

Keeping Children Safe in School

Safeguarding our children: Early Help through to Child Protection

Policy and Guidance for Durham Schools



The Oaks Secondary School

Executive Head Teacher: Mrs A E English
Head of School: Mr M Tweddle
Chair of Governing Body: Mr C Hubery
Safeguarding Governor: Mrs M Farrow

Approved by:	Children's Committee	Date: 13 th December 2023
Signed by:	(Chair)	
Last reviewed on:	October 2023	
Next review due by:	Autumn 2024	

Safeguarding and Child Protection Training Summary

Our school complies with the advice laid down in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018 (July 2022 update) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2023 to undertake regular training.

A record of those trained may be found on the Safeguarding Drive- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Documents- Training. Hard copies of staff certificates are kept, to verify the attendance of individuals, in the assistant head teacher's office. Child protection and safeguarding training form a key part of our induction processes. All staff will receive regular updates regarding child protection and safeguarding as necessary and at least annually. This training includes Safeguarding Level one, Safeguarding children with SEN and The Oaks in house policy and procedures. Staff may also undertake additional training in related subjects such as self-harm.

Training for the designated safeguarding lead and other designated teachers in school is undertaken every 2 years.

We recognise that, as a minimum, schools should ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead undertakes Prevent awareness training and is thus able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation (The Prevent duty DFE March 23 update). At The Oaks we have a member of staff who leads on Prevent, Mr C Farrow.

	Name	Training	Date
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs R Farrow	DSL Training Prevent, CSE, FGM, Child Criminal Exploitation (Incl County Lines)	March 2023 July 2020
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Mr M Tweddle Mrs R Dobinson Mrs F Tweddle Mr M Broom Mrs J Jackson	DSL Training Prevent, CSE, FGM, Child Criminal Exploitation (Incl County Lines)	Nov 2022 Oct 2022 March 2022 Oct 23 Oct 23 July 2020
Nominated Governor for Child Protection and Safeguarding	Mrs M Farrow	Level 1 Safeguarding Training Prevent, CSE, FGM, Child Criminal Exploitation (Incl County Lines)	Oct 2022
Governor(s) and Staff with Safer Recruitment Training	M Tweddle F Tweddle R Farrow C Loftus S Cochrane M Farrow A E English C Hubery	Safer Recruitment	Sept 2020 Jan 2022 April 2022

Whole Staff	See separate signed list and Spreadsheet	Level 1 Safeguarding Training Prevent, CSE, FGM, Child Criminal Exploitation (Incl County Lines)	June 2022 July 2020
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A. PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

Children maximise their potential in an environment which is safe, secure and supportive of all their needs, including any needs they have for protection from abuse. We acknowledge that pupils at The Oaks are particularly vulnerable due to their wide ranging and complex special educational needs.

Our school is committed to promoting the welfare of all children by working in partnership with parents and carers, the Local Authority (LA) and multi-agency partners in early help and child protection, in accordance with locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements procedures and practices.

Our policy applies to members of the school community in its widest sense. Thus, this includes children and young people, their parents/carers, school staff, governors, visitors, specialist staff, and the local and wider community where they interface with the school. Within its framework, the policy outlines entitlements and responsibilities in securing the protection of children who attend the school (Appendix 1).

Our policy is underpinned and shaped by legislation and guidance contained in a variety of documents including: -

- The Children Act 1989; Children Act 2004
- The Education Act 2002; Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018
- Local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements and Procedures (www.durham-scp.org.uk)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – DfE 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education. Statutory guidance for schools and colleges. September 2022
- Use of reasonable force. Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies. DfE. July 2013

- County Durham Practice Framework [Single Assessment Procedures](#) and Practice Guidance.
- Confidential Reporting Code, (Durham Schools Extranet; Documents Library/HR/HR advice and support)
- A Guide for Professionals on the Sharing of Information: County Durham Safeguarding Adults Inter-Agency Partnership and Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership
<http://www.safeguardingdurhamadults.info/media/23716/Collaborative-Working-Protocol/pdf/Collaborative-working-and-information-sharing-protocol.pdf>
- Procedures for locating missing pupils and the removal of pupils from roll. *June 2017* See DfE document “Children Missing Education” Sept 16
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf
- *Prevent* Duty Guidance for England and Wales: HM Government 2015
- The *Prevent* Duty Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers Department for Education June 2015

To emphasise the caring ethos of our school, the staff and governors are committed to the following principles: -

- The welfare and well-being of each child is of paramount importance.
- Our policy works on the premise that abuse takes place in all communities and that school staff are particularly well-placed to identify and refer concerns and to act to prevent children and young people from being abused.
- We respect and value each child as an individual.
- We are a listening school, and encourage an environment where children feel free to talk, knowing that they will be listened to.
- The protection of children from abuse is a whole-school issue, and the responsibility therefore of the entire school community.
- We recognise our policy should be accessible in terms of understanding and availability. This policy is displayed on our website, can be reproduced (free of charge, translated or generated in large print or braille. Safeguarding part one is available in an auditory format.
- Regular training will ensure all adults in school are aware of indicators of concern or abuse. Staff will know which colleagues act as designated safeguarding leads that information should be promptly passed on to them.
- Our policy will be developed and kept up to date with information from our relevant partners in early help and child protection as well as national documentation issued by HM Government and The Department for Education.
- We will use the school curriculum to resource our children to protect themselves from abuse, both as victims and as potential perpetrators.

- The school runs in an open, transparent way.

B. THE FIVE MAIN ELEMENTS TO THE POLICY

(1) Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop

This links to the school's overall safeguarding arrangements and duty of care to all students.

The following policies are relevant:

Policy	Date	Checked by
Behaviour Policy including use of RPI	March 22	School and Children's Committee
Anti-bullying Policy	March 22	Children's Committee
Health and Safety Policies (including COSHH and COSE guidance)	July 22	Children's Committee
Confidential Reporting Code (Whistleblowing)	Sept 21	DCC
Medication in school	Dec 21	Children's Committee
Intimate Care Policy and guidance	Dec 22	Children's Committee
Educational visits including Risk assessments	July 22	Children's Committee
Online Safety	July 22	Children's Committee
SEN policy	Dec 22	Children's Committee
Children Looked After	July 22	Children's Committee
Equal Opportunities	Dec 22	Community Committee
Prevent Guidance	Dec 22	Children's Committee

(2) Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children

Staff and governors who have received Safer Recruitment training are listed on the front page of this document.

- Our school will comply with the requirements outlined in local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements 'Key Safeguarding Employment Standards' and in the DSCP Child Protection procedures as well as national documentation in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2023, Part 3.
- Our school will refer to its responsibilities regarding safeguarding and child protection in all job descriptions, and/or to its profile in the school, in the general information distributed with application forms. Annex B in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2023 has specific details of the role of the designated safeguarding lead.
- Our school will undertake appropriate pre-employment checks on all staff working in school, including criminal record checks (DBS checks), barred list checks and prohibition checks together with references and interview information, as detailed in Part 3: Safer Recruitment in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', September 2023. We will also ensure that relevant staff are made aware of their

responsibilities to disclose anything relating to “Disqualification Under the Childcare Act 2006” [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006)

As outlined in ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’, September 2023 the level of DBS certificate required, and whether a check for any prohibition, direction, sanction, or restriction is required, will depend on the role that is being offered and duties involved. As most staff will be engaging in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS certificate which includes barred list information, will be required for most appointments. Risk assessments will be undertaken to determine the level of checks needed for any volunteers within our school (KCSIE 2023 paras 305-312). We will also check that the necessary checks are in place for staff in Alternative provision or those adults supervising work experience. There may also be some circumstances where we will carry out new checks on existing staff (para 327)

In our school:

- Volunteers will not be left unsupervised with groups of children, nor will they be in areas where they cannot be fully seen by the supervising teacher.
- In accepting the offer of help from volunteers, especially those unknown, staff are aware that schools in general are attractive places for ‘unsafe’ volunteers.
- Schools may be places where those with unhealthy interests in children seek to find employment (paid or otherwise). We will be vigilant about all inappropriate behaviour with children that gives cause for concern. The Head Teacher and governors are aware of the Durham County Council Confidential Reporting Code arrangements.
- We ensure that appropriate DBS checks are carried out before employing supply staff, especially those not available via the Durham Supply Partnership. We will obtain written notification that the appropriate checks have been completed. We will also check that the member of supply staff is the same person for whom these checks have been made.
- Our Governing Body will be aware of their responsibilities in connection with staff appointments and similarly aware of their liabilities especially if they fail to follow LA guidance.
- Members of our governing body will have an enhanced DBS check. They will also be subject to a Section 128 check.
- Volunteers and helpers will not be given tasks beyond their capabilities and therefore where they might feel under pressure.
- Volunteers and helpers should feel able to discuss difficulties with the teacher, who will respond with advice and additional guidance and supervision.
- Volunteers and helpers will not have the opportunity to feel that they are in charge and thus in a position of power, which may then be abused.
- Volunteers, helpers and staff new to the school are given a leaflet that covers behaviour guidelines, safeguarding information and code of conduct for staff and volunteers. There is also a volunteer handbook with additional information.

(3) Training and supporting staff to equip them to appropriately recognise, respond to and support children who are vulnerable and may need safeguarding

KCSIE September 2023 states that 'All staff members should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction'. This will include:

- The child protection policy which should amongst other things also include the policy and procedures to deal with child on child abuse.
- The behaviour policy and RPI policy
- The Anti-bullying policy (which includes measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- The staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct).
- Online safety policy including Wi-Fi acceptable use agreement
- The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.
- The role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

Copies of policies and a copy of Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023, will be provided to staff and volunteers at induction. All staff, volunteers and supply staff are **required to read** this. The Oaks staff are required to read this annually

All staff, volunteers and supply staff will be made aware of:

- Our local 'early help' process and their role in it.
- The process for making referrals to Children's Social Care and sections 17 and 47 that may follow a referral, along with the role they may be expected to play in such assessments.
- What to do if a child tells them he or she is being abused or neglected, along with maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality, involving only those who need to be involved, and never promising a child that they will not tell anyone about their abuse. See responding to disclosures appendix 13
- The practical government guidance document 'Guidance on Safer Working practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People', Safer Recruitment Consortium, February 22.

All adults working in school will receive annual safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated. The DSL is responsible for ensuring that the training reflects new priorities and concerns within the County and other multi-agency local priorities. Adults will also receive updated training and guidance throughout the year as necessary.

The date and the names of delegates at these sessions are recorded in the CPD file and training database and held securely to ensure all staff are appropriately trained.

Staff responsible for safeguarding

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies will be given sufficient time and training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their roles. This will be updated every two years and record of this training will be kept. In addition to this formal training, their knowledge and skills will continually be updated through a range of means (for example via e-bulletins, attendance at safeguarding networks or through reading), at regular intervals, and at least annually, to keep up with any developments.

Members of the staff team support the safeguarding leads and specialise in promoting certain themes within the school including; young carers, domestic abuse awareness, drugs and alcohol, CSE, online safety, Prevent

(4) Raising awareness of other safeguarding issues, boosting resilience and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe

We raise other related issues with children, young people and their parents/carers in the following ways:

Children and Young People

We are mindful that children are kept safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools. All schools in the County, including The Oaks have Smoothwall filtering and Senso monitoring systems in place for this and other potentially risky content. It is wise that the Designated Safeguarding Lead has electronic, real time access to these records to see whether it links up with other safeguarding concerns about particular individuals. At The Oaks this activity is overseen by Ms Fink, online safety lead and Mr Dean ICT technician. Online safety is continually emphasised in line with Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023 (Paragraph 141) and DfE 'Teaching Online Safety in Schools', June 2019

Additional information can be found on the school website and advice and training for parents

Our PSHCE curriculum covers related themes, including safe touch, drug and alcohol misuse, mental health, sexting, peer pressure, relationships and sex education, feelings and healthy relationships.

Other themes are addressed through our school curriculum, policies, PSHE and RHSE programmes, support groups (e.g. Rainbow club, mindfulness), assemblies, outside visitors and trainers e.g. One Punch, Childline. These may be part of our typical, planned curriculum or in response to issues arising in school, the community or nationally.

Pupils may speak to any member of staff or peer mentor with whom they feel comfortable at any time if they have concerns (school, family or community issues).

Some staff have additional training in 'Connecting with Children' and the Names (and photographs) of these staff are on display in school.

Parents/Carers

Our school brochure, web site and other means of communication with parents will re-enforce the message that our school is committed to the welfare and protection of all children in its care. School staff and governors take this duty of care very seriously.

Newsletters, letters to parents about specific issues, our school web site and parents' evenings / consultations are used to disseminate and re-enforce key safeguarding and child protection information.

In addition, we also offer events/briefings and workshops that they may attend on particular issues.

Parents are reminded regularly that it is essential that school records are kept up to date. Parents are asked to keep school informed of any changes. School will accordingly update records held to reflect:

- current address and telephone contacts. We are aware that, as a school, it is good practice to hold more than one emergency contact number for each child and this is particularly important for children who are a safeguarding or welfare concern
- which adults have parental responsibility
- court orders which may be in force
- children on the Child Protection list
- the child's name at birth and any subsequent names (taking care over unusual spellings)
- any other changes to home circumstances

Appendix 10 is a copy of the statement relating to safeguarding and child protection from our school brochure and there is a parent safeguarding leaflet handed out as part of the transition package and available at the school entrance

(5) Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse

The culture of our school is that 'it could happen here'. Staff are trained to identify indicators of abuse and are aware of circumstances that could potentially make children and young people more vulnerable to abuse.

Listening to Children and Receiving Disclosures

We embrace our role as a listening school where children can discuss concerns with any member of staff or adult who works with them. Staff (teaching and support) will make time and be available should children approach them with a situation they are worried about.

Concerns must be taken seriously and at face-value. It is easy to make speedy judgements based on previous knowledge of the child or young person.

Staff receiving a disclosure are unable to promise 'keeping a secret' or confidentiality. They will explain that depending on what the child says they might need to share the information with someone who deals with these concerns in school. See appendix 13

If the child does not wish to continue and say anything further the adult should pass on the concern to the designated safeguarding lead and record on CPOMS. The DSL might wish to keep an eye on that student and may well be aware of other issues of concern.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

All staff including part time, peripatetic and other adults working with pupils in school will be informed who these colleagues are. This also applies to students on placement and supply staff who may be the 'new face' that a pupil may disclose to.

Mrs R Farrow	Office in Navy Blue Corridor	ext 203
Mr M Tweddle	Office in Navy Blue Corridor	ext 208

Posters with safeguarding staff and governor photographs are displayed around school.

'Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child. All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.'
Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023, Part 1.

When the member of staff next comes across the child concerned, it would be appropriate to ask how they are and remind them that they are able to come and talk when they wish.

Staff should never speak to another sibling in the family to make enquiries; to investigate concerns is not the role of the school and parents/carers would be rightly aggrieved.

Recording concerns

ALL concerns and disclosures passed to the designated safeguarding lead must be written on our electronic monitoring system CPOMS. If this system is unavailable staff should, sign and dated on the relevant 'Cause for Concern' form which is available on the shared area, in the BSU and Staff room). All concerns recorded should be factual; staff should avoid using emotive language & recording their opinions.

Staff should write the exact words used by the child. Any original notes/jottings/reminders made by the adult must be stapled to the form as first-hand

information that could be important if a case went to court or scanned into the electronic monitoring system.

The more relevant details staff document, the better (eg: approximate size, colour of injury, which arm, if burn is scabbing over etc.) Staff can express concern about an injury (open ended questions) but should not ask direct questions. They should never do so in front of other children.

Staff are trained not to suggest the emotions of the pupil but describe what they see e.g. Their face was red, they had tears in their eyes. Also exact language should be recorded rather than generic 'they were swearing/using abusive language'

Please remember:

- (i) The child should be allowed to make the disclosure at his/her own pace and in his/her own way.
- (ii) The member of staff should avoid interrupting except to clarify what the child is saying but
- (iii) Should not probe for any information that the child does not volunteer.

Concerns about staff members or other adults in school

If there is concern about another member of staff or adult working in school, the matter must be passed straight to the Head of School. The member of staff concerned must not be spoken to. If the concern regards the Head of School, this should be passed onto The Executive Head Teacher and then to the Chair of Governors. Further information is included in Section G of this policy and KCSIE 2023, Part 4.

Recording and Response of the designated lead professional

All information received is stored within CPOMS or in the child's 'concern' file. Where this is in electronic form, we provide appropriate levels of access to information. Records are kept securely in locked storage and away from the child's individual school records. Our designated safeguarding leads can access these documents in an emergency or in the event of an enquiry for information by the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) Team, for example.

We keep a simple central 'chronology of significant events' for all children in school, in the event that the MASH make contact about issues beyond school and inform any other concerns in school.

We ensure that records include:

- a clear and detailed summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- notes of any actions taken, decisions reached and the outcome

Discussing concerns with the First Contact Service - 03000 26 79 79

We use the local authority Referral Form for notifying First Contact of concerns. Early help referrals are completed online using the following link: https://doitonline.durham.gov.uk/service/Early_Help_Referral via DCC CRM system.

Procedures and guidance detailing local multi-agency arrangements, including detailed information about the management of individual cases, may be found at www.durham-scp.org.uk

If a concern is taken up as a **referral** under section 47: Child Protection, actual or likelihood of significant harm, parents or carers will be informed of this **unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm.**

If the child requires immediate medical attention staff will accompany the child to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department. First Contact will be informed immediately if the injuries are linked to a child protection matter, so an appropriate paediatrician sees the child. The Director of Children and Young People's Services will be informed, and parents will be notified of the action taken.

If the situation is an emergency and staff are unable to speak to First Contact, we will phone the Police on 101 and ask to speak to a colleague in the Vulnerability Unit concerning a child (see Appendix 9 on guidance about when to contact the police).

Police Switchboard: 0345 6060365 or 101
Ask for the nearest local Vulnerability Unit to school

Discussions with First Contact will be followed up in writing

Discussions of concern and requests for support will be followed up in writing, using the referral form. Early help referrals are completed online using the following link: https://doitonline.durham.gov.uk/service/Early_Help_Referral via DCC CRM system. A copy is kept on the child's concern file. If an early help or safeguarding referral is made either by telephone or email this must be recording on the pupils CPOMS chronology

If a member of staff feels that the designated safeguarding lead and/or Head Teacher are not taking concerns seriously enough, then it is appropriate for them to tell that person that they are going to consult with First Contact themselves.

Any staff member who has a concern about a child's welfare should follow the referral processes set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, Part 1.

First Contact Service
firstcontact@durham.gov.uk
Telephone: 03000 26 79 79

Attendance at Strategy meetings if assessed to be child protection concern

Strategy meetings are one of four multi-agency meetings as part of Child Protection processes. Local multi-agency procedures have detailed guidance about these meetings www.durham-scp.org.uk

The threshold document is available on the DSCP website.

School staff may be invited to a strategy meeting. These multi-agency meetings are called to decide whether the threshold for an s47 enquiry should commence to investigate the concerns that have been raised.

These meetings may be called at short notice and appropriate staff from school will attend wherever possible. If the school is the referring agency, they are usually invited to attend these meetings. Covid guidance permitting school is able to offer a venue if there is a suitable room where confidentiality can be assured, however most meetings are being conducted via TEAMS or similar platform

Staff will make available any CPOMS or handwritten notes, dated and signed, as well as other records regarding concerns including the single agency chronology. Any further written evidence from the child: stories, drawings etc. will be brought to the meeting.

In school, staff will monitor the child discreetly for any further concerns or signs that are worrying, maintain appropriate records and give support and reassurance to the child.

All information should be treated with discretion and confidentiality and shared in accordance with the National Guidance on information sharing and the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

If concerns are not substantiated following the section 47 enquiries, our school will work with other agencies to determine what further support the family and child require. The school will continue to monitor and support the child.

C. OVERVIEW: SAFEGUARDING

(1) Definition of 'safeguarding'

'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

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

'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18.'

At The Oaks we include all pupils on roll, including those aged 18 and 19

(2) Safeguarding within this school

Everyone who encounters children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. School staff are particularly important as they are able to identify concerns early and provide help for children, to prevent concerns from escalating. Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children by working with our 3 safeguarding partners in Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership – Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary and the Clinical Commissioning Groups to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding children permeates all aspects of our work as a school, with a preventative role to inform and boost the resilience of all students by enhancing protective factors in their lives.

Accordingly, this policy links with many other related policies in school, including:

- Whole school Behaviour Policy including the Use of Reasonable force
- Whole school Anti-bullying policy including cyber bullying and other forms of child on child abuse
- Health and Safety policies
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Medication in school/First Aid
- Intimate Care
- School Visits
- Online Safety (Durham Schools Extranet Pupils -> Safeguarding -> Online Safety)
- Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Looked After Children (LAC)
- Equal Opportunities
- Relationships, Health and Sex Education
- Prevent Guidance (appendix 11)

This policy is also linked to local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Current, up to date documentation can be found at <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/> and include:

- Managing Allegations against Staff (Durham online local partnership safeguarding arrangements and policies)
- County Durham Practice Framework: Single Assessment Procedure & Practice Guidance.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education. September 2023

(3) Safeguarding throughout school life

Caring ethos

We aim to create and maintain a **caring ethos** where all children and adults feel safe, secure and valued. If children feel happy and enjoy school this will encourage good attendance and then create conditions in which they can do their best in every area of school life. Our school operates as a listening school where children can approach

adults with concerns. These will be taken seriously and relevant local multi-agency safeguarding procedures followed without delay if there is a risk/likelihood of, or actual **significant harm**.

Pupils are actively encouraged to approach school staff, peer mentors or other professionals e.g. CAMHs workers with any concerns. We run Listening Matters, resilience, mindfulness, relax kids and Lego therapy. We also have quiet withdrawal spaces throughout the school and in the grounds so that pupils can feel safe and confident if they have disclosures to make.

Many of our pupils do not have a 'voice' due to their special educational needs, it is up to the adults caring for and supporting these young people to be hyper vigilant and read non-verbal cues such as changes in body, mood and demeanour.

Curriculum

Children have access to an appropriate curriculum. This includes weekly Rights, respecting School (RRS) lessons, online safety and the teaching of Relationships, Health & Sex education, differentiated to meet their needs. This enables them to learn to develop the necessary skills to build self-esteem, respect others, defend those in need, and resolve conflict without resorting to violence. Children learn skills to question and challenge to enable them to make informed choices now and later in life. A protective factor for children is personal resilience including strong social and emotional skills. All work with children which boosts confidence and self-esteem is valuable to protect them from peer pressure and outside influences detrimental to their physical and mental well-being.

Children are encouraged to express and discuss their ideas, thoughts and feelings through a variety of activities and have access to a range of cultural opportunities which promote respect and empathy for others. As part of our Prevent duty under s.26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, we are aware of the importance of building pupils' resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views. Schools can build pupils' resilience to radicalisation by providing a safe environment for debating controversial issues and helping children and young people understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making.

Relationships & Sex education, health education, PSHCE, RRS lessons, Preparation for Adulthood, Religious Education, Art, English (including Drama), Food Technology and PE are some other areas of the curriculum which include age and stage of development appropriate opportunities for children and young people to discuss and debate important issues including lifestyles, health, safety and well-being (physical and emotional), family life, child-care and parenting, forced marriage, domestic abuse, religious beliefs and practices as well as human rights issues. These subjects can be used to support children and young people to recognise and manage risk, make safer choices and recognise when pressure from others threatens their personal safety and wellbeing. Pupils can develop effective ways of resisting pressure, including knowing when, where and how to get help.

Pupils' emotional and behavioural needs are also addressed through interaction with our Behaviour Support Team. Risk taking behaviour, Child Exploitation and Physical and Emotional Well-being programmes are available to identified individuals and groups as the need arises

Universal services and specialist support staff

The following professionals are also available to support individual children in school:

- The school nurses Mrs C Thompson (school nurse assistant) Mrs E Irving /Mrs M White, who are able to provide drop in sessions, curriculum support, attendance at in house doctors clinics.
- Attendance and Inclusion Officers Mrs P Emmerson (School) Mrs B Cook (LA)
- Educational Psychologist – Ms E Devine
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Behaviour support team – Mrs D Turnbull, Mrs J Taylorson
- Listening Matters team – Mrs D Turnbull, Ms K Graham, Mrs D Devonport, Mrs R Gallagher, Mr P Hetherington, Mr W Crawford
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health service including LD CAMHS

The following **visitors** have also contributed to our work to safeguard and promote the welfare of our students, Covid regulations and guidance permitting:

Parish priest, Community police, Jet and Ben stranger danger, Fire Brigade/safety carousels, domestic abuse workers, sexual health advisors/drop in sessions, drugs workers providing information and therapeutic cessation work, Child line in schools, Full Circle, Human Kind, ERASE, YOS

The Extended Day

- Breakfast club
- Lunchtime activities e.g. quiet club, reading sessions, sport, Makaton Choir
- After-school activities
- On and off-site educational visits including residential opportunities

These all provide further opportunities for students to develop positive and caring relationships with adults, who themselves will be trained to be aware of signs and behaviours that could suggest concerns. Supportive relationships outside the home, such as those with adults in school and other children, are additional protective factors that boost children's resilience. Staff will always work with children in a professional way and are reminded to respond to disclosures sensitively and appropriately. All adults in school know the names of the designated safeguarding leads during induction, through regular training, via posters. These are Martyn Tweddle, Fiona Tweddle, Rachael Dobinson and Rebecca Farrow. Staff are made aware of their responsibility to pass on any issues of concern without delay and make a written record.

Cause for concern forms are available in the staff room and all staff have a CPOMS log in and training. Staff from outside agencies who work regularly with our pupils are given safeguarding information and advice which they sign and date.

Working with parents and carers

Our school believes in effective communication with parents and carers. We welcome parent/carer views and concerns about the welfare of their children and use this feedback to regularly review our practices. Parental views are obtained in the following ways: Parental surveys and questionnaires, parents evenings, TEAMs/Zoom meetings, coffee mornings, social events, home school diaries and an open door approach.

We keep parents informed about important and topical issues, including child protection elements of safeguarding, in the following ways:

Newsletters, letters home, website, parent information file training/information sessions e.g. e-safety, bullying, staying safe and sane etc. The Oaks has achieved the Leading Parent Partnership award.

We aim to have good working relationships with parents and carers and to work in partnership with them through transparency and honesty. However, we do not forget that their child's needs and welfare are our paramount concern, thus obtaining consent to take matters further is **not** always appropriate. This obligation is set out in our school prospectus/brochure (see appendix 10)

D. CHILD PROTECTION WITHIN SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR ALL CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCHOOL

There are a series of layers of care and intervention ranging from safeguarding for all/universal services (single-agency activities) through to multi-agency work under the Children Acts 1989 to 2018:

- Safeguarding arrangements in school
- Early Help within universal services
- More complex cases requiring Early Help
- Child in Need consent required as for Levels 2 and 3
- Child Protection
- Durham Safeguarding Children's Partnership guidance and procedures (see <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/>)

The Durham Children and Young People's Strategy

The Children and Young People's Strategy 2023-25 is prepared jointly by all public services, voluntary and community services, including the Council, local health services and the police who work together to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families through the Children and Families Partnership. It can be accessed here: [Growing Up in County Durham Strategy \(countydurhampartnership.co.uk\)](http://countydurhampartnership.co.uk)

(1) Life at Home

The Framework for Assessment triangle, reproduced below, summarises every aspect of a child's life under three headings and is mirrored in the Referral form for First Contact Service.

- Child's developmental needs (How I grow and develop)
- Parenting capacity (What I need from people that look after me)
- Family and environmental factors (My wider world)

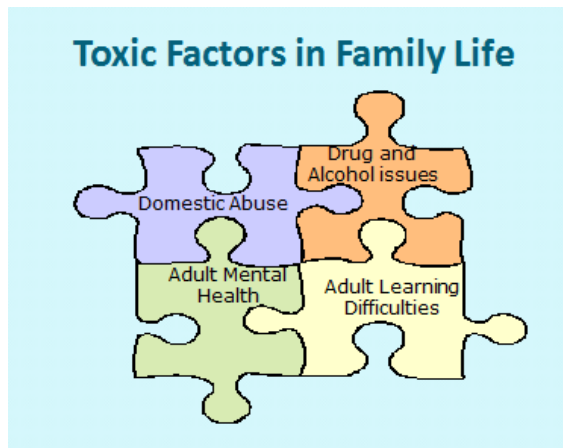


Aspects from all three domains combine in home life and staff and adults in school should be mindful of these connections as they work with children and their parents/carers in school.

This school believes that it is essential to work with parents and carers in the best interests of their children. However, good relationships with parents and carers should not detract from our primary concern which is the welfare of children in this school.

Staff are made aware in training of the 'toxic quad.' issues in home life that could have an impact on the way children are parented (Munroe, 2010). The Government research into Serious Case Reviews reveals that the presence of one or more of the following issues could have a detrimental impact on parenting of children in that household:

- Domestic abuse (violence)
- Substance misuse (alcohol and or drugs)
- Adult mental health
- Learning Disabilities



Neglect is the largest category for children being on the Child Protection list (nationally and in Durham). Durham DSCP have produced new Neglect Practice Guidance (Revised 2017) linked to the Tackling Neglect Multi-Agency Strategy 2017. It can be found here: [Early Help Strategy for children, young people and Families \(durham-scp.org.uk\)](http://www.durham-scp.org.uk)

(2) Signs and behaviours of concern

‘All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect. Knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect (see paragraphs 26-30 KCSIE Part 1 2023), and specific safeguarding issues such as child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation (see paragraphs 36-42) so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection’

All of our staff are familiar with KCSIE September 2023 and their responsibilities highlighted within this.

Paragraph 20 of the document emphasises that staff should be particularly alert to the need for early help for the following groups of children:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs.
- has special educational needs (whether they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan or not).
- has a mental health need.
- 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 or county lines.
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation.
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- has a family member in prison or is affected by parental offending.
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse.
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- has returned home to their family from care.
- is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage.
- is a privately fostered child, and
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

All pupils at The Oaks have SEND as outlined in their Education Health and Care Plans.

'All staff members should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated. In addition, all staff members should receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via e-mail, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively'. Keeping children safe in education, September 2022, Part 1 (para 14).

In our school we do these regular updates through:

Twice weekly staff briefings, Team Teach training, Staffroom notice board, discussion of individual cases with form staff and behaviour team, Cause for concern/CPOMS chronology reviews and In-set training, including: Prevent, Anti bullying, Prejudice related incidents, Child protection procedures and use of CPOMS

Our school understands that it is best practice to discuss concerns with parents/carers before contacting First Contact Service (providing this does not present a delay), unless by doing so the child would be put at further risk of harm. First Contact Service: 03000 267979.

Anyone can make a referral. When referrals are not made by the designated safeguarding lead, the designated safeguarding lead should be informed, as soon as possible, that a referral has been made.

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately.

(3) Single Assessment Procedure & Practice Guidance

'All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help' Keeping children safe in education, September 2023. This relates to work with other universal agencies and following DSCP procedures and guidance (see <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/>). Our school is aware that *'no single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances'*. Also, that *'if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action'*. KCSIE 2023.

Staff from The Oaks have attended signs of safety training, a place based approach course, Safeguarding partnership briefings, LADO training and serious case reviews

This school works with the consent of parents and carers to jointly undertake assessments where an unmet need has been identified. However, we are aware from the document, 'A Guide for Professionals on the Sharing of Information' (Durham, 2014) that it may be necessary to meet with other services and agencies even if this consent for a 'Team around the Family' meeting is not forthcoming. These professionals' meetings are important to share concerns, suggest ways forward along with further work to encourage participation by parents/carers in early help processes. 0-19 Hubs, One Point colleagues and Early Help Advisers are also a useful source of advice in these circumstances.

Team around the Family (TAF) is an early means of intervention to provide appropriate advice and support for the parents/carers and young person by working with appropriate local agencies through Team around the Family arrangements. See www.durham-scp.org.uk

If families are reluctant to engage with these processes, we will continue to encourage them to participate for the benefit of their child.

Pupils at The Oaks attend from across South West Durham and sometimes from further afield. Consequently, we deal with a number of local One Point Hubs and Families First Teams. The designated safeguarding leads and assistant head teachers liaise with the multidisciplinary teams and attend Team around the Family, Child Protection, Looked After reviews and Care Team meetings. The DSL attends and supports the Early Help Locality meetings

Durham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Where concerns are identified as amber or red on the Durham Staircase, our school will cooperate promptly and fully, with relevant information, to inform further assessments undertaken by the MASH team. [Durham-Council-Document-FINAL-09-09-20-V6-1-003.pdf \(durham-scp.org.uk\)](#)

(4) Child in Need

Section 17 of the 1989 Children Act (Updated 2021)
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

“A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989” KCSIE 2023.

This school recognises the importance of this early support and intervention work in more complex cases undertaken with the consent of parents and carers and follows the Durham Threshold Guidance document, which includes the “Durham Staircase and Continuum of Need Model. [Durham-Council-Document-FINAL-09-09-20-V6-1-003.pdf \(durham-scp.org.uk\)](#)

The DSL keeps a record of all pupils who are child in need, supported by universal services or subject to a child protection plan.

(5) Child Protection and Significant Harm

Section 47 of the 1989 Children Act
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

‘Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment. This includes all forms of abuse and neglect, female genital mutilation, or other so-called ‘honour’-based abuse, forced marriage and extra-familial harms like radicalisation and sexual exploitation.’ KCSIE 2023

Significant harm is where some children are in need because they are **suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm**. This is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

(6) Prepare for the unexpected

Our staff are aware from their training that some children might display worrying signs/symptoms or disclose information suggesting abuse, when they have never previously given rise to concern. Staff must contact the designated safeguarding lead for child protection **without delay** so concerns can be discussed with First Contact Service as soon as possible. In all cases, it should be borne in mind that other siblings might be at risk in the household as well as the one presenting concerns in school. *‘Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of **‘it could happen here’** where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the **best** interests of the child’.* KCSIE 2023.

(7) Low Level Concerns

Please see: KCSIE 2023 (Para 425-446) and Appendix 7

As part of our safeguarding culture where ALL concerns regarding adults are shared responsibly in line with our school's safeguarding reporting systems and will be recorded in writing and held securely in the executive head teacher's office. Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and appropriate actions taken.

We have a separate Low Levels Concerns Policy, Confidential reporting code and staff guidance (see appendix 7) which should be read in conjunction with our Staff Code of Conduct.

We will ensure that:

- staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others;
- staff know how to share any low-level safeguarding concerns and are empowered to do so;
- unprofessional behaviour is addressed and the individual is supported to correct it at an early stage;
- we will provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised;
- we will use concerns to help identify any weakness in the school safeguarding system.

We will instil a culture where staff feel safe to report any concerns using our safeguarding reporting system identified in this policy. We include a reference to reporting low level concerns in our annual safeguarding training. We also encourage the staff member themselves to report any behaviour that could be classed as a low-level concern. Where the report has been made by a third party, as much evidence as possible will be gathered by the head teacher/principal from the person reporting the concern, the individual named and any witnesses. All of this will be recorded to determine whether any further action needs to be taken alongside a recorded rationale as to the decisions taken.

In the case of reports about supply staff and contractors, we will report any concerns to their line managers so that any concerning, problematic or inappropriate patterns of behaviour can be identified.

We will retain information regarding low level concerns until the person leaves school's employment, then may seek advice depending on the nature of the concerns.

Low level concerns will not be recorded on any references given unless they meet the threshold for reporting to the LADO.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):
Sharon Lewis / Louise Brookes 03000 268835
CYPSSLADOsecure@durham.gov.uk

First Contact Service: 03000 26 79 79

E. MULTI-AGENCY WORK IN CHILD PROTECTION

See Appendix 4: Summary of multi-agency meetings

For up to date school responsibilities and LA arrangements and procedures please see the local partnership website - <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/>

(1) Initial Child Protection Conference: school responsibilities

See local partnership procedures for more details, <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/>.

Following the final strategy meeting (some complex cases like forced marriage, fabricated and induced illness and organisational abuse may require several strategy meetings) a decision might be made to hold an Initial Child Protection Conference. This work continues within Family First teams within the County.

A conference will be called if there is thought to be an on-going risk or likelihood of significant harm to the child(ren). The date will be within **15 working days** after the last strategy meeting.

Attendance at Conference

An appropriate member of school staff, usually the DSL will make every effort to this may be more challenging if the date coincides with school holidays, however staff to endeavour to attend remotely via TEAMS

Preparation of a report

Schools would be expected to prepare a report and may wish to amplify and develop information provided on the referral form <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/> as the basis of their report. The Oaks school reports are written using the recommended standard proforma, see appendix 12. The report is usually written by the DSL following consultation with relevant in school.

Chronology of significant events

A single-agency chronology should also be produced for this meeting using the template available on the DSCP website: <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/>. The detailed 'in house' school chronology should be

streamlined to include key relevant incidents noted by school. The Oaks uses a CPOMS system which can generate a chronology report which is also acceptable.

Sharing of the report

The report should be shared with parents/carers of the child at least **two working days** before the conference. Part of the report may also be shared with the young person, where age-appropriate. This will give the family a chance to question or clarify any issues raised within the report prior to the conference.

The report will be passed to the Conference Clerk via the e-mail system ready for dissemination to other professionals attending the conference. The school report needs to be sent by 12 noon 2 working days before an initial conference and 7 working days before any subsequent meetings.

(2) Membership of a Core Group

(See partnership safeguarding arrangements and procedures - <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/>) This school recognises that membership of a core group is a responsibility that necessitates time and commitment to attend regular meetings and complete the work detailed in the Child Protection Plan.

The merged multi-agency chronology will be regularly updated as part of this on-going work. Usually the DSL will be part of the core group and attend all meetings, under some circumstances the child's form tutor may be the core group member.

(3) Review Child Protection Conference

The school will complete the relevant report for the first review conference, after 10 weeks and for any subsequent reviews at intervals of 5 months. The report will detail work undertaken by the school with parents/carers and the child to complete the tasks assigned in the Child Protection Plan. This report should be shared **7 days** before the conference takes place. This report will detail the progress made towards the tasks outlined on the Child Protection Plan.

F. INFORMATION-SHARING

Staff at our school are aware of the need to share information appropriately. KCSIE 2023 (Para 115-123)

See Appendix 5 - Information Sharing July 2018 (HM Government)

If there are concerns that sharing of information with individuals could result in significant harm to any individual, legal advice should be sought before the information is shared.

Our school takes care to ensure that information about a child is only given to the appropriate external people or agencies. Staff will take names and ring back via a main switchboard if unsure. All staff within school will be aware of the confidential

nature of personal information about a child and the need for maintaining confidentiality. They will seek advice about parental responsibility issues if unsure.

Parents/Carers

Staff and Head Teacher must **not** automatically contact parents if there is a disclosure by the child or there are other concerns that the child may be at risk of significant harm. Rather schools should discuss concerns with the First Contact Service. Information should not be shared with parents if there was a likelihood that by doing so it might place the child at further risk of harm.

Parents must be aware that once matters have been referred to the First Contact Service the school can only explain the procedure and is not able to give 'progress reports' on the case.

There is a safeguarding leaflet shared with parents during transition and available at the entrance to school describing what Oaks staff will do in the event of a serious disclosure or when concerns are raised about a child's safety and wellbeing. See appendix 10

School staff

There is a delicate balance to be struck between alerting members of staff to the concern about the child and the need to protect the child from too many people knowing. Information should only be divulged on a 'need to know' basis. Other members of staff need to know sufficient detail to prepare them to act with sensitivity to a distressed pupil. They do not need to know details.

Information from other schools come to The Oaks via CPOMS and confidential files. These are examined by the DSL and Deputy Head. Any information which needs to be shared with form teachers, behaviour team or form support staff is done verbally or staff are invited to come to an office to read the CPOMS chronology.

Children transferring to another school

When a child on the Child Protection List moves to another school the designated lead professional will inform the new school immediately and arrange the handover of confidential information securely and separately from other records.

If a child for whom there are other existing serious concerns transfers to another school, the new receiving school will be informed immediately, and written records will follow. Both schools should maintain evidence of the secure transfer and receipt of information. Schools that both use CPOMS will transfer this information electronically.

Data that is not being transferred to another school should be kept in line with the school's Data Retention Policy, e.g. electively home educated pupils or moving to full time employment. Confidential /safeguarding information is transferred (and signed for) to local sector colleges or other post school provider.

County Guidance and protocols

See DSCP website for further details, 'Information sharing' - www.durham-scp.org.uk and the **National Guidance on information sharing and the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018**.

National Guidance on Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

Further advice about legal issues is available from Corporate Legal Services

G. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST TEACHERS AND OTHER STAFF

See Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023. There is an extensive section in the DSCP online Child Protection Procedures (under Core Procedures).

Allegations of abuse by adults and peers in schools must be investigated in accordance with the DSCP procedures, and when dealing with any allegation against adults and peers, it is vital to keep the welfare of the child as the central concern. However, as in all child protection issues, a balance needs to be struck between supporting and protecting the child and keeping the effects of possibly false allegations to a minimum. Thus, urgent consideration should be given to the substance of the allegations.

Receiving an allegation

On receiving an allegation, the Head Teacher will proceed in line with recognised procedures - consulting immediately with LA officers (LADO, Local Authority Designated Officer, see contact details at front of policy) and/or informing the First Contact Service. If the LADO is unavailable there should be no delay in discussing with First Contact. **The Executive Head Teacher or Head of School must not start to investigate.**

If an allegation is made for a person not directly employed by the school recognised procedures should be followed, e.g. a supply teacher, sports coach etc. Under no circumstances should a school cease the use of a supply teacher, sports coach etc. due to safeguarding concerns without liaising with the LADO. (See KCSIE 2023 Para 353-377)

Allegations regarding the Executive Head Teacher or Head of School should be passed to the Chair of Governors. Should this lead to delay, the person receiving details of the allegation should follow the advice above and report the matter immediately to the LADO and First Contact Service. At this stage the Executive Head Teacher or Head of School should not be informed of the allegation (the same process as for any member of staff or adult in school). The Chair of Governors should be informed as soon as possible and asked to contact the LADO.

Where it is suspected that a crime has been committed, then the matter should be reported to the police with immediate effect.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Sharon Lewis / Louise Brookes 03000 268835

First Contact Service

03000 26 79 79

CYPSLADOSecure@durham.gov.uk

Carrying out an investigation

Investigations will be carried out by the appropriate agencies.

In dealing with any allegation the Executive Head Teacher or Head of School and governors need to balance:

- The seriousness of the allegation.
- The risk of harm to pupils.
- Possible contamination of evidence.
- The welfare of the person concerned.

Suspension of the member of staff/adult in school will be considered:

- (a) if there are any grounds for doubt as to the suitability of the employee to continue to work
- (b) where suspension may assist in the completion of an investigation.

Suspension will be carried out in line with LA/Trust guidelines. Head Teachers should contact Human Resources for guidance.

Suspension should not be an automatic response. Wherever possible, redeployment should be considered as an alternative considering the seriousness of the allegation made. See KCSIE Part 4 para 380-387.

During the investigation, support will be offered to both the pupil making the allegation and the adult/peer concerned. A disciplinary investigation will be carried out only after Police and Intervention and Assessment Teams propose to take no further action. Detailed records will be kept by all parties involved.

Recommendations following an investigation

Where recommendations are made to school regarding the outcome of a Child Protection investigation, the school will advise Children and Young People's Services regarding their response to the recommendation. For example, if a person is suspended and returns to school, the date of that return should be communicated.

The following definitions are now used when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.

- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject to the allegation.
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

Where it is considered that an individual has engaged in conduct that has harmed (or is likely to harm) a child or if a person otherwise poses a risk to harm a child, the Executive Head Teacher or Head of School and/or governors will make a referral to the DBS in line with their legal requirement to do so.

H. SAFE TOUCH

Physical contact other than to control or restrain

The Oaks is a school for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs. Their learning, physical, emotional, social and behavioural challenges mean that staff may be required to support pupils physically more than in a mainstream setting. However, pupils will be taught and encouraged to be as independent as possible. Our school has a policy/guidelines on the use of touch, including an Intimate Care Policy/Guidance and a Moving and Handling Policy and this includes such points as:

- assisting in the washing of young children who have wet/soiled themselves
- intimate care risk assessments for certain children with medical needs or disabilities.
- using physical contact to demonstrate exercises or techniques, for example, in PE, sports coaching or other practical subjects.
- administering First Aid
- supporting pupils with special needs who may need physical prompts or help
- giving appropriate comfort to a child who is distressed
- recognising that physical contact is a sensitive issue for some cultural groups
- acknowledging that physical contact becomes increasingly open to question as children reach and go through adolescence
- ensuring a consistent approach where staff and pupils are of different genders
- acknowledging that innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued
- having a prescribed personal handling plan (PHP), Personal Emergency Evacuation plan (PEEP) or Moving and Handling Plan (MH) for pupils requiring complex or repeated physical handling, with specific training for staff who deal with them.

I. PHYSICAL CONTROL AND RESTRICTIVE PHYSICAL INTERVENTION: USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

Our school has a policy on the use of restrictive physical interventions covering the appropriate use of reasonable force.

Our school policy relates to the following:

DfE Guidance: Use of Reasonable Force in Schools (2013)

Our school Policy on the Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions gives guidance on:

- when staff may use physical control and restraint
- who is allowed to use physical control and restraint
- what forms physical control and restraint may take in particular circumstances
- what forms of physical control and restraint are not acceptable
- recording of incidents where physical handling has been used
- The Policy also makes it clear that corporal punishment is NOT allowed.
- Staff at The Oaks are Team Teach Behaviour Management trained, this includes the use of restrictive intervention intermediate techniques,
- The Oaks has three Team Teach trainers (intermediate level) who can also provide training for other schools.

J. THE PREVENT DUTY

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on certain bodies, including schools, to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. The DfE has produced non-statutory advice for schools, 'The Prevent duty' June 2015.

This work is part of schools' broader safeguarding responsibilities and protecting children from other harms (drugs, gangs, neglect, and sexual exploitation). During the process of radicalisation, it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised. The PREVENT duty (July 2015) summarises four areas in which schools might be involved: risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training and IT policies.

In our school:

- Staff can identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. Information or concerns are shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the same way as other information that might be a safeguarding concern, who will then follow procedures in line with DSCP guidance. We have a high number of pupils with autism who can be particularly vulnerable to online content taking things literally and at face value. Sometimes becoming obsessive about certain themes. Staff are aware of this.

- Policies and procedures are in line with those of DCC, Durham Constabulary and the DSCP.
- Throughout the life of the school as well as in specific lessons to build pupils' resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views.
- Robust online policies are mindful of guidance within Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023 and DfE guidance 'Teaching Online Safety in School' June 2019.

Prevent Duty Guidance in England and Wales (2015), notes 'Schools should be safe spaces in which children and young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas. The Prevent duty is not intended to limit discussion of these issues. Schools should, however, be mindful of their existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues'

Through discussion with the specialist colleagues at Durham Constabulary it may be appropriate to make a referral to the Channel programme. This programme focuses on support at an early stage, tailor-made to the individual young person. Engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary. A school representative may be asked to be a member if a student from the school is to be discussed at the Channel panel.

The Prevent Team
 HQ Special specialbranch@durhampolice.uk

DCC Community Safety 03000 265436/435
Community.safety@durham.gov.uk

The DSCP website (<https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/multi-agency-safeguarding-arrangements/prevent-counter-terrorism/>) 'Professionals; Prevent-Counter Terrorism', has examples of policies produced by the Safe Durham Partnership as well as further information including e-learning opportunities.

K. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

Schools must be aware of young people who could be at risk of sexual exploitation. Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023 (Annex B)

Refer also to Appendix 6 – Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes: Advice for Education Settings, and Appendix 8 - Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence.

The definition of CSE makes it clear that this is where there is an imbalance of power in a relationship when the young person receives something as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Due to our pupil's SEN they are particularly vulnerable. There are varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement that might also link to bullying, peer pressure and e-safety issues. National Serious Case Reviews highlight that sometimes these young people are perceived as 'bad' not 'sad'. Where there is a deterioration in behaviour, work, and changes to friendship patterns along with

missing from home or absenting school the underlying factors need to be examined. If there is a concern that a young person may be at risk of sexual exploitation the designated lead should discuss with First Contact Service where there are specialist colleagues trained to assist in these cases.

Durham DSCP has a section of their website devoted to resources, guidance, and a risk assessment matrix that assists schools: <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/missing-and-exploited-children/child-sexual-exploitation/>.

The multi-agency ERASE team website is available as a source of help and information for children, parents and the wider community, <http://www.eraseabuse.org/Pages/Home.aspx>.

Additional support is also available for pupils who are developmentally young via the PANTs programme or from the NSPCC www.nspcc.org.uk

L. FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

If there are concerns that an act of FGM has been undertaken on a girl under the age of 18, this MUST be reported to the police immediately.

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. This is illegal in the UK (The FGM Act 2003), abusive and has varied long-lasting consequences for the young girl.

There is an FGM Helpline also on 0800 028 3550. There is also a useful website: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Guidance leaflets have been produced by the Home Office & the National FGM Centre:

<http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/FGM-Schools-Guidance-National-FGM-Centre.pdf>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-leaflet>

The Home Office has also produced some free, informative, on-line training that designated leads might wish to access:

Virtual college e-learning: Recognising and Preventing FGM.

M. ONLINE SAFETY

This policy links to the wealth of other policies in school, and those that schools may download and customise from the following sources:

- 2019 DFE 'Teaching Online Safety in Schools'
- February 2021 Durham LA Online Safety Policy Template for Educational Settings
- School's Behaviour Policy

- School's Anti-bullying Policy
- Online safety policy

One item is referenced in the Appendices Sharing Nudes Appendix 6 - Summary of key information from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people> .

There is a Professionals Online Safety Helpline 0844 381 4772

Schools are reminded that a criminal offence has been committed if a person aged 18 or over intentionally communicates with a child under 16, who the adult does not reasonably believe to be 16 or over, if the communication is sexual or if it is intended to encourage the child to make a communication which is sexual. The offence will be committed whether or not the child communicates with the adult. This is the offence of sexual communication with a child under section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015.

Some of The Oaks pupils who are aged 18 or 19 have significant learning difficulties and their contacting a younger peer or asking for explicit images is usually treated sensitively by the police. Nevertheless, appropriate action will still be taken by school who will also endeavour to provide education and appropriate sanctions and interventions.

On the DSCP website in the multi-agency online Procedures Manual, part 2, Safeguarding Practice Guidance there is further information under 'E-safety: Children Exposed to Abuse through the Digital Media'

N. Child on Child Abuse (including Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment)

Child on child abuse is taken very seriously and our staff are aware that children are capable of abusing their peers, and that this can happen both in and out of school, online and offline.

Refer also to Appendix 6 – Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes: Advice for Education Settings, and Appendix 8 - Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence.

Education settings are an important part of the inter-agency framework not only in terms of evaluating and referring concerns to Children's Services and the Police, but also in the assessment and management of risk that the child or young person may pose to themselves and others in the education setting.

All staff are supported to understand, that, even if there are no reports in our school, it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is not being reported. As such, it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse or sexual harassment, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse. When considering whether behaviour is abusive, it is important to consider:

- Whether there is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned; or
- Whether the alleged perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children; or
- Whether there are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.

In this school, all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between pupils, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Child on child abuse may take different forms:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, 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-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery). see responding to sexting information appendix 14
- 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, see appendix 15).

To support this agenda, the following steps are taken in school to minimise these risks. The school:

- will provide a developmentally appropriate Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum which develops students understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe and is in line with DfE guidance from September 2021 update.
- will ensure that all reports of alleged abuse or sexual harassment will be acted upon in line with Section 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 Part 5.
- will reassure all victims 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.
- where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, the starting point is that this will be passed on to the police.
- will have robust risk assessments in place where appropriate and in line with Section 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 5.
- have relevant policies in place (e.g., behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy).

Victims, alleged perpetrators and any other child affected by peer-on-peer abuse and/or sexual harassment will be supported by a nominated, appropriate member of staff.

O. CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE) INCLUDING COUNTY LINES

(KCSIE Sept 2023 Para 37-39 & Annex B)

We will ensure that all staff are aware of the indicators that may signal that children are at risk from or involved with CCE.

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity

- in exchange for something the victim needs or wants
- for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator
- through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. It can be linked to serious violence.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being

- children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education

Please see the home office 'Preventing Youth Violence and Gang Involvement' and 'Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults: County Lines'). https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/418131/Preventing_youth_violence_and_gang_involvement_v3_March2015.pdf

Also relevant is the 'Criminal Exploitation of Children and Young Adults: County Lines Guidance': <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines>

P. SERIOUS VIOLENCE

Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023 (para 48 & 49)

We will ensure that all staff are aware of the indicators that may signal that children are at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime.

Indicators may include:

- Unexplained gifts/new possessions - these can indicate children have been approached by/involved with individuals associated with criminal networks/gangs
- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendship/relationships with others/groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm/significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault/unexplained injuries

Staff will also be made aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage them.

Please see the home office 'Preventing Youth Violence and Gang Involvement' and 'Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults: County Lines'). https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/418131/Preventing_youth_violence_and_gang_involvement_v3_March2015.pdf

Also relevant is the 'Criminal Exploitation of Children and Young Adults: County Lines Guidance': <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines>

Q. MENTAL HEALTH

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (paras 45-47)

We will ensure that all staff are aware that mental health problems could be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff will access training or information so that they are aware of how abuse, neglect and/or other traumatic childhood experiences can impact on children's mental health, behaviour and education.

The Oaks has appointed a member of staff with a TLR for leading on mental health and wellbeing across school.

We will ensure that we access professional advice to support us in identifying pupils suffering from mental health problems as well as following best practice mental health guidance in schools, including the following:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/topics/rise-above/overview>