Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Key contacts

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Reserve Designated Safeguarding Lead	Rachel Kelly	01787 279342 rkelly@stourvalley.org
Nominated Governor for Safeguarding and Child Protection	Nick Vosper	nvosper@stourvalley.org
Chair of Governors	Nick Vosper	nvosper@stourvalley.org
Chair of Trustees & Nominated Trustee for Safeguarding and Child Protection	Keith Haisman	keithhaisman@stourvalley.org
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)		**0300 123 2044** LADO@suffolk.gov.uk
Children's Social Care – for reporting concerns	Duty and Assessment Team - Suffolk	Customer First: **0808 800 4005** Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub Consultation Line: **0345 606 1499**
	Duty and Assessment Team - Essex	Chlidren and Families Hub: **0345 603 7627** Out of hours No: Telephone: **0345 606 1212**
Mental Health	Suffolk Wellbeing Service	Advice Line: **0300 123 1503**

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

1.2 Students' welfare is our paramount concern. The Governing Body will ensure that the School will safeguard and promote the welfare of students and work together with other agencies to ensure that our school has adequate arrangements to identify, assess and support those children who are suffering or likely to suffer harm.

2 ETHOS

2.1 We believe that the School should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of each individual child.

2.2 We aim to provide an environment within the School that will help children feel safe and respected. We recognise the importance of enabling children to talk openly and to feel confident that they will be listened to.

2.3 All adults within the school, including permanent and temporary staff, volunteers and Governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting students from harm.

2.4 We will work with parents to build an understanding of the School's responsibilities to ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.

3 SCOPE

3.1 In line with the law, this policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years.

3.2 This policy applies to all members of staff in our school, including all permanent, temporary and support staff, Governors, volunteers, contractors and external service or activity providers.

4 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on governing bodies of maintained schools and further education institutions to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are students at the school. Section 157 of the same Act places a similar duty on free schools and academies.

4.2 Under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, all maintained schools, including free schools and academies, are required to cooperate with the local authority to improve the well-being of children in the local authority area. Under section 14B of the Children Act 2004, the Local Safeguarding Children Board can require a school to supply information in order to perform its functions.

4.3 This policy and the accompanying procedures have been developed in accordance with the following statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures:
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children, 2018*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2023*
- *Suffolk County Council LSCB Policies, Guidance and Protocols*

5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 The person with overall responsibility for child protection and safeguarding is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). There are three Deputy DSLs, one of whom has specific responsibility for matters concerning e-safety. There is also a reserve DSL to ensure there is appropriate cover for this role at all times. The DSLs are an Assistant Headteacher and two Year Leaders and the role of DSL is explicit within this job description. The DSL's responsibilities are described in Appendix A.

5.2 The school has a nominated Governor responsible for safeguarding to champion good practice, to liaise with the Headteacher and to provide information and reports to the Governing Body.

5.3 The trust has a nominated Trustee responsible for safeguarding to ensure that policies remain fit for purpose, that best practice is followed and that the trustees can comply with their collective responsibility for making sure safeguarding procedures are properly followed.

5.4 The case manager for dealing with allegations of abuse made against school staff members is the Headteacher. The case manager for dealing with allegations against the Headteacher is the Chair of Governors. The procedure for managing allegations is detailed in Appendix C.

5.5 The Headteacher will ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are fully implemented with sufficient resources and time being allocated to enable staff members to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities.

5.6 The Governing Body is collectively responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the school's ethos and reflected in the school's day-to-day practice.

5.7 All staff members, Governors, volunteers and external providers know how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse, how to respond to students who disclose abuse and what to do if they are concerned about a child.

5.8 All staff are responsible for notifying the school of any relationships or associations they have outside of school (including online) that may have an implication for the safeguarding of children in school.

6 SUPPORTING CHILDREN

6.1 We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence. Children who have witnessed domestic violence/abuse are also victims themselves. These children are likely to have low self-esteem and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helpless, humiliated and some sense of blame. SVCS may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives.

6.2 We accept that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal, to aggressive or withdrawn.

6.3 Safeguarding Children with SEN & Disabilities (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023)
All staff are aware that changes in student behaviour might not be a manifestation of their Special Educational Need, in addition to the following:

- Behaviour, mood and injury may relate to abuse and not just their SEN or disability;
- Higher risk of peer group isolation
- Disproportionate impact of bullying;

- Difficulties with communication
- Extra pastoral support to be considered as appropriate.

6.4 Our school will support all students by:
- ensuring the content of the curriculum includes social and emotional aspects of learning;
- ensuring a comprehensive curriculum response to e-safety, enabling children and parents to learn about the risks of new technologies and social media and to use these responsibly;
- SVCS has a whole school approach to online safety and has a clear approach to the use of communications technology in school. (SVCS E-Safety Policy) This includes:
  - Establishing a safe ICT learning environment within the school, including filtering that is set up to the correct level, and transparent monitoring of the internet and online technologies.(Section 3 SVCS E-Safety Policy)
  - Students are allowed to have mobile phones in their possession as long as they are turned off and stored securely out of sight. They may be used in lessons only with the explicit permission of a member of staff. (Section 9 SVCS E-Safety Policy)
- ensuring that child protection is included in the curriculum to help children stay safe, recognise when they are at risk and know how to get help when they need it;
- providing students with a number of appropriate adults to approach if they are in difficulties;
- ensuring that there a range of reporting mechanisms that students, families and staff can use to raise safeguarding concerns. These include but are not limited to:
  - Toot Toot – All students have access to anonymous safeguarding reporting app
  - direct email to staff
  - direct telephone contact with staff
  - dedicated safeguarding email mailbox: safe@stourvalley.org
  - student self-referral post-boxes
  - staff available for face-to-face meetings
  - staff reporting a concern form
- adopting a stance where it is recognised that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported, with staff aware of the signs that a student may need support;
- supporting the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence;
- encouraging development of self-esteem and self-assertiveness while not condoning aggression or bullying;
- ensuring repeated hate incidents, e.g. racist, homophobic or gender or disability-based bullying, are considered under child protection procedures;
- liaising and working together with other support services and those agencies involved in safeguarding children;
- monitoring children who have been identified as having welfare or protection concerns and providing appropriate support.
- Children Missing Education (CME): Close monitoring of attendance; contacting home in cases of unexplained non-attendance and engaging with the EWO in cases where attendance is a persistent issue. In some cases alternative provision or personalised timetables may be offered.
- seeking, wherever possible, to hold at least two (up-to-date) emergency contact details per student.
- considering wider environmental factors in a child's life that might impact on their safety and welfare (Contextual Safeguarding) *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges 2023*

- being aware of the potential barriers to children disclosing abuse, such as:
  - Children might not be ready or know how to tell someone about abuse they've experienced
  - Children might not recognise their experiences as harmful
  - They might be embarrassed, humiliated or threatened not to tell anyone about their abuse
  - Their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation or any language barriers could also be reasons why they don't tell someone about their experiences

7 CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

7.1 We have developed a structured procedure in line with Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board and Essex Safeguarding Children Board procedures which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse. This is detailed in Appendix C.

7.2 The names of the DSL and Deputy DSLs will be clearly advertised in the School, with a statement explaining the responsibilities of all adults with regard to safeguarding.

7.3 Parents and carers will be made aware of the responsibilities of staff members to safeguard and promote the welfare of children through publishing the policy and procedures on the school's website.

8 RECORD KEEPING

8.1 All child protection and welfare concerns will be recorded and transferred in line with guidance within Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023), which requires records to be transferred within 5 days of an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of the new term. In the event that there is a delay in post-16 settings providing admissions lists, the school will endeavour to transfer files as soon as practicable after lists are received.

8.2 The school records, monitors and manages all safeguarding concerns using CPOMS Safeguarding Software for Schools.

8.3 We will continue to support any student leaving the School about whom there have been concerns by ensuring that all appropriate information, including child protection and welfare concerns, is forwarded under confidential cover to the student's new school as a matter of priority.

9 SAFER WORKFORCE AND MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

9.1 People who pose risks to children will be prevented from working at SVCS by ensuring that all individuals working in any capacity at SVCS have been subjected to safeguarding checks in line with the statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2023.*

9.2 Agencies and third parties supplying staff will be required to provide evidence that the appropriate level of safeguarding checks on individuals working in the School have been undertaken. This also applies to off-site Alternative Providers, who will be required to supply written confirmation that their staff have been subject to the necessary checks, in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2023.*

9.3 Every job description and person specification will have a clear statement about the safeguarding responsibilities of the post holder.

9.4 We will ensure that at least one member of every interview panel has completed safer recruitment training.

9.5 There is a procedure in place to handle allegations against members of staff and volunteers in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2023.* This procedure is detailed in Appendix C.

10 STAFF INDUCTION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

10.1 All new members of staff will be given induction, proportionate to staff members' roles and responsibilities, that includes basic child protection training on how to recognise signs of abuse, how to respond to any concerns, e-safety and familiarisation with the safeguarding and child protection policy, staff code of conduct, Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2023, and other related policies.

10.2 The DSL and Deputy(ies) will undergo updated child protection training every two years.

10.3 All staff members of the school will undergo safeguarding and child protection training (whole-school training) which is regularly updated at least every three years. This will be supplemented by, at least, annual updates. All Governors must undergo safeguarding and child protection training at least every three years. The Governing body will have access to safeguarding training and the Named Governor for Safeguarding will also undertake additional training at least every two years to support their employer's role in Handling Allegations against adults who work with children and young people, including our staff and volunteers.

10.4 The nominated Governor for safeguarding and child protection will undergo Governor Services training prior to or soon after appointment to the role; this training will be updated every three years.

10.5 We will ensure that staff members provided by other agencies and third parties, e.g. supply teachers and contractors, have received appropriate child protection training commensurate with their roles. They will be given the opportunity to take part in whole-school training if it takes place during their period of work for the School.

10.6 The DSL will provide an annual briefing to the School on any changes to child protection legislation and procedures and relevant learning from local and national serious case reviews.

10.7 The School will maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

11 CONFIDENTIALITY, CONSENT AND INFORMATION SHARING

11.1 We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.

11.2 The Headteacher or the DSL will disclose any information about a student to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only.

11.3 All staff members must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being.

11.4 All staff members have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

11.5 All staff members will be given appropriate training to understand the purpose of information sharing in order to safeguard and promote children's welfare. This is covered in greater detail in Appendix C.

11.6 The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent. *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges 2023.*

12 INTER-AGENCY WORKING

12.1 We will develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, including those providing early help to children, the Police and Children's Social Care.

12.2 We will ensure that relevant staff members participate in multi-agency meetings and forums, including child protection conferences and core groups.

12.3 We will participate in serious case reviews, other reviews and file audits as and when required to do so by the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board.

13 CONTRACTORS, SERVICE AND ACTIVITY PROVIDERS

13.1 We will ensure that contractors and providers are aware of our school's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.

13.2 We will seek assurance that employees and volunteers provided by these organisations and working with our children have been subjected to the appropriate level of safeguarding check in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2023.* Where this is not the case adults will be required to wear a green visitors' lanyard and will be escorted at all times.

14 WHISTLE-BLOWING AND COMPLAINTS

14.1 We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff members fail to do so.

14.2 We will ensure that all staff members are 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. If necessary, they will speak with the Headteacher, Chair of Governors or the Local Authority Designated Officer.

14.3 We have a clear reporting procedure for children, parents and other people to report concerns or complaints, including abusive or poor practice.

15 ONLINE SAFETY

15.1 The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues, for example, technology often provides the platform that facilitates child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and sexual predation.

15.2 There are three categories of risk:

- Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material, for example, pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views;
- Contact: being exposed to harmful online interaction with other users, for example, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults; and
- Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying.

15.3 The governing body has had due regard to the additional information and support set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2023* and will ensure that the school has a whole school approach to online safety and has a clear policy on use of communications technology in school.

15.4 There is a deputy DSL who has specific responsibility for matters relating to E-safety.

16 SITE SECURITY

16.1 All staff members have a responsibility to ensure our buildings and grounds are secure and for reporting concerns that may come to light.

16.2 We check the identity of all visitors and volunteers coming into school. Visitors are expected to sign in and out in the office visitors' log and to display a visitor's badge while on the school site. Anyone wearing a visitor badge with a green lanyard should be escorted at all times. Any individual who is not known or identifiable will be challenged for clarification and reassurance.

16.3 The School will not accept the behaviour of any individual, parent or anyone else, that threatens school security or leads others, child or adult, to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse the person access to the school site.

17 QUALITY ASSURANCE

17.1 We will ensure that systems are in place to monitor the implementation of and compliance with this policy and accompanying procedures.

17.2 The Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body will ensure that action is taken to remedy, without delay, any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in child protection arrangements.

18 POLICY REVIEW

18.1 This policy and the procedures will be reviewed annually.

APPENDIX A

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

1 MANAGING REFERRALS
1.1 Refer all cases of suspected abuse to Suffolk or Essex Children's Social Care and, if appropriate, to the Police.
1.2 Liaise with the Headteacher about safeguarding issues relating to individual children, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
1.3 Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff members on matters of child protection and safeguarding.
1.4 Liaise with agencies providing early help services and coordinate referrals from the school to targeted early help services for children in need of support.

2 RECORD KEEPING
2.1 Keep written records of child protection and welfare concerns with regard to Suffolk and Essex Local Safeguarding Board guidance. Maintain a chronology of significant incidents for each child with safeguarding concerns.
2.2 Ensure a CPOMS electronic log is created as necessary for children with safeguarding concerns. Any paper records are kept confidentially and securely and separate from the child's educational record.
2.3 When a child leaves SVCS, the DSL will make contact with the new school and will ensure that the child protection file is forwarded to the receiving school in an appropriately agreed manner. The school will retain evidence to demonstrate how the file has been transferred. Where a parent elects to remove their child from the school roll to home educate, the school will retain the records until requested by a new provider.

3 INTER-AGENCY WORKING AND INFORMATION SHARING
3.1 Cooperate with Children's Social Care for all enquiries about students.
3.2 Attend, or ensure other relevant staff members attend, child protection conferences, core group meetings and other multi-agency meetings, as required.
3.3 Liaise with other agencies working with the child, share information as appropriate and contribute to assessments.

4 TRAINING
4.1 Undertake appropriate training, **updated every two years**, in order to
   - be able to recognise signs of abuse and how to respond to them, including special circumstances such as child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, fabricated or induced illness;
   - understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention in Suffolk and Essex;
   - have a working knowledge of how the local authority conducts initial and review child protection case conferences and contribute effectively to these;
   - be alert to the specific needs of Children in Need (as specified in section 17 of the Children Act 1989), those with special educational needs, pregnant teenagers, young carers and children affected by parental imprisonment.
4.2 Organise whole-school child protection training for all staff members at least every three years, provide at least annual update training for staff and maintain accurate records of staff induction and training. Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, including providing induction on these matters to new staff members.

4.3 Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any action the school takes to protect them.

5 AWARENESS RAISING

5.1 Review the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures annually and liaise with the School's Governing Body to update and implement them

5.2 Make the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures available publicly and raise awareness of parents that referrals about suspected abuse may be made and the role of the school in any investigations that ensue.

5.3 Provide an annual briefing to the school on any changes to child protection legislation and procedures and relevant learning from local and national serious case reviews.

6 QUALITY ASSURANCE

6.1 Monitor the implementation of and compliance with policy and procedures, including periodic audits of child protection and welfare concerns files.

6.2 Complete an annual audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements at frequencies specified by the Suffolk Local Safeguarding Children Board.

6.3 Provide regular reports to the Governing Body detailing changes and reviews to policy, the number of children with Child Protection plans and other relevant data.

6.4 Take lead responsibility for remedying any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in child protection arrangements.

APPENDIX B

THE ROLE OF THE SAFEGUARDING TRUSTEE

- Report regularly to the Trust Board to ensure that trustees can comply with their collective responsibility for making sure that safeguarding procedures are properly followed.

- Act as a co-ordinator for safeguarding local governors.

- Meet with nominated safeguarding local governors, and DSL's where appropriate, to ensure that policies remain fit for purpose and that best practice is followed.

- Receive termly safeguarding reports from local safeguarding governors in order to be alerted to safeguarding trends or patterns.

- Receive reports of safeguarding audits.

- Ensure that the child protection policy is understood across the layers of governance and by all stakeholders.

- Ensure the trustees, local governors and staff are trained sufficiently, and regularly oversee the Trust's Single Central Record, and ensure the proper procedures are in place for it to be administered correctly.

APPENDIX C

Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedure

1   DEFINITIONS

1.1 **Abuse**, including neglect, is a form of maltreatment. A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused within their family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger.

1.2 **Children** are any people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday; a 16-year-old, whether living independently, in further education, in the armed forces or in hospital, is a child and is entitled to the same protection and services as anyone younger.

1.3 **Child protection** is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and refers to activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

1.4 **Early help** means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years to teenage years.

1.5 **Harm** is ill treatment or impairment of health and development, including impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

1.6 **Safeguarding children** is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (2022)* as:
- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Making sure children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

1.7 **Significant harm** is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in the family in the best interests of the child. Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 states 'where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.'

2   CATEGORIES OF ABUSE
2.1 **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such that it causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:
- making a child feel worthless, unloved or inadequate
- only there to meet another's needs
- inappropriate age or developmental expectations
- overprotection and limitation of exploration, learning and social interaction
- seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another, e.g. domestic abuse
- making the child feel worthless and unloved - high criticism and low warmth
- serious bullying

- exploitation or corruption

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

2.2 **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, it may involve a parent failing to:
- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care givers
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

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

2.4 **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Activities may involve physical contact, including penetration of any part of the body, or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at or in the production of sexual images, including on the internet, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Child sexual exploitation is also sexual abuse; it involves children and young people receiving something, for example accommodation, drugs, gifts or affection, as a result of them performing sexual activities, or having others perform sexual activities on them. It could take the form of grooming of children, e.g. to take part in sexual activities or to post sexual images of themselves on the internet.

3 SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

3.1 School staff members need to be aware of specific safeguarding issues and be alert to any risks. Specific issues could include child sexual exploitation, fabricated or induced illness, female genital mutilation, private fostering, etc., and the school procedures to respond to risks.

3.2 The government website, gov.uk, has broad government guidance on a variety of issues. The following is not a comprehensive list but highlights more common issues;
- child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- children missing from education (CME)
- County Lines
- bullying including cyberbullying
- domestic abuse
- drugs
- 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
- private fostering
- preventing radicalisation and the Prevent duty
- sexting
- all forms of child-on-child abuse
- sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools
- trafficking

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

Teachers and school staff are more likely to see victims on a regular basis than almost any other professional. They will notice recurrent or prolonged absences and significant changes in behaviour. The use of the chronology and attendance reviews will enable these patterns to be identified. They are key to identifying children at risk and raise concerns at an early stage, to potentially halt the grooming process before sexual exploitation has begun.

Due to the nature of the grooming methods used by their abusers, it is very common for children and young people who are sexually exploited not to recognise that they are being abused. Practitioners should be aware that young people may believe themselves to be acting voluntarily and will need practitioners to work with them so they can recognise that they are being sexually exploited.

3.4 **Further information in children missing from education (CME)**
A child going missing from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.
There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:
- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

3.4 Further information on child criminal exploitation: County Lines

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns.

Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism95 should be considered. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

• can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
• can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
• can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
• can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
• can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and
• is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources

3.5 Further information on Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care.

Guidelines for school sets out how staff can make a difference; 'Girls who are threatened with, or who have undergone, FGM may withdraw from education, restricting their educational and personal development. They may feel unable to go against the wishes of their parents and consequently may suffer emotionally. Staff may become aware of a student because she appears anxious, depressed and emotionally withdrawn. They may be presented with a sudden decline in her performance, aspirations or motivation. There may be occasions when a student comes to school or college but then absents herself from lessons, possibly spending prolonged periods in the bathroom.

Students who fear they may be at risk of FGM can often come to the attention of, or turn to, a member of staff before seeking help from the police or social services. Sometimes the student's friends report it to staff. Members of staff are in an ideal position to identify and respond to a victim's needs at an early stage'

3.6 Further information on Preventing Radicalisation

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, places a duty on specified authorities, including local authorities and education in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism, 'the Prevent duty'.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on local authorities to ensure Channel panels are in place. Panels will assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and, where considered appropriate, arrange for support to be provided to those individuals. The Act will require partners of Channel panels, which includes schools, to co-operate with the panel in the carrying out of its functions and with the police in undertaking the initial assessment as to whether a referral is appropriate.

'Channel' is the name for the process of referring a person for early intervention and support, including identifying people at risk of being drawn into terrorism, assessing the nature and extent of that risk, and developing the most appropriate support plan for the people concerned. The Channel process is about safeguarding children, young people and adults from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activity. It is about early intervention to protect and divert people away from risk before a crime occurs.

3.7 Further information on Child-on-Child abuse
Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school and online.
Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:
- Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Where children abuse their peers online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.

3.8 Further information on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools
Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur:
- Between 2 children of any age and sex
- Through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children
- Online and face to face (both physically and verbally)

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school.

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that staff make sure they are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:
- Challenging inappropriate behaviours and the use of sexually inappropriate language
- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them

Further information can be found in KCSIE 2023, Part 5

3.9 Further information on Online Safety
The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues, for example, technology often provides the platform that facilitates child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and sexual predation.

There are three categories of risk:

- Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material, for example, pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views;
- Contact: being exposed to harmful online interaction with other users, for example, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults; and
- Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying.

3.10 Self-harm and suicidal behaviour
Definition - Self harm, self-mutilation, eating disorders, suicide threats and gestures by a child must always be taken seriously and may be indicative of a serious mental or emotional disturbance.

3.11 Domestic Abuse
Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. The government has issued statutory guidance to provide further information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including the impact on children. All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases,

a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

4 RECOGNITION

4.1 Staff members should recognise that all families are different but that they should raise any concerns with the DSL.

4.2 In an abusive relationship, the child may appear frightened of their parent or act in a way that is inappropriate to their age and development.

4.3 In an abusive relationship, the parent may persistently avoid child health services and treatment of the child's illnesses, have unrealistic expectations of the child and fail to provide attention or praise, be misusing substances, persistently refuse to allow access on home visits by professionals or be involved in domestic violence and abuse.

4.4 Any child may benefit from early help, but all 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 frequently missing/goes missing from care or home;
   • is a young carer;
   • is LGBTQ+
   • is misusing drugs or alcohol;
   • is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse; and/or
   • has returned home to their family from care.

5 ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE MADE AGAINST OTHER CHILDREN

5.1 We believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students. We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the School's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

5.2 Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a student, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:
   • is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
   • raises risk factors for other students in the school
   • indicates that other students may have been affected by this student
   • indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

5.3 Examples of safeguarding issues against a student could include:

Physical Abuse - violence, particularly pre-planned or forcing others to use drugs or alcohol

Emotional Abuse – blackmail, extortion or threats and intimidation

Sexual Abuse - indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults and forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting

Sexual Exploitation - encouraging other children to attend inappropriate parties or photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts; Criminal offences such as 'Upskirting'.

5.4 When an allegation of 'child-on-child abuse' is made by a student against another student, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern the DSL should be informed. If it is deemed to be a safeguarding issue then a referral will be made to the appropriate Children's Social Services. In situations where the School considers a safeguarding risk is present a risk assessment will be prepared. Examples of peer on peer abuse include but are not limited to: Bullying (including cyber-bullying), physical abuse, sexual violence & harassment, upskirting, sexting, 'Youth-produced sexual imagery', initiation violence and rituals.

6 WHAT ACTION TO TAKE IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD

6.1 All concerns about a child should be reported to the DSL in person, in writing, on the report form or by passworded email. It is expected that all staff will use CPOMS for recording their concerns. Sharing initial concerns is more important than the format for reporting. In the absence of the DSL, the Deputy DSL should be informed, or the Headteacher.

7 DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE MADE BY A CHILD – ADVICE FOR ALL MEMBERS OF STAFF

7.1 If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff or volunteer should follow this guidance.
- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Only ask questions when necessary to clarify.
- Accept what is being said.
- Allow the child to talk freely – do not put words in the child's mouth.
- Reassure the child that what has happened is not his or her fault.
- Do not make promises that you may not be able to keep.
- Do not promise confidentiality – it may be necessary to refer the child to Children's Social Care.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.
- Inform the DSL without delay.
- Dealing with a disclosure from a child and safeguarding issues can be stressful. Consider seeking support for yourself and discuss this with the DSL.

8 INFORMATION SHARING AND CONSENT

8.1 It is essential that people working with children can confidently share information as part of their day-to-day work. This is necessary not only to safeguard and protect children from harm but also to work together to support families to improve outcomes for all.

8.2 The School may have to share information about parents or carers, such as their medical history, disability or substance misuse issues, for investigations of child abuse carried out by Children's Social Care. The General Data Protection Regulations (2018) is not a barrier to sharing information. It is there to ensure that personal information is managed in a sensible way and that a balance is struck between a person's privacy and public protection.

8.3 The School will proactively seek out information as well as sharing it. This means checking with other professionals whether they have information that helps us to be as well informed as possible when working to support children.

8.4 The DSL will keep a record of decisions to share information, with or without consent, and the reasons for it.

9 PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE AND DISAGREEMENTS

9.1 Working with children and families, and in particular child protection work, is stressful and complex, as well as involving uncertainty and strong feelings. To ensure that the best decisions are made for children, we need to be able to challenge one another's practice.

9.2 A culture with be promoted within the school that enables all staff members to raise, without fear of repercussions, any concerns they may have about the management of child protection in the school. This may include raising concerns about decisions, action and inaction by colleagues about individual children. If necessary, staff members will speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors or with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

9.3 If there are any professional disagreements with practitioners from other agencies, the DSL or the Headteacher will raise concerns with the relevant agency's safeguarding lead in line with guidance from Suffolk LSCB.

9.4 If the school disagrees with the Child Protection Conference chair's decision, the DSL or the Headteacher will consider whether they wish to challenge it further and raise the matter with Children's Services Head of Safeguarding.

10 SAFER RECRUITMENT

10.1 The school has robust recruitment and vetting procedures to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children. SVCS job advertisements and application packs make explicit reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding children, including compliance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) process and clear statements in the job description and person specification about the staff member's safeguarding responsibilities.

10.2 All staff members who have contact with children, young people and families will have appropriate pre-employment checks in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2023.*

10.3 At least one member on every short listing and interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training.

10.4 All appointments to school management level posts (including Governors/Trustees; Headteacher; Senior Leadership Team and Departmental Leaders) will be subject to a Section 128 Check to ensure that they are not prohibited from school management. This is part of the DBS check. In line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2023.*

10.5 The Headteacher, Business Manager and the Nominated Governor for Child Protection are responsible for ensuring that the single central record is accurate and up to date.

11 PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE MADE AGAINST SCHOOL STAFF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

11.1 The School aims is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for the children at SVCS. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

11.2 Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

11.3 If an allegation is made or information is received about an adult who works in our setting which indicates that they may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the information should inform the Headteacher immediately. Should an allegation be made against the Headteacher, this will be reported to the Chair of Governors. In the event that neither the Headteacher nor Chair of Governors is contactable on that day, the information must be passed to and dealt with by either the member of staff acting as Headteacher or the Vice Chair of Governors.

11.4 In cases where an allegation meets the harms threshold as set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2023,* the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will contact the LADO. No member of staff or the Governing Body will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the LADO.

11.5 Where allegations are considered not to meet the harms threshold it is the responsibility of the headteacher to ensure that these are addressed and investigated promptly in order that an appropriate course of action can be implemented.

11.6 Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors should contact LADO directly.

11.7 The school has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO.

Ratified by Governing Body	SVCS LGB
Date	28 November 2023