0300 123 7047

Emergency Duty Team (Out of hours)	01244 977 277
4.30pm-8am Mon-Thurs From 4pm Friday 24hours weekends and bank Holidays	
TAF Advisor	Hayley Bennett Hayley.Bennett@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
Safeguarding Children Partnership	www.cheshirewestscp.org.uk 0151 356 6494
School Health Advisor	School nurse (Starting Well Team) Lizzie Warr lizzie.warr1@nhs.net
CAMHS	cwp.cyp.mentalhealthhub@nhs.net
Cheshire Police	0845 458 0000 or 101 for non-emergencies 999 in case of emergency
Neighbourhood Policing Officer	PCSO Simon Donnelly - Simon.Donnelly@cheshire.police.uk

Appendix 2I - Roles and Responsibilities of Single Point of Contact (Radicalisation and Extremism)

Preventing Violent Extremism – Roles and Responsibilities of the Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

The SPOC for Hartford Church of England High School is Mr Stuart Cuthill, who is responsible for:

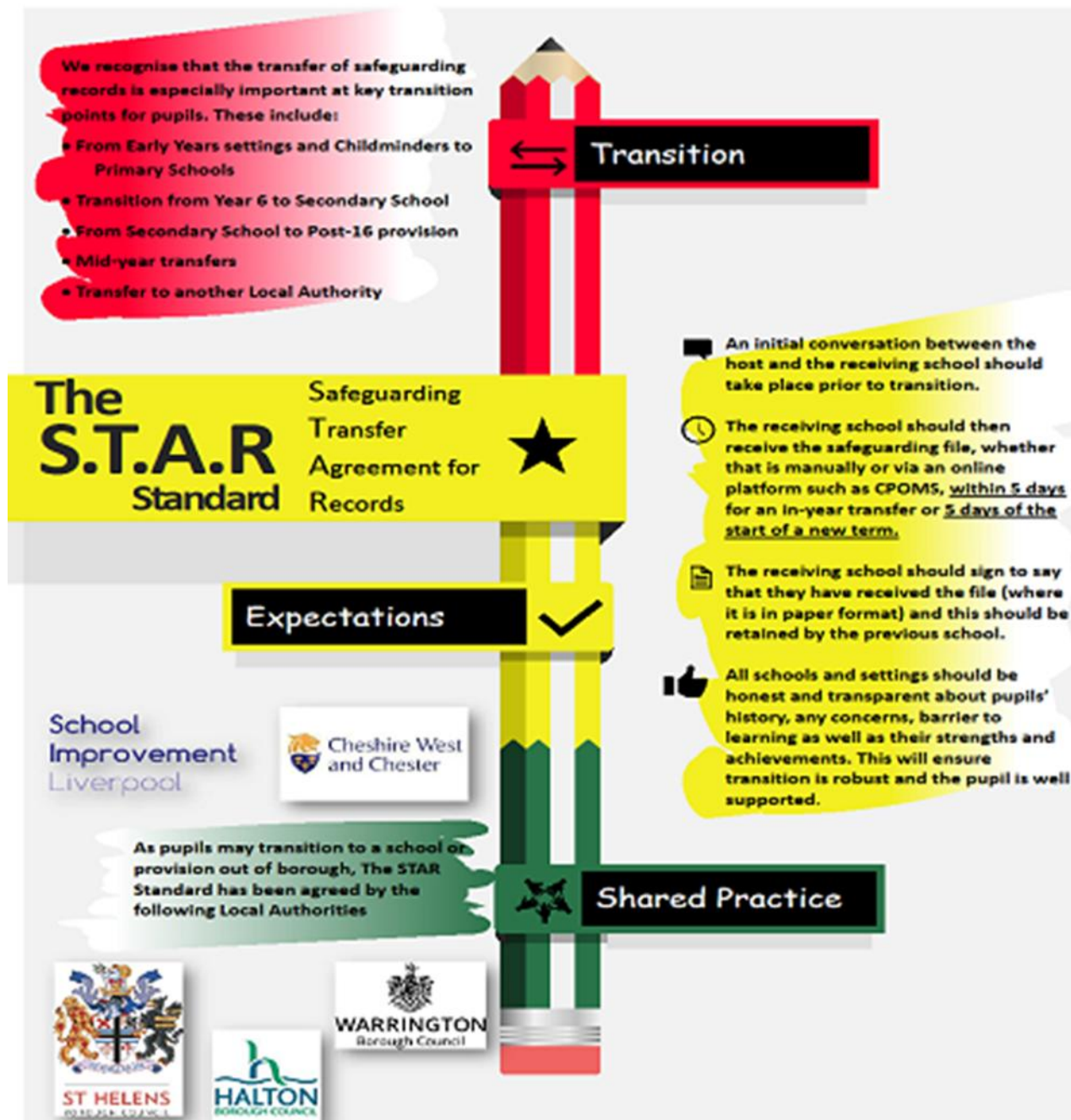
- Ensuring that staff of the school are aware that you are the SPOC in relation to protecting students/students from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism.
- Maintaining and applying a good understanding of the relevant guidance in relation to preventing students/students from becoming involved in terrorism, and protecting them from radicalisation by those who support terrorism or forms of extremism which lead to terrorism.
- Raising awareness about the role and responsibilities of Hartford Church of England High School in relation to protecting students/students from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism.
- Monitoring the effect in practice of the school's RE curriculum and assembly policy to ensure that they are used to promote community cohesion and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.
- Raising awareness within the school about the safeguarding processes relating to protecting students/students from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism.
- Acting as the first point of contact within the school for case discussions relating to students / students who may be at risk of radicalisation or involved in terrorism.
Collating relevant information from in relation to referrals of vulnerable students / students into the Channel* process;
- Attending Channel* meetings as necessary and carrying out any actions as agreed.

- Reporting progress on actions to the Channel* Co-ordinator.
- Sharing any relevant additional information in a timely manner.

* Channel is a multi-agency approach to provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorist related activity. It is led by Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority and the Cheshire Police Counter-Terrorism Unit, and it aims to:

- Establish an effective multi-agency referral and intervention process to identify vulnerable individuals.
- Safeguard individuals who might be vulnerable to being radicalised, so that they are not at risk of being drawn into terrorist-related activity.
- Provide early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risks they face and reduce vulnerability.

Appendix 22 – Transfer of Records



Date approved by Governing Board: 06/10/2025

Applicable from: 06/10/2025

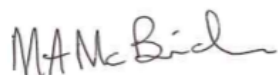
Signed by

Headteacher:



Date: 06/10/2025

Chair of Governors:



Date: 06/10/2025