THE ORCHARDS SCHOOL CHILDREN PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

APPROVED BY:	Local Governing Committee	**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 2026
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1.0	06/11/2026	BPT CEO	DfE Information Sharing Duty.

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Orchards School recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We are committed to providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment where children are respected, valued and supported to achieve their full potential. We maintain a strong safeguarding culture based on vigilance, early intervention and the shared understanding that safeguarding concerns can arise anywhere and at any time.

Child protection is an integral part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities. We are alert to the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and follow clear procedures to ensure that children receive appropriate support, protection and, where necessary, intervention from relevant agencies. This policy also reflects duties arising from the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, which came into force in January 2026, and should be read alongside existing UK data protection legislation when processing safeguarding information.
We believe that every child has the right to grow up safe from harm and abuse. We encourage pupils to "stay safe, speak out" and develop the confidence, resilience and understanding needed to keep themselves safe. We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- The school recognises that safeguarding practice must be child centred. The wishes, feelings, lived experiences and voice of the child will be central to all safeguarding assessments, planning, decision-making and support arrangements
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have an equal right to protection from harm.
- Some children are at greater risk because of previous experiences, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), communication difficulties, family circumstances or other vulnerabilities.
- Effective safeguarding relies upon strong partnerships with children, parents, carers and external agencies.

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is underpinned by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, the Children and Families Act 2014, Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, relevant school regulations, Working Together to Safeguard Children, and the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

KEY PERSONNEL

Role	Name	Email address	Contact Number
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Tom Harris	tharris@blackkpeartrust.org	01527 872271

Deputy DSL	Naomi Mansell Tom Haden	nmansell@blackpeartrust.org thaden@theorchardsschool.org	01527 872271
EYFS DSL	Sam Jacobs	sjacobs@theorchardsschool.org	01527 872271
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Ashleigh Whitwell	awhitwell@theorchardsschool.org	01562 824206
Nominated Safeguarding Trustee	Julia Page	jpage@blackpeartrust.org	01905 701120
Headteacher	Tom Harris	tharris@blackkpeartrust.org	01527 872271
Chair of Governors	Nicola Bayley	nbayley@theorchardsschool.org	01527 872271

Other named staff and contacts:

- Designated Teacher for Children in Care: Tom Harris
- Online Safety Co-ordinator: Tom Harris
- Designated Teacher for EYFS Operation Encompass: Tom Harris
- School Mental Health Lead: Jenny Harris
- Prevent and Protect Lead: Tom Harris
- GET Safe Lead: Tom Harris
- Safeguarding in Education Adviser, WCC Denise Hannibal
- Family Front Door: **01905 822666** (core working hours)
- Out of hours or at weekends: **01905 768020**
- Prevent Lead: Paul Kinsella WCC

1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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

- Home Office (2023) 'Prevent duty guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales'
- DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children
- DfE (2018) 'Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006'
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education 2026'
- DfE (2026) 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance

- The Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR, and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 HM Government (2020) 'multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation'
- HM Government (2025) 'Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting people susceptible to radicalisation'
- Home Office and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (2023) 'multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage and multiagency practice guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage'
- DfE (2026) *Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework*
- The School Premises (England) Regulations 2012 including requirements relating to toilets, changing accommodation and showers.
- The Crime and Policing Act 2026, which removes the supervision exemption from regulated activity for relevant volunteer activity.
- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment)
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils/students may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination.
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- From 30 September 2026, the school will also have regard to the DfE's Information Sharing Duty: statutory guidance for safeguarding organisations and their practitioners, issued under section 16LA of the Children Act 2004.

Other non-statutory Guidance

- DfE (2025) 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'
- DfE (2017) 'Child sexual exploitation'
- DfE (2024) 'Information sharing'
- DfE (2024) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'
- DfE (2021) 'Teachers' Standards'
- DfE (2024) 'Recruit teachers from overseas'
- DfE (2024 updated 2026) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2022 updated 2026) 'Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges'

2. KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children and

acting in their best interests. At The Orchards School, all staff should maintain an attitude of *"it could happen here"* and recognise that safeguarding concerns may arise at any time.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- The welfare of the child is paramount, and all decisions should be made in the child's best interests.

All Staff

All staff, including supply staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors, have a responsibility to:

- Consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.
- Maintain an attitude of *"it could happen here"* where safeguarding is concerned.
- Provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
- Observe and comply with the behaviour policy, the staff code of conduct, procedures for low-level concerns and allegations against staff, whistleblowing arrangements and the safeguarding response to children who are absent from education. Complete safeguarding and child protection induction and ongoing safeguarding training, including online safety training and filtering and monitoring arrangements.
- Read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 *(KCSIE) 2026* A and any additional safeguarding information identified by the school as relevant to their role. School leaders and all staff who work directly with children will also read Annex A
- Be aware of the school's safeguarding systems, policies and procedures.
- Know the identity and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs.
- Be alert to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding concerns.
- Recognise that children may be unable, unwilling, or afraid to disclose abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and may not recognise their experiences as harmful or abusive. Children may communicate concerns indirectly through their behaviour, presentation, or interactions rather than through explicit disclosure. Staff must remain professionally curious, be alert to signs and indicators of harm, and take immediate, appropriate action whenever concerns arise.
- Listen to children, take their concerns seriously and reassure them that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Help create trusted relationships and a safe culture in which all children, including children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual and children who are questioning their gender, can speak openly and share concerns
- Avoid victim-blaming attitudes and challenge such attitudes where they occur.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality whilst understanding that safeguarding concerns must always be shared with the appropriate safeguarding lead.
- Report any safeguarding concern immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

- Understand the local arrangements for universal services and community-based early help, and the targeted early help level of Family Help and identify children who may benefit from early intervention and support..
- Contribute to multi-agency working where appropriate.
- Support social workers and other professionals working with children and families.
- Be aware of safeguarding issues that can place children at risk, including:
    - child-on-child abuse;
    - sexual violence and sexual harassment;
    - online abuse;
    - child criminal exploitation;
    - child sexual exploitation;
    - domestic abuse;
    - serious violence;
    - county lines;
    - modern slavery
    - radicalisation and extremism;
    - mental health concerns;
    - children missing education.

      All staff should be particularly alert to the needs of children who:
    - Have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
    - Have a social worker.
    - Are looked after or previously looked after.
    - Are living in kinship care arrangements.
    - Are young carers.
    - Experience family difficulties, including domestic abuse, parental substance misuse or parental mental ill-health.
    - Are frequently absent or missing from education.
    - Are vulnerable to exploitation, abuse or neglect.
    - (Teachers)Safeguard pupils' wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession in accordance with the Teachers' Standards.
- Promote children's welfare through teaching and pastoral support.
- Be aware of the mandatory reporting duty in relation to known cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and report such cases directly to the Police where required by law.
- Recognise and respond appropriately to indicators that a child may be at risk of harm
- If any member of staff believes that appropriate action has not been taken, or that a child remains at risk of harm, they must escalate their concerns in line with local safeguarding partnership procedures. Staff may seek advice directly from Children's Social Care, the Police or other safeguarding agencies where necessary

If the DSL or Deputy DSL is unavailable, staff must not delay action and should seek advice from Children's Social Care, the Police or other appropriate agencies. The DSL must then be informed as soon as possible.

Local Governing Committee

The Local Governing Committee will:

- Support the Trust Board in fulfilling its safeguarding responsibilities.

- Approve their School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy ensuring it reflects the school and community context
- Monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements within the school.
- Ensure safeguarding remains a standing agenda item for governance meetings.
- Provide challenge and support to school leaders regarding safeguarding practice.
- Receive appropriate safeguarding training including online safety
- Ensure that safeguarding considerations inform local decision-making.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day leadership of safeguarding within the school and will:

- Ensure all safeguarding and child protection policies are implemented effectively.
- Promote a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Ensure all staff understand and fulfil their safeguarding duties.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place for alternative provision, educational visits and extended services.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate safeguarding information, induction and training.
- Undertake safer recruitment responsibilities in accordance with statutory guidance.
- Ensure effective online safety, filtering and monitoring arrangements are implemented.
- Support and challenge safeguarding practice throughout the school.
- Ensure referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) and other relevant bodies are made where required.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will:

- Provide strategic and operational leadership for safeguarding.
- Be available during term time and school hours for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure robust safeguarding cover arrangements are in place whenever they are unavailable – this will be through the deputy DSLs within the school. In a highly rare circumstance the DSL and DDSLs are not on site all staff will be notified of the Trust DSL or Trust CEO who they will be able to email or contact directly on TEAMS if there is a safeguarding concern as well as using CPOMs to record safeguarding concern in the normal manner.
- Support, advise and challenge staff regarding safeguarding matters.
- Act as the school's main point of contact with safeguarding partners and external agencies.
- Refer cases to Children's Social Care Early Help and targeted Family Help services,, the Police, Channel, the National Referral Mechanism, the DBS and other agencies as appropriate.
- Take part in strategy discussions, child protection conferences and other multi-agency meetings.
- Promote early help and support staff in identifying and responding to emerging needs.
- Ensure safeguarding records are accurate, secure, confidential and maintained appropriately.
- Ensure child protection files are transferred securely and promptly when pupils move schools.

- Oversee the school's safeguarding recording systems, including CPOMS.
- Ensure safeguarding policies and procedures remain compliant with current legislation and guidance.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and regular updates.
- Promote a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings.
- Lead on online safety, including oversight of filtering and monitoring systems.
- Work with the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and relevant professionals to promote the educational outcomes of vulnerable pupils.
- Monitor and support children who:
    - have a social worker;
    - are looked after or previously looked after;
    - are living in kinship care arrangements;
    - are otherwise vulnerable to poor educational outcomes.
- Liaise with the Senior Mental Health Lead where safeguarding concerns relate to mental health.
- Manage concerns, allegations and low-level concerns in accordance with statutory and local procedures.
- Ensure, wherever reasonably possible, that the school holds more than one emergency contact number for every pupil.
- Undertake refreshed DSL training at least every two years and complete regular updates between formal training sessions.
- Maintain awareness of responsibilities relating to private fostering arrangements and PACE Appropriate Adult requirements.

The DSL, Deputy DSLs and safeguarding team will meet regularly to monitor safeguarding concerns, evaluate actions taken and ensure effective outcomes for children.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs)
Deputy DSLs will:

- Be trained to the same standard as the DSL.
- Provide support and additional capacity to the safeguarding team.
- Undertake safeguarding duties delegated by the DSL.
- Act with the same authority as the DSL in their absence.
- Ensure continuity of safeguarding leadership and decision-making.

The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputy DSLs are set out in the role-holder's job description as set out by the DfE in Annex B of the current version of Keeping Children Safe in Education. The School will review the job description regularly and update it whenever required.

Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children
The Designated Teacher will:

- Promote the educational achievement, welfare, attendance and progress of:
- looked after children (LAC);
- previously looked after children (PLAC);
- children who left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements orders;

- children adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Work closely with the DSL, Headteacher, Virtual School Head and other professionals.
- Ensure appropriate support is in place to meet educational and safeguarding needs.
- Promote high aspirations and positive outcomes for all children with a care experience

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the accountable body for safeguarding across the Trust and holds ultimate responsibility for ensuring that effective safeguarding and child protection arrangements are in place in all academies.

Trustees will:

- Ensure the Trust complies with all statutory safeguarding and child protection duties, including arrangements for child-on-child abuse and children absent from education.#
- Facilitate a whole school/college approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development. This includes ensuring that all systems, processes and policies operate with the best interests of the child at their heart, and that the school actively promotes an inclusive, anti-discriminatory culture in which racism and other forms of discriminatory behaviour are recognised, challenged and addressed as part of its safeguarding responsibilities.
- Promote a strong culture of safeguarding across the Trust.
- Appoint a Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding oversight to take strategic leadership responsibility for the Trust's safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensure safeguarding policies, procedures and systems are effective and regularly reviewed and complies with KCSIE 2026, statutory guidance and the locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Monitor safeguarding performance, compliance, audits and emerging risks through regular reporting.
- Ensure sufficient resources, staffing and training are available to support effective safeguarding.
- Oversee safer recruitment, allegations management and whistleblowing arrangements.
- Maintain strategic oversight of online safety, filtering and monitoring arrangements, including the safe use of generative AI, mobile phones, remote education, information security and cyber security.
- Hold the CEO and school leaders to account for the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and outcomes for children.
- Ensure that safeguarding arrangements for alternative provision are effective, including written assurance about checks, accurate records of where each child is educated, regular review of placements and immediate review where safeguarding concerns arise.
- Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place regarding sport, toilets, changing rooms, showers and, in accordance with statutory requirements and the safeguarding provisions in KCSIE 2026.
- Ensure that referrals are made to the Disclosure and Barring Service and, where appropriate, the Teaching Regulation Agency when the relevant legal criteria are met.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO has executive responsibility for safeguarding across the Trust and will:

- Promote a strong culture of safeguarding across all schools.
- Hold Headteachers accountable for effective implementation of safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensure schools have sufficient safeguarding capacity, training and resources.
- Monitor safeguarding compliance, quality assurance, audits and emerging risks across the Trust.
- Support schools and DSLs with complex safeguarding matters and multi-agency working where required.
- Ensure serious safeguarding concerns and statutory requirements are addressed appropriately.
- Report safeguarding effectiveness, compliance and areas for development to the Board of Trustees.

Social Transition

The school recognises that requests relating to social transition require careful consideration and will be managed in accordance with current legislation, statutory guidance and safeguarding principles.

The school will:

- Take a cautious, child-centred and safeguarding-led approach to any request relating to social transition.
- Recognise that social transition is not a neutral act and may have significant implications for a child.
- Not initiate social transition.
- Involve parents/carers in decision-making unless doing so would place the child at risk of significant harm.
- Consider safeguarding, wellbeing, educational, developmental, legal and equality implications.
- Maintain accurate records of discussions, decisions and agreed support arrangements.
- Seek appropriate professional advice where necessary.

3. DEFINITIONS

The terms **"children"** and **"child"** refer to anyone under the age of 18.

Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children

For the purposes of this policy, **safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and should be child centred. The welfare of the child is paramount.

Consent
For the purposes of this policy, **consent** is defined as having the freedom and capacity to choose to engage in sexual activity.
Consent may be given to one kind of sexual activity but not another and can be withdrawn at any time. A person only consents to a sexual activity if they agree by choice and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice.
Children under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity. The age of consent in England is 16.

Sexual abuse involves forcing causing or inciting a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

i. Physical contact, including acts of penetration, whether that is with part of a person's body or an object (for example, rape or assault by penetration) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching over clothing.
ii. Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children or young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child or young person in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse can take place online as well as offline, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. Children can be sexually abused within the family, an institution or a community setting, and are more likely to know their abuser than not. There are specific offences for children under 13, who can never provide valid consent to sexual activity and there are specific offences which make clear that sexual activity with a child under 16 is an offence, regardless of whether they agreed to that activity.

Sexual Violence
For the purposes of this policy, **sexual violence** refers to the following offences defined under the Sexual Offences Act 2003:

Rape
A person (A) commits an offence of rape if they intentionally penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with their penis, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration
A person (A) commits an offence if they intentionally penetrate the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of their body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault
A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if they intentionally touch another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Causing Someone to Engage in Sexual Activity Without Consent
A person (A) commits an offence if they intentionally cause another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
This may include forcing a person to strip, touch themselves sexually or engage in sexual activity with another person.

Sexual Harassment
For the purposes of this policy, **sexual harassment** means unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that occurs online or offline, inside or outside of school.
Sexual harassment is likely to violate a child's dignity, make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. If left unchallenged, sexual harassment can create an atmosphere that normalises inappropriate behaviour and may lead to sexual violence.
Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- Sexual comments, stories, remarks and jokes.
- Sexualised name-calling.
- Deliberate sexual remarks about appearance or clothing.
- Displaying or sharing sexualised pictures, photographs or drawings.
- Physical behaviour such as deliberately brushing against someone or interfering with their clothing.
- Online sexual harassment, including:
  - the consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos;
  - sharing unwanted explicit content;
  - upskirting;
  - sexualised online bullying;
  - unwanted sexual comments and messages;
  - sexual exploitation, coercion and threats.

Child-on-Child Abuse
For the purposes of this policy, **child-on-child abuse** refers to abuse that is perpetrated by one child against another child.
This can occur both inside and outside school, including online.
Child-on-child abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other prejudice- based incidents.
- Physical abuse.
- Sexual violence.
- Sexual harassment.

- Upskirting.
- Abuse within intimate personal relationships.
- The consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, including images that are digitally altered or generated using AI.'
- Initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals.
- Child criminal exploitation.
- Child sexual exploitation.

The school recognises that even if there are no reported incidents, child-on-child abuse may still be taking place and should never be dismissed as banter, part of growing up, harmless behaviour or simply "children being children".

Upskirting

For the purposes of this policy, **upskirting** is defined by the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 as taking a photograph or video beneath a person's clothing without their knowledge or consent, with the intention of:

- Viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear);
- Obtaining sexual gratification; or
- Causing humiliation, distress or alarm.

Upskirting is a criminal offence. Anyone, regardless of age or gender, can be a victim.

Sharing Nude and Semi-Nude Images and/or Videos

For the purposes of this policy, the **consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos** refers to the creation, sharing and possession of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos by children under the age of 18.

This includes:

- Images or videos sent voluntarily between children.
- Images or videos shared without consent.
- Images or videos used for coercion, exploitation or harassment.
- Content generated, manipulated or distributed through digital technology.

The school follows the Department for Education guidance *Sharing Nude and Semi-Nude Images: Advice for Education Settings Working with Children and Young People*.

Deepfakes and Deepnudes

For the purposes of this policy:

Deepfakes are digitally altered, manipulated or AI-generated images, video, audio or other content that falsely depicts a person without their consent.

Deepnudes are AI-generated or manipulated nude or semi-nude images that depict a person without their consent.

Deepfakes and deepnudes may be used to facilitate bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, exploitation, abuse or criminal activity and will be treated as safeguarding concerns.

Indecent Imagery

For the purposes of this policy, **indecent imagery** is defined as imagery that involves one or more of the following:

- Nude or semi-nude sexual posing.

- A child touching themselves in a sexual way.
- Any sexual activity involving a child.
- Someone sexually abusing a child.
- Sexual activity involving animals.

Indecent images also include indecent **pseudo-images**, which are images that have been created, adapted or manipulated using computer software, artificial intelligence or other digital technology.

Online Safety

For the purposes of this policy, **online safety** refers to the school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when using technology, digital devices and internet-enabled services.

This includes protecting children from:

- Online abuse and exploitation.
- Online grooming.
- Cyberbullying.
- Exposure to harmful content.
- Fraud and scams.
- Misinformation and disinformation.
- Harmful online challenges.
- Risks associated with artificial intelligence technologies.
- Contact with individuals who may present a risk of harm.

Online safety forms part of the school's wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Abuse

For the purposes of this policy, **abuse** is defined as a form of maltreatment of a child.

A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Harm can include ill-treatment that is not physical, as well as the impact of witnessing the ill-treatment of others. This is particularly relevant in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse.

Children may be abused:

- In a family, institutional or community setting.
- By those known to them or by others.
- Online or offline.
- By one or more adults.
- By another child or children.

Abuse can take place wholly online or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Physical Abuse may involve:

- Hitting.
- Shaking.
- Throwing.
- Poisoning.
- Burning or scalding.
- Drowning.
- Suffocating.

- Otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical abuse may also occur when a parent or carer fabricates, exaggerates or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate.
- Valuing a child only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- Preventing a child from expressing their views.
- Deliberately silencing a child.
- Making fun of what a child says or how they communicate.
- Imposing age-inappropriate expectations.
- Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning.
- Preventing participation in normal social interaction.
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person.
- Serious bullying, including cyberbullying.
- Exploitation or corruption.

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

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Activities may involve:

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration.
- Non-penetrative acts such as kissing, touching, rubbing or masturbation.
- Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities such as:
- Looking at sexual images.
- Producing sexual images.
- Sexual exploitation.
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- Grooming a child in preparation for abuse, including online grooming.

Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by people of any age, gender or sexual orientation

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing or shelter.
- Protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision.
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- Neglect may also include:
- Exclusion from home.
- Abandonment.
- Use of inappropriate caregivers.
- Failure to respond appropriately to a child's emotional needs.

Extra-Familial Harm

For the purposes of this policy, **extra-familial harm** refers to abuse, exploitation and harm that occurs outside a child's family environment.

This may include:

- Child criminal exploitation (CCE).
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE).
- County lines activity.
- Serious violence.
- Gang-associated violence.
- Trafficking.
- Modern slavery.
- Online exploitation and abuse.
- Radicalisation.
- Harm occurring in peer groups, schools, communities or public spaces
- Stalking
- Financial exploitation

The school recognises that children can be vulnerable to abuse both within and outside the home and will work with safeguarding partners and relevant agencies to identify, assess and respond to these risks.

4. SAFEGUARDING CULTURE, SCHOOL CONTEXT AND OPERATIONAL PRACTICE

The Orchards School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff, governors, trustees, volunteers, contractors and visitors have an important role to play in protecting children from harm and promoting their physical, emotional, mental and social wellbeing.

Safeguarding is a child-centred process which seeks to protect children from maltreatment, prevent impairment of their health or development, ensure they grow up in safe and effective care, and enable them to achieve the best possible outcomes. The welfare of the child is paramount in all decision-making.

Safeguarding extends beyond child protection and encompasses all aspects of school life contribute to keeping children safe, including:

- Staff conduct and professional boundaries.
- Health and safety.
- Attendance and children missing education.
- Behaviour and positive relationships.
- Anti-bullying practice.
- Child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- Online safety, filtering and monitoring.
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Contextual safeguarding.
- Safer recruitment.
- Educational visits and off-site activities.

- Intimate care.
- Restrictive physical interventions.
- Substance misuse.
- Site security and premises management.
- Breakfast clubs, after-school provision, wraparound childcare and extended services. The school will ensure that safeguarding arrangements remain effective during all wraparound provision, extracurricular activities, educational visits and off-site activities.

This policy applies to all adults working on behalf of the school, including permanent and temporary staff, volunteers, governors, trustees, agency workers, contractors and visitors.

Our School Context

The Orchards School is a two-form entry first school serving the Sidemoor area of Bromsgrove. The school currently has approximately 240 pupils on roll.
The school serves a diverse community and recognises that local demographics and contextual factors influence safeguarding practice. Factors within our community include:

- Significant attendance concerns with historic poor attendance of key groups.
- Higher than national levels of Free School Meal eligibility.
- Considerable community development with changing environment, housing estates and mobility within the community.
- Local community concerns relating to anti-social behaviour, violent crime and exploitation.
- Significant language deprivation on entry.

The school recognises that these factors can increase vulnerability and potentially impact children's welfare, safety, attendance, wellbeing and educational outcomes.
Consequently, safeguarding practice at The Orchards School is responsive to local needs, emerging risks and community concerns.

Safeguarding themes, local risks and emerging issues are reflected within:

- Staff safeguarding updates and briefings.
- DSL training and network meetings.
- Curriculum planning, including PSHE and Relationships Education.
- Pupil voice activities.
- Risk assessments and safeguarding procedures.

Family Help and Family Support

In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children , the school recognises the importance of Family Help as a collaborative, multi-agency approach to supporting children and families at the earliest opportunity.
The school will participate in Family Help arrangements where appropriate and work proactively with safeguarding partners, families and other professionals to identify need, coordinate support and improve outcomes for children.
Staff should discuss any concerns regarding children who may benefit from Family Help support with the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity

Child Protection
All staff must remain vigilant and be able to recognise indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation, modern slavery and extra-familial harm.
Staff understand that abuse can occur:

- Within the family.
- Within institutions.
- In the community.
- Online.
- Through child-on-child abuse.
- Through criminal or sexual exploitation.

The school recognises that children with SEND and children who identify as LGBTQ+ may experience additional barriers to recognising abuse, disclosing concerns or accessing support.

Where concerns arise, all staff must act immediately, and report concerns to the DSL or deputy DSL. Safeguarding concerns must never be ignored, delayed or investigated by staff.

Where a child is at immediate risk of harm, any member of staff may make a referral directly to Children's Social Care and/or the Police. The DSL must be informed as soon as possible afterwards.

Recognising Abuse and taking Action
All staff are expected to identify and recognise indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery. Staff will recognise that risks may occur inside or outside the home or school and online. Staff will remain alert to children who may benefit from universal services, community-based early help, targeted Family Help or statutory intervention including any child who:

- Is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education health and care (EHC) plan)
- has a mental health need, including concerns relating to self-harm, an eating disorder, suicidal ideation or suicide risk;
- Is a young carer
- Is pregnant and/or is a parent;
- Is bereaved, living in temporary accommodation, returning home from care, or otherwise experiencing circumstances that may increase vulnerability; or
- has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, is at risk of permanent exclusion, or attends alternative provision or a pupil referral unit;
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or home
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited

- Is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- Is pregnant and/or is a parent;
- Is bereaved, living in temporary accommodation, returning home from care, or otherwise experiencing circumstances that may increase vulnerability; or
- has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, is at risk of permanent exclusion, or attends alternative provision or a pupil referral unit;
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or home
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- 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
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage
- Is a privately fostered child
- Has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending
- Is missing education, or persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education
- Is viewing harmful or inappropriate online content or developing unsafe relationships online.

Recording Concerns

The school uses CPOMS as its electronic safeguarding recording system.
All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, welfare concerns, behavioural concerns linked to safeguarding and child protection information must be recorded on CPOMS without delay.
When a safeguarding concern is submitted on CPOMS, an automated notification is immediately sent to the DSL Team to enable timely review and action.
Recording a concern on CPOMS does not replace the responsibility of staff to speak directly with a member of the DSL Team. Any member of staff who records a safeguarding concern must follow this up with the DSL or Deputy DSL on the same day and before the child leaves school to ensure that the concern has been seen, considered and acted upon appropriately.
Where there is a risk of immediate harm, staff must not wait for a CPOMS notification and must report concerns directly to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

The DSL will:

- Assess concerns.
- Determine appropriate next steps.
- Liaise with external agencies.

- Make referrals where required.
- Maintain oversight of vulnerable children.
- Ensure accurate and secure record keeping.

The DSL is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and is available during term time and out of school hours to respond to safeguarding concerns. Appropriate cover arrangements are in place whenever the DSL is unavailable- these will be communicated with the school team.

Training and Safeguarding Awareness

The school ensures that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and support to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

This includes:

- Safeguarding and child protection induction training.
- Annual safeguarding and child protection training.
- Regular safeguarding updates throughout the academic year.
- Online safety training.
- Training relating to local safeguarding priorities and emerging risks.
- Specific safeguarding training relevant to staff roles and responsibilities

All staff are required to read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. School leaders and all staff who work directly with children will also read Annex A

The Local Governing Committee, Local Governors, Trustees and Senior Leaders receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role and responsibilities.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSLs receive specialist safeguarding training through Brightcore Training and Consultancy and undertake annual refresher training and continuing professional development to ensure safeguarding knowledge remains current and reflects local and national developments.

DSLs also attend local authority safeguarding network meetings, partnership briefings and relevant multi-agency safeguarding training to maintain professional knowledge and strengthen safeguarding practice.

Creating a Culture of Safeguarding

The school is committed to creating a culture where children feel safe, respected and listened to will:

- Maintain a culture of vigilance and professional curiosity.
- Promote an ethos that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Encourage children to talk about worries and concerns.
- Ensure children know which adults they can approach for help.
- Promote positive relationships and respectful behaviour.
- Maintain a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse, discrimination, bullying, racism, sexism, homophobia and all forms of harmful behaviour.
- Listen to and act upon children's wishes and feelings.
- Ensure children receive age-appropriate safeguarding education.

Working with Families and Other Agencies

The school recognises that effective safeguarding is dependent upon positive partnerships with families and agencies.

We will:

- Work openly and honestly with parents and carers wherever possible.
- Share information appropriately and lawfully.
- Engage with Early Help services.
- Participate fully in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Attend child protection conferences, reviews and core group meetings.
- Contribute to assessments and plans for children.
- Support children subject to Child Protection Plans, Child in Need Plans and other multi-agency support arrangements.

Record Keeping and Information Management

The school maintains accurate, confidential and secure safeguarding records in accordance with statutory guidance and data protection legislation.

Records will include:

- A clear summary of concerns.
- Relevant background information.
- Discussions and decisions.
- Actions taken including rationale for decision-making'
- Referrals made.
- Outcomes and follow-up activity.

Safeguarding records are maintained separately from educational records and are accessible only to authorised staff.

Attendance and Welfare Monitoring

The school recognises the strong link between safeguarding and attendance. The safeguarding team meets weekly to review the welfare, attendance, safeguarding concerns and progress of children identified as vulnerable. These meetings help ensure that concerns are monitored effectively, support is coordinated and appropriate interventions are implemented in a timely manner.

Particular attention is given to:

- Persistent absence.
- Children Missing Education (CME).
- Unexplained absence.
- Children subject to Child Protection Plans.
- Children in Need.
- Children receiving Family Help or targeted Early Help support.
- Children with identified vulnerabilities.

The school recognises that pupils who are persistently absent or severely absent may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, modern slavery and poor educational outcomes. Attendance concerns will always be considered within the wider safeguarding context, and appropriate safeguarding action will be taken where concerns are identified.

The school will actively follow up unexplained absences and, where appropriate, undertake welfare checks and home visits in accordance with school procedures, safeguarding risk assessments and attendance protocols.

In line with KCSIE 2026, the school will, wherever reasonably possible, hold at least two emergency contact numbers for every child from KS1up and three emergency contact numbers for EYFS children to support safeguarding and welfare enquiries.

Supporting Children

The school recognises that children who experience abuse, neglect, exploitation, trauma or adverse childhood experiences may face significant barriers to learning, wellbeing and healthy development. The Orchards School aims to be a safe, stable and supportive environment in which children feel valued, respected and protected.

Children will be supported through:

- Positive and trusting relationships with adults.
- A broad and balanced curriculum.
- Effective pastoral support.
- Early identification of need.
- Appropriate intervention and support services.
- Inclusive practice.
- Strong partnership working with families and external agencies.
- A culture that promotes safety, dignity, resilience and belonging.

The school recognises that safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, mental health, inclusion and educational achievement are intrinsically linked and will take a holistic approach when supporting children and families.

5. CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE (INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE)

The Orchards School recognises that children can abuse other children (child-on-child abuse) and that this can happen both inside and outside of school, online and offline. Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator. It is preventable, and timely evidence-based support may prevent further abuse or violence.

Child-on-child abuse is never acceptable, will never be tolerated and should never be dismissed as:

- Banter.
- Part of growing up.
- Having a laugh.
- A childhood rite of passage.
- Harmless behaviour

The school maintains a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse, including child-on-child abuse. All concerns, allegations and incidents will be treated seriously, recorded appropriately and responded to in accordance with this policy, the Child-on-Child Abuse Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE) 2026 and local safeguarding procedures.

The school recognises that children who display harmful behaviour towards others may themselves have experienced abuse, trauma, exploitation or unmet safeguarding needs. Safeguarding support, assessment and intervention will therefore be considered for all children involved.

The school recognises that child-on-child abuse may occur even if no incidents have been reported. Staff should maintain professional curiosity and remain vigilant at all times.
All staff should understand that child-on-child abuse can occur between children of any age, gender, ethnicity, disability, culture, religion or sexual orientation.

The school recognises that, whilst child-on-child abuse can affect any child, national evidence demonstrates that girls are more likely to be victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and these behaviours are more likely to be perpetrated by boys. However, all concerns will be taken seriously regardless of the sex or gender of those involved.

All staff are expected to challenge inappropriate behaviour between children and must never tolerate abuse, harassment or harmful behaviour as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys".

Forms of Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other prejudice- based incidents.
- Physical abuse.
- Could place any child in the school at risk.
- Is violent or involves serious physical assault or harm.
- Involves a threat of harm with a weapon, carrying a weapon or using a weapon.
- Abuse within intimate personal relationships.
- Whilst some forms of child-on-child abuse are more commonly associated with older children, the school recognises that harmful, abusive and inappropriate behaviours can occur at primary age and will always be taken seriously.
- Sexual violence.
- Sexual harassment.
- Online sexual harassment.
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.
- The consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.
- Image-based abuse.
- Upskirting.
- Initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals.
- Child criminal exploitation.
- Child sexual exploitation.
- Harmful behaviour facilitated through technology.
- Abuse linked to the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), including deepfake and deepnude imagery.

The school recognises that child-on-child abuse may involve a single incident or a pattern of behaviour over time.
The school will manage all incidents in accordance with current Department for Education guidance and safeguarding procedures.

Harmful Sexual Behaviours(HSB)

HSB is an umbrella term for sexual behaviours displayed by children and young people that are developmentally inappropriate and may be harmful or abusive. Sexual behaviour exists on a continuum from normal and developmentally expected behaviour, through inappropriate and problematic behaviour, to abusive and violent behaviour. HSB may occur online, face to face or both and will always be considered within a child-protection context.

When assessing behaviour, the DSL will consider the children's ages and developmental stages; the nature, frequency and pattern of the behaviour; any difference in age, power or developmental ability; coercion, intimidation or lack of consent; disability and vulnerability; the impact on the victim and others; and whether the behaviour may indicate the child displaying it has experienced abuse, trauma, unmet needs or exposure to abusive material.

Vulnerable Children

The school recognises that some children may face additional barriers to recognising abuse, reporting concerns or accessing support.

Particular consideration will be given to children who:

- Have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Have communication needs.
- Have speech and language difficulties.
- Have mental health difficulties.
- Are looked after or previously looked after.
- Have a social worker.
- Live in kinship care arrangements.
- Are vulnerable to bullying or discrimination.
- Are living in challenging or unsupportive home circumstances.

The school recognises that children with SEND can be particularly vulnerable to child-on-child abuse and may require additional support, adjustments and safeguarding measures.

All children have the right to be safeguarded and protected from harm regardless of their age, disability, sex, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, culture or background.

Responding to Child-on-Child Abuse

All staff are responsible for identifying, reporting and responding appropriately to child-on-child abuse.

Any concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.

All concerns must be:

- Taken seriously.
- Recorded appropriately.
- Investigated in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Risk assessed where necessary.
- Monitored and reviewed.

All incidents, concerns, disclosures, decisions and actions relating to child-on-child abuse will be recorded on CPOMS in accordance with the school's safeguarding recording procedures.

The wishes, feelings and lived experiences of the child who has experienced the abuse will be central to decision-making.

The school will ensure that children who have experienced abuse are reassured that they are being taken seriously, are supported and are kept safe. A child will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment or harmful behaviour.
Children who disclose abuse will:

- Be listened to carefully.
- Be taken seriously.
- Be reassured that they have done the right thing.
- Be supported throughout the process.
- Be protected from further harm wherever possible.

The school will also consider the support needs of the child whose behaviour has caused concern, recognising that they may themselves have unmet safeguarding needs.

The school recognises that behavioural sanctions may be appropriate in some circumstances; however, disciplinary action alone is not an appropriate response to child-on-child abuse and will not replace safeguarding investigation, risk assessment, support and intervention.

Where appropriate, the DSL will complete a risk assessment and implement measures to safeguard all children involved whilst enquiries are ongoing. 'Decisions and their rationale will be recorded and kept under review.
The DSL will consider:

- The safety and welfare of all children involved.
- Any ongoing risk posed.
- Appropriate support and intervention.
- Any referral required to Children's Social Care, the Police or other relevant agencies.
- The impact on attendance, behaviour, wellbeing and educational outcomes.
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The DSL will also consider whether an incident that appears to involve children may actually involve an adult posing as a child online. Any such concerns will be referred immediately to Children's Social Care and/or the Police.

Pupils will be made aware of how to report concerns about themselves or their peers and will be reassured that any report will be taken seriously, managed sensitively and responded to appropriately.

Prevention
The school is committed to preventing child-on-child abuse through a whole-school approach to safeguarding.
The school recognises the importance of identifying and addressing inappropriate, problematic and abusive behaviour at the earliest opportunity to prevent escalation and reduce the risk of harm.
Prevention strategies include:

- A strong safeguarding culture based on an "it could happen here" approach.
- Clear behaviour expectations.
- Effective supervision.
- Staff training and safeguarding updates.
- Online safety education.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (where applicable) and Health Education.
- Anti-bullying education.
- Pupil voice opportunities.
- Early intervention and support.
- Positive relationships and restorative approaches where appropriate.
- Effective partnership working with parents, carers and external agencies.

Pupils are taught how to:

- Recognise abuse and harmful behaviours.
- Understand healthy and respectful relationships.
- Recognise inappropriate behaviour.
- Report concerns about themselves or others.
- Stay safe online.
- Access support when needed.

Children are reminded regularly that they can report concerns about themselves or their peers and that all reports will be taken seriously.

Further Information

Further information regarding procedures for responding to incidents, allegations and reports of child-on-child abuse can be found in the school's Child-on-Child Abuse Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy, Relationships Education Policy and Suspensions and Exclusion Policy.

6. MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

The Orchards School recognises that positive mental health and emotional wellbeing are fundamental to children's safety, learning, development and overall welfare. We recognise that mental health and safeguarding are closely linked. Mental health concerns may be a warning sign of current or historic abuse, neglect, exploitation, trauma, or other Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and can escalate into safeguarding concerns, including self-harm, eating disorders, suicidal ideation, and risk of suicide. All staff have a responsibility to identify emerging concerns, remain professionally curious, record and report concerns without delay, and ensure that children receive timely support and protection

All staff understand that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children includes supporting their mental health and emotional wellbeing. Staff are not expected or trained to diagnose mental health conditions. However, they are well placed to identify children whose behaviour may suggest that they are experiencing mental health concerns or who may be at risk of developing them.

The school recognises that experiences such as abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, trauma, bereavement, parental substance misuse, parental mental ill health, exploitation and other adverse childhood experiences can have a significant impact on a child's mental health, behaviour, attendance and educational outcomes.

The school has clear systems, processes and referral pathways for identifying, assessing and supporting pupils with emerging mental health and emotional wellbeing concerns. These systems are overseen by the Senior Mental Health Lead, Pastoral Team and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), working in partnership where appropriate.

Staff will remain vigilant to signs that may indicate a pupil is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing concerns. These may include:

- Changes in mood, presentation or behaviour.
- Increased anxiety or emotional distress.
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits.
- Withdrawal from friends, family or activities.
- Reduced attendance or engagement in learning.
- Deterioration in academic performance.
- Risk-taking behaviours.
- Alcohol or substance misuse.
- Talking about self-harm or suicide.
- Expressions of hopelessness, worthlessness or low self-esteem.
- Repeated or unexplained physical symptoms.
- Evidence of self-harm, neglecting themselves or other indicators of emotional distress'

These warning signs will always be taken seriously and considered within the wider safeguarding context.

Where staff have a concern about a pupil's mental health, they should record this on CPOMS and discuss their concerns with the DSL, Deputy DSL, Senior Mental Health Lead or appropriate pastoral staff.

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f staff believe a child is in immediate danger, they must call 999 or arrange for the child to attend A&E immediately with a parent/carer or another suitable person. If urgent mental health help is needed but the situation is not an emergency, staff should use NHS 111 online or call 111 and select the mental health option.'

If the mental health concern is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action must be taken in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures, and the concern must be referred to the DSL without delay.

The DSL and Senior Mental Health Lead will work collaboratively to:

- Identify pupils requiring additional support.
- Consider whether safeguarding concerns are present.
- Liaise with Children's Social Care and other agencies where appropriate.
- Facilitate access to specialist support services.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of support provided.

The school teaches pupils how to maintain and support positive mental health through its Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (where applicable), Health Education, PSHE and wider wellbeing curriculum.
Pupils are taught how to:

- Recognise and manage emotions.
- Build resilience and self-esteem.
- Develop healthy relationships.
- Recognise when they need support.
- Seek help for themselves or others.
- Stay safe online and offline.
- Understand the links between mental health, wellbeing and personal safety.

The school recognises the importance of working closely with parents and carers to support children's mental health and emotional wellbeing wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so. Parents and carers will be provided with opportunities to discuss concerns with relevant members of staff, including the Senior Mental Health Lead. Following meetings, agreed actions and next steps will be recorded and, where relevant, documented within the child's CPOMS safeguarding record.

7. OPPORTUNITIES TO TEACH SAFEGUARDING

The Orchards School recognises that safeguarding is an important part of the curriculum and that children should be taught about safeguarding, including online safety to help them recognise risks, build resilience, develop healthy relationships and know how to seek support when needed.

The school plays a crucial role in preventative education. Preventative education is most effective within a whole-school approach that creates a positive safeguarding culture, prepares pupils for life in modern Britain and promotes a culture of respect, inclusion and zero tolerance towards abuse, discrimination, harassment, violence and harmful behaviours.
Safeguarding education is delivered through:

- Relationships Education.
- Health Education.
- PSHE.
- Computing.
- Collective Worship.
- Assemblies.
- Visitors and external agencies.
- The wider curriculum.
- Daily interactions and pastoral support.

Safeguarding education is underpinned by the school's vision, values, behaviour policy, online safety procedures and pastoral support systems. Teaching is age-appropriate, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND, additional vulnerabilities and protected characteristics. The curriculum supports pupils to understand that safeguarding laws and procedures exist to protect and support them, not to criminalise them.

Pupils are taught, at an age-appropriate level, about:

- Online safety, including social media, gaming, livestreaming, artificial intelligence (AI), deepfakes, misinformation and disinformation.
- Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Healthy friendships and relationships.
- Respectful behaviour and personal boundaries.
- Consent and bodily autonomy.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- County lines.
- Domestic abuse.
- Harmful sexual behaviour.
- So-called Honour-Based Abuse (HBA), including Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
- Extremism and radicalisation.
- Substance misuse, including smoking, drugs, alcohol and vaping.
- Personal safety.
- Road, rail, fire and water safety.
- Recognising unsafe situations and knowing how to seek help from trusted adults. The importance of attendance, wellbeing and keeping safe both in and outside school.

Online Safety Education

Online safety is embedded within the school's curriculum and safeguarding culture. It is taught through Computing, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (where applicable), Health Education, PSHE, assemblies, pastoral programmes and wider safeguarding opportunities.

The school's online safety curriculum is progressive and age-appropriate, reflecting the differing needs, experiences and risks faced by pupils across primary and secondary phases. Teaching is adapted to pupils' age, stage of development, vulnerabilities and individual needs, including those with SEND. The school recognises that online harms can affect pupils of all ages. Whilst some risks are more prevalent amongst older pupils, age-appropriate online safety education begins in the primary phase and is reinforced throughout a pupil's educational journey.

Pupils are taught to:

- Stay safe online.
- Develop healthy and respectful online relationships.
- Protect personal information and privacy.
- Recognise abuse, exploitation and manipulation.
- Critically evaluate online content.
- Understand misinformation and disinformation.
- Recognise online scams and fraud.
- Report concerns appropriately.

- Use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly.
- Understand the risks associated with social media, gaming platforms and emerging technologies, including AI
- Understand the law relating to online behaviour and image sharing.

The school promotes Fundamental British Values and supports pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to become responsible, respectful and active citizens.

Opportunities to teach safeguarding are continually reviewed in response to local safeguarding issues, contextual safeguarding concerns, emerging risks, pupil voice, local intelligence and national guidance to ensure learning remains relevant and responsive to the needs of our school community.

8. ONLINE SAFETY, FILTERING AND MONITORING

The Orchards School recognises that technology plays an essential role in the lives of children and young people and is an important part of education, communication and social interaction. The school also recognises that the online environment presents safeguarding risks and that children must be protected from potentially harmful, inappropriate and unsafe content, contact, conduct and commercial risks.

Online safety is an integral part of safeguarding and child protection and is therefore approached through a whole-school and whole-community strategy. Effective online safety practice is embedded throughout the curriculum, pastoral systems, safeguarding procedures, staff training, leadership oversight and engagement with parents and carers. The school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and follows the Department for Education Filtering and Monitoring Standards, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE) 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children (and relevant
safeguarding partner guidance.
Online safety is supported through:

- The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- The Online Safety Policy.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Acceptable Use Agreements.
- Behaviour Policy.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (where applicable) and Health Education.
- PSHE curriculum.
- Filtering and monitoring systems.
- Staff safeguarding training.
- Pupil education and awareness.
- Parent and carer engagement.

Online Risks
The school recognises that safeguarding incidents and concerns can occur both online and offline and that children can be vulnerable to abuse and exploitation through

technology. Online risks generally fall into four categories:

Content
Being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, including:

- Pornography.
- Extreme sexual or violent content.
- Racist, sexist, misogynistic, misandrist, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic content.
- Self-harm and suicide content.
- Extremist and radicalising material.
- Anti-Semitic and discriminatory content.
- Misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories.

Contact
Being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.', including:

- Online grooming.
- Child sexual exploitation.
- Child criminal exploitation.
- Coercion and manipulation.
- Radicalisation.
- Harassment and bullying.
- Pressure to engage in harmful behaviours.

Conduct
online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, including those generated using AI and online bullying including:

- Cyberbullying.
- Online harassment.
- Sharing personal information.
- Image-based abuse.
- The consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.
- Misuse of social media.
- Harmful sexual behaviour online.
- Creating, accessing or sharing inappropriate material.

Commerce
Risks associated with online activity, including:

- Online gambling.
- Financial scams.
- Fraud.
- Phishing.
- Inappropriate advertising.
- In-app purchases.
- Cryptocurrency-related risks.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)
The school recognises the increasing use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies and the opportunities and risks associated with their use.

Potential safeguarding risks include:

- Deepfake and deep nude imagery.
- Misinformation and disinformation.
- Online harassment and cyberbullying.
- The creation of abusive, harmful or sexually explicit content.
- Impersonation and identity misuse.
- Manipulation of images, audio and video.
- Misuse of personal or confidential information.

Staff must ensure that any AI technologies used within school comply with data protection, information security and safeguarding requirements. Confidential, personal or safeguarding information must never be entered into publicly available AI platforms unless expressly authorise and compliant with Trust procedures. Pupils will be taught how to use AI safely, responsibly and critically and how to report concerns relating to the misuse of AI technologies.

Filtering and Monitoring
The Governing Committee, Trustees, Chief Executive Officer, Headteacher and Senior Leadership team have strategic responsibility for ensuring appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and operating effectively.

The school uses filtering and monitoring systems, including SENSO, to support the safeguarding of pupils and staff.

The school recognises that filtering and monitoring systems are an important safeguarding measure but do not replace effective safeguarding practice, staff vigilance, professional curiosity, supervision, education or behaviour management.
The school will:

- Ensure filtering and monitoring systems are effective, proportionate and age appropriate.
- Block access to illegal, harmful and inappropriate content where appropriate.
- Monitor internet use to identify safeguarding concerns.
- Act promptly on concerns identified through monitoring systems.
- Ensure internet-connected devices are appropriately protected.
- Regularly test and review filtering and monitoring arrangements.
- Review emerging online risks and adapt systems and procedures accordingly.

Filtering and monitoring reports are reviewed by the DSL Team, and any safeguarding concerns are acted upon promptly and in accordance with school safeguarding procedures.
The Trust IT Team undertakes routine monitoring, and system checks to support the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring arrangements. Formal reviews of filtering and monitoring arrangements are undertaken at least half-termly by the designated senior leader responsible for filtering and monitoring, supported by the DSL and relevant IT professionals. Reviews consider the effectiveness of systems, identified risks, actions taken and any additional controls required. Written records of

reviews and actions are maintained. The school uses the Department for Education's self-assessment tools and guidance to review compliance with filtering and monitoring standards and to support continual improvement. Any new software purchased is reviewed in accordance with DFE guidance and KCSIE expectations. The Trust IT team will work with the Trust central team and relevant DSL to ensure full compliance and safety before the software is purchased.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety. The DSL will take lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place, reviewing concerns identified through those systems and ensuring appropriate safeguarding action is taken.

The DSL will:

- Provide advice and support to staff regarding online safety concerns.
- Ensure that safeguarding concerns identified through the school's filtering and monitoring systems are promptly identified, assessed, recorded, and managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures. The school will review the effectiveness of its filtering and monitoring arrangements at least annually, undertake and document regular checks to ensure filtering is operating effectively on all internet-connected devices in all relevant locations, and take timely action to address any identified gaps, weaknesses, or safeguarding risks
- Work with relevant leaders and IT professionals to review online safety risks.
- Support pupils and families where online safety concerns arise.
- Ensure online safety is reflected within safeguarding procedures and curriculum provision.

All staff will:

- Receive online safety training, including the safeguarding risks associated with generative AI.
- Understand their responsibilities in relation to online safety, filtering and monitoring.
- Follow school policies and Acceptable Use Agreements.
- Report concerns promptly.
- Act upon safeguarding concerns linked to technology use.
- Model safe and professional use of technology.

Governors and Trustees will:

- Governors and Trustees will receive regular safeguarding assurance regarding the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems and will satisfy themselves that arrangements remain appropriate, proportionate and compliant with Department for Education Filtering and Monitoring Standards.
- Maintain strategic oversight of online safety arrangements.
- Seek assurance that filtering and monitoring standards are being met.
- Review safeguarding reports relating to online safety.
- Ensure appropriate cyber security and safeguarding measures are in place.
- Ensure online safety remains a key part of the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Cyber Security

The school recognises that cyber security is an important component of safeguarding and operational resilience.
Working alongside the Trust IT Team and external providers, the school will:

- Maintain appropriate cyber security arrangements.
- Implement security updates and controls.
- Promote cyber security awareness.
- Respond to emerging cyber threats.
- Review systems and processes regularly.

Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Personal Technology
The Orchards School operates as a mobile-phone-free environment for pupils during the school day. Pupils must not have access to mobile phones during lessons, breaktimes, lunchtimes or other school activities. Where a pupil is permitted to bring a mobile phone to school for safeguarding or travel purposes, it must be handed to the school office on arrival and stored securely until the end of the school day. Staff must use personal mobile phones in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct and must not use personal devices in the presence of pupils unless authorised and appropriate. Smartwatch notifications must be disabled whilst teaching or supervising pupils. EYFS staff must not wear smartwatches during direct contact time with children. All Governors, Trustees and any other visitors to school site will be informed that mobile phones and smart devices are not permitted to be used.

Review and Continuous Improvement
Technology and online risks evolve rapidly. The school will review its online safety, filtering and monitoring arrangements regularly and at least annually to ensure that systems, procedures, training and curriculum provision continue to reflect the risks faced by pupils and remain compliant with current legislation, statutory guidance and safeguarding best practice Online safety will remain a standing safeguarding priority and will be reviewed in response to emerging risks, local issues, safeguarding incidents, pupil voice, technological developments and national guidance.

9. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE), CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE), COUNTY LINES, MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Orchards School recognises that Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), County Lines, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking are distinct but often interconnected forms of abuse and exploitation. Children who are exploited are victims of abuse and should never be viewed as making a lifestyle choice, consenting to their own exploitation or being responsible for the harm they have experienced. The school will always seek to ensure that children are recognised and treated as victims and will actively challenge the inappropriate adultification of children and young people.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal

activity.
The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual.
Child Criminal Exploitation can include:

- County Lines activity.
- Drug distribution.
- Carrying weapons.
- Theft and acquisitive crime.
- Violence.
- Financial exploitation.
- Forced labour.
- Modern slavery and trafficking.
- Children involved in criminal exploitation are victims of abuse and will be supported through safeguarding procedures.

Staff should be aware that children who are criminally exploited may:

- Be absent from school frequently.
- Go missing from home or care.
- Associate with older individuals or groups.
- Possess unexplained money, clothing or mobile phones.
- Display changes in behaviour, emotional wellbeing or attendance.
- Be found in areas away from their home community.

Any concerns relating to Child Criminal Exploitation must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse.

It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity:

- In exchange for something the victim needs or wants; and/or
- For the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual.

Child Sexual Exploitation can occur:

- In person.
- Online.
- Through the use of technology.
- Through peer groups.
- Through organised groups or networks.

Sexual exploitation may involve coercion, intimidation, manipulation, threats, violence, grooming, deception, gifts, money, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, affection, status or perceived friendship. Staff should be aware that children who are sexually exploited do not always recognise themselves as victims and may not disclose abuse.

County Lines

County Lines is a form of Child Criminal Exploitation where organised criminal groups use children and vulnerable adults to transport and sell drugs, money or weapons across geographical areas. A common feature of County Lines activity is the exploitation of children through coercion, intimidation, violence, debt bondage or grooming.

County Lines activity often involves:

- Missing episodes.
- Violence or threats of violence.
- Debt bondage.
- Criminal exploitation.
- Cuckooing (where the home of a vulnerable person is taken over for criminal purposes).
- Possession of multiple phones or unexplained money.

If staff suspect that a child may be at risk of County Lines exploitation, they must report concerns immediately to the DSL. The DSL will consider referrals to Children's Social Care, the Police and other relevant safeguarding partners in accordance with Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and local threshold guidance. Where appropriate, the DSL will complete a Get Safe Risk Assessment and share relevant intelligence with West Mercia Police and partner agencies.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

The school recognises that children can be victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. Trafficked children may be exploited for:

- Criminal activity.
- Sexual exploitation.
- Domestic servitude.
- Forced labour.
- Financial exploitation.

Staff must remain alert to indicators of trafficking and modern slavery and report concerns to the DSL immediately. The school will continue to access current guidance, support and resources to address merging forms of exploitation and vulnerability.

Children Missing Education (CME)

The school recognises that children missing education, particularly repeatedly or for prolonged periods, can act as an important warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns including:

- Abuse and neglect.
- Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Child Criminal Exploitation.
- County Lines involvement.
- Mental health concerns.
- Radicalisation.
- Forced Marriage.
- Honour-Based Abuse.

- Domestic abuse.

The school also recognises the duty placed upon local housing authorities to notify schools where a child is placed into temporary accommodation. Such notifications will be reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and attendance team to identify any safeguarding, welfare, attendance or educational concerns and to ensure that appropriate support is implemented promptly.

Notifications will be reviewed promptly by the DSL and attendance team to assess any safeguarding, welfare, attendance or educational risks and to ensure appropriate support is provided. The school will work closely with families, the Local Authority and partner agencies to identify and support children at risk of becoming missing from education.
The school will notify the Local Authority where:

- A child is persistently absent.
- A child is missing from education.
- A child is removed from roll in accordance with statutory requirements.

The school will provide information to Worcestershire County Council in accordance with:

- Children Missing Education statutory guidance.
- Worcestershire Children Missing Education procedures.
- Attendance guidance and local authority requirements.

Further information can be found in the school's Attendance Policy.

Elective Home Education (EHE)
The school recognises that parents have a right to educate their child at home where this is a suitable education. Where a parent or carer expresses an intention to remove a child from school to electively home educate, the school will work collaboratively with parents wherever possible to ensure informed decisions are made in the best interests of the child.
The school will consider:

- The child's wishes and feelings where appropriate.
- Any safeguarding concerns.
- Additional vulnerabilities.
- Attendance history.
- Educational needs.
- Existing support plans.

Where a child is subject to safeguarding concerns, Child in Need plans, Child Protection plans or other vulnerabilities, the school will work with partner agencies to consider the implications and ensure safeguarding risks are fully understood. The school will notify Worcestershire County Council of all relevant deletions from the admission register in accordance with statutory requirements. The school will follow Elective Home Education guidance and work with relevant agencies where safeguarding concerns are identified.

Homestay Exchange Visits

School Arranged Homestays in the UK

Where the school arranges for a visiting child to stay with a host family in the UK, the host adults are considered to be undertaking regulated activity for the duration of the stay.

The school will:

- Obtain the required suitability information.
- Undertake appropriate safeguarding checks, including enhanced DBS checks with barred list information where required.
- Consider all relevant information when assessing suitability.
- Consider whether checks should be obtained for other household members aged 16 and over.

Where criminal record information is disclosed, the school will undertake a risk assessment to determine suitability.

School Arranged Homestays Abroad

Where pupils participate in overseas exchange visits, the school will work closely with partner organisations and schools to ensure appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place. The school may seek advice from the relevant embassy, High Commission or local authorities where appropriate.

Pupils will be provided with:

- Emergency contact arrangements.
- Safeguarding information.
- Procedures for reporting concerns.

The school will use professional judgement to determine whether safeguarding arrangements are sufficient and appropriate.

Privately Arranged Homestays

Where parents arrange accommodation independently, this is considered a private arrangement and the school is not the regulated activity provider.

Honour or Faith -Based Abuse (HBA), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage

The school recognises that Honour or Faith -Based Abuse (HBA) is a form of abuse which may involve violence, threats, coercion, intimidation or abuse committed to protect or defend perceived family, cultural, religious or community honour. Honour or Faith -Based Abuse is a safeguarding concern and may involve:

- Physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Coercive control.
- False imprisonment.
- Forced Marriage.
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Children experiencing Honour-Based Abuse are at risk of significant harm and, in some cases, death. Potential motivations may include:

- Perceived damage to family honour.
- Controlling behaviour and sexuality.
- Preventing relationships considered inappropriate.
- Family or community pressure.
- Perceived breaches of cultural or religious expectations.

Where Honour-Based Abuse is identified or suspected, the DSL will make referrals to Children's Social Care, the Police and other appropriate agencies, including the Forced Marriage Unit where necessary.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
Female Genital Mutilation is a form of child abuse, violence against women and girls and a criminal offence involves procedures that intentionally alter or injure female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The four recognised categories are:

- Type 1 – Clitoridectomy.
- Type 2 – Excision.
- Type 3 – Infibulation.
- Type 4 – Other harmful procedures to the female genital area.

Under the FGM Mandatory Reporting Duty, teachers who discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 must personally report this to the Police. Teachers must also inform the DSL immediately and follow school safeguarding procedures. The school will ensure that all staff receive appropriate information and safeguarding updates regarding the indicators and risks associated with FGM.

Forced Marriage
Forced Marriage is a marriage entered into without the free and full consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats, coercion or other forms of pressure are used. Forced Marriage is a form of abuse and a serious safeguarding concern. Staff should be aware that Forced Marriage may involve:

- Emotional pressure.
- Physical threats.
- Family pressure.
- Removal from education.
- Being taken abroad.
- Restrictions on personal freedom.

Since February 2023, it has also been a criminal offence to carry out any conduct intended to cause a child under the age of 18 to marry, even where violence, threats or coercion are not used. This applies to both legally recognised marriages and non-legally binding ceremonies. Staff who have concerns relating to Forced Marriage must report these immediately to the DSL. The school may seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit and will make referrals to Children's Social Care and the Police as appropriate. The school will continue to ensure that staff remain up to date with current safeguarding guidance and are confident in identifying and responding to all forms of exploitation and abuse.

10. DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Orchards School recognises that domestic abuse is a safeguarding and child protection issue which can have a significant impact on children and young people's safety, wellbeing, development and educational outcomes.

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may consist of a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Abuse can include, but is not limited to:

- Psychological abuse.
- Physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Financial or economic abuse.
- Coercive or controlling behaviour.

Children may experience domestic abuse directly within their own relationships or indirectly through witnessing, hearing or experiencing the effects of abuse occurring within the home. The school recognises that children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse are victims in their own right and may suffer both immediate and long-term emotional, psychological and developmental harm. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced the first statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children who see, hear or experience its effects. Domestic abuse can occur between people who are personally connected, including:

- Current or former intimate partners.
- Family members.

Domestic abuse can affect anyone regardless of age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic background or culture. The school recognises that young people may also experience abuse within their own intimate relationships. This may be referred to as teenage relationship abuse and should be treated as a safeguarding concern. The school also recognises that domestic abuse may include child-to-parent abuse or adolescent-to-parent violence and abuse (APVA). This may involve physical violence, coercive behaviour, threats, intimidation, emotional abuse or controlling behaviour directed towards a parent or carer experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious impact on a child:

- Physical health.
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Behaviour.
- Attendance.
- Progress and attainment.
- Relationships and social development.

Children affected by domestic abuse may:

- Feel frightened or unsafe.
- Display changes in behaviour or presentation.
- Experience anxiety, depression or trauma responses.
- Become withdrawn or isolated.

- Blame themselves for the abuse.
- Experience disruption to their home life, accommodation or education.

Where concerns relating to domestic abuse are identified, the school will take appropriate safeguarding action and work collaboratively with children, families and partner agencies to ensure children receive appropriate support and protection.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)
Where a victim of domestic abuse is identified as being at high risk of serious harm, the school may contribute to a referral to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). The purpose of MARAC is to:

- Share information between relevant agencies.
- Assess risk.
- Coordinate support.
- Develop a multi-agency action plan to safeguard victims and their children.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will normally coordinate the school's involvement in MARAC processes and information-sharing arrangements. Participation in MARAC does not replace the need to make referrals to Children's Social Care where safeguarding concerns are identified.

Operation Encompass
The Orchards School is an Operation Encompass school. Operation Encompass is a national safeguarding partnership that supports children who have experienced domestic abuse. Where the Police attend an incident of domestic abuse and a child is present, lives at the address, or is otherwise affected by the incident, an Operation Encompass notification may be shared with the school. These notifications are treated as safeguarding information and are reviewed promptly by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL.
The school will:

- Record Operation Encompass notifications on CPOMS.
- Consider any immediate safeguarding or welfare needs.
- Ensure relevant staff are informed on a need-to-know basis.
- Monitor the child's wellbeing, attendance, behaviour and presentation.
- Provide appropriate emotional, pastoral and practical support.
- Work with children, families and partner agencies where appropriate.

Operation Encompass enables schools and safeguarding partners to share information promptly so that children receive timely support following a domestic abuse incident.

This information-sharing process helps the school understand circumstances that may affect a child's wellbeing and enables staff to provide appropriate support whilst maintaining confidentiality and respecting the child's dignity.

11. PREVENTING RADICALISATION AND EXTREMISM (THE PREVENT DUTY)

The Orchards School recognises that protecting children from the risk of radicalisation and extremism forms part of the school's wider safeguarding responsibilities. Under Section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent Duty.

The school recognises that safeguarding children against radicalisation and extremism is no different from safeguarding them from other forms of harm, abuse and exploitation. Radicalisation is a safeguarding concern and should be approached in the same way as any other safeguarding risk. Whilst the risk of a child being drawn into terrorism is relatively low, children can be susceptible to extremist influences and radicalisation. Radicalisation can occur online and offline and may occur through family members, peer groups, social networks, community influences, gaming platforms, social media or exposure to extremist content. As with all safeguarding matters, early identification and intervention are essential.

Definitions

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to Fundamental British Values, including:

- Democracy.
- The Rule of Law.
- Individual Liberty.
- Mutual Respect.
- Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Extremism also includes calls for the death of members of the armed forces.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Terrorism is an action or threat that:

- Endangers or causes serious violence to a person or people.
- Causes serious damage to property.
- Seriously interferes with or disrupts an electronic system.

The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or intimidate the public and be made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause.

Vulnerability to Radicalisation The school recognises that there is no single indicator that identifies a child as being vulnerable to radicalisation. Children and young people may become vulnerable through a combination of factors including:

- Personal circumstances.
- Family influences.
- Peer relationships.
- Social isolation.
- Adverse childhood experiences.
- Exposure to extremist material online.
- Mental health or emotional wellbeing concerns.
- Experiences of discrimination or grievance.
- Significant life events or trauma.

Staff understand that extremists may seek to target vulnerable individuals and may use a variety of methods to influence, manipulate or recruit them.
Radicalisation can occur through:

- Social media platforms.
- Online forums and websites.
- Gaming platforms.
- Peer groups.
- Family members.
- Community networks.

Staff will remain professionally curious and vigilant to changes in a child's:

- Behaviour.
- Presentation.
- Attendance.
- Relationships.
- Emotional wellbeing.
- Online activity.
- Use of language.
- Interests or beliefs.

These indicators will always be considered within the wider context of the child's life and circumstances.

Responding to Concerns
Protecting children from radicalisation forms part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities. Any concerns relating to extremism, radicalisation or vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism must be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.
Staff must:

- Report concerns without delay.
- Record concerns promptly on CPOMS.
- Continue to support and monitor the child.
- Maintain professional curiosity.
- Avoid conducting investigations themselves.
- Follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

The school recognises that children may not recognise their own vulnerability to radicalisation and may not disclose concerns directly. Staff will therefore create a culture where children feel safe, respected and able to seek help from trusted adults.
The DSL will:

- Assess concerns.
- Gather relevant information.
- Consider the child's individual circumstances.
- Liaise with relevant agencies where appropriate.
- Determine whether additional support or intervention is required.
- Consider referrals to Children's Social Care, Prevent or Channel where appropriate.

All decisions and actions will be recorded in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Prevent Referrals and Channel

Where appropriate, concerns may be referred through Prevent referral pathways. Channel is a voluntary, confidential multi-agency programme which aims to safeguard individuals identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Where concerns indicate that a child may be vulnerable to radicalisation, the DSL may:

- Seek advice from the local Prevent Team.
- Consult with safeguarding partners.
- Make a Prevent referral.
- Refer the case to Children's Social Care.
- Participate in Channel processes where required.

The DSL and Deputy DSLs are aware of local authority Prevent procedures, local risks and referral pathways.

Training and Professional Development

The school ensures that all staff receive safeguarding training which includes awareness of:

- The Prevent Duty.
- Radicalisation.
- Extremism.
- Terrorism.
- Local and national safeguarding risks.
- Referral procedures.
- Online risks associated with radicalisation.

The DSL and Deputy DSLs undertake additional Prevent-related training and maintain an up-to-date understanding of local and regional risks. Prevent and radicalisation updates for part of the school's ongoing safeguarding training programme and annual safeguarding updates.

Curriculum and Preventative Education

The school recognises the important role it plays in building pupils' resilience to extremist narratives and harmful influences. Through the curriculum, assemblies, collective worship, pastoral support and wider school life, pupils are encouraged to:

- Develop resilience, confidence and self-esteem.
- Respect diversity and difference.
- Understand and promote Fundamental British Values.
- Think critically about information encountered online and offline.
- Challenge stereotypes and prejudice.
- Recognise manipulation and harmful influences.
- Understand how and where to seek help.

Age-appropriate teaching is delivered through Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (where applicable), Health Education, PSHE, Computing and other curriculum areas. The school provides a safe environment where pupils can discuss issues, ask questions and express their views respectfully.

Online Safety and Radicalisation

The school recognises that the internet and social media can be used to promote extremist views and facilitate radicalisation. Online safety education therefore includes teaching pupils to:

- Recognise harmful or extremist content.
- Critically evaluate online information.
- Identify misinformation and disinformation.
- Report concerns about online content.
- Stay safe when accessing digital platforms and social media.

Filtering and monitoring systems are used in accordance with the school's Online Safety, Filtering and Monitoring procedures to help protect pupils from harmful content.

Use of School Premises and External Visitors

The school will undertake appropriate safeguarding and suitability checks when external organisations, speakers or groups use school premises or work with pupils. The school will not knowingly allow its facilities to be used by individuals or organisations that:

- Promote extremist ideologies.
- Encourage radicalisation.
- Incite hatred or violence.
- Undermine Fundamental British Values.

The school will ensure that visiting speakers and organisations contribute positively to pupils' learning and wellbeing and are consistent with the school's values and safeguarding responsibilities.

Partnership Working

The school will work closely with:

- Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Children's Social Care.
- The Police.
- Local Prevent Teams.
- Channel Panels.
- Other relevant safeguarding partners.

This collaborative approach helps ensure that children who may be vulnerable to extremist influences receive appropriate support, intervention and protection at the earliest opportunity

12. SAFEGUARDING ISSUES:

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare.

- The DSL/DDSLs will be aware of contact details and referral routes in to the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures).
- Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to children's social care.

Child Abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. This can include a parent, other family members, someone not related to the child / young person, or by a stranger.
Other community safety incident could include people loitering, unknown adults engaging children in conversation, adults taking photos of children or young people, or a violent incident occurring in the neighbourhood.

- Any concerns that a child may have been abducted, or around a community safety incident need to be reported to the DSL immediately.
- The DSL will respond to the concern in accordance with the above policy and the Local Safeguarding procedures, depending on the nature of each concern. If we are made aware of a potential risk of abduction, we will seek advice and support from police and children's social care to confirm that they are aware and seek clarity on what actions we are able to take.
    - Any concerns that a child may have been abducted, or around a community safety incident need to be reported to the DSL immediately.
    - The DSL will respond to the concern in accordance with the above policy and the Local Safeguarding procedures, depending on the nature of each concern. If we are made aware of a potential risk of abduction, we will seek advice and support from police and children's social care to confirm that they are aware and seek clarity on what actions we are able to take.
    - From a preventative perspective it is important our pupils are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. We provide content within the curriculum which focus on building both confidence and safeguarding knowledge as well as opportunities for children to report their concerns.

Children and young people involved in the court system and children with family members in prison

Children and young people involved in the court system
Children may be required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed, and may be involved in private family-law proceedings. The school will recognise that court proceedings can create anxiety and additional welfare or safeguarding needs, and will provide or signpost age-appropriate support and explanatory resources.

Children with a parent or family member in prison
Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. Children with a parent or family member in prison may experience stigma, isolation, poverty, poor mental health, reduced attendance and increased vulnerability. The school/college will identify and respond to these needs, work with relevant agencies and signpost appropriate support, including resources from the National Information Centre on Children of Offenders where appropriate.

- All information relating to pupils being involved in the Court system or with family members in prison, should be reported to the DSL/DDSL. We will not only signpost the above guidance, where appropriate, to both the young people and parents and carers, but will

also provide additional pastoral and wellbeing support to those young people and work with additional agencies where necessary.

Cybercrime
Children and young people with particular skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. Offences under the Computer Misuse Act 1990 include unauthorised access to computer material, unauthorised access with intent to commit further offences, and unauthorised acts intended to impair the operation of a computer.

- Indicators may include a child using unfamiliar coding tools, discussing hacking or denial-of-service attacks, accessing networks or accounts without permission, or being recruited through online forums. Such behaviour may expose the child to exploitation, criminalisation and contact with organised or hostile actors.
- Staff will report concerns to the DSL. The DSL will consider safeguarding needs and, where appropriate, seek advice or make a referral to children's social care, the police or the National Crime Agency's Cyber Choices programme in accordance with local arrangements.

Children and young people with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues
Children and young people with SEND or certain medical or physical health conditions may face additional risks because they may not understand that what is happening is abuse; may require intimate care; may be isolated from others; or may be more dependent on adults for care. The School will ensure appropriate communication support is in place and will not attribute indicators to a child's condition without further exploration.

We recognise that pupils with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges, and are more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration.
- Pupils being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils.
- The potential for pupils with SEN, disabilities or certain health conditions being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.
- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in school or the consequences of doing so.

We offer extra pastoral support for these pupils, as outlined in our SEND Policy.

Safeguarding Children and young people with Medical Conditions
An incident involving the management of a medical condition, including an allergy, does not automatically require a safeguarding referral. A referral will be considered where the incident indicates increased risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation, for example where essential medical

information is withheld or a child is repeatedly sent to school without essential medication, placing them at risk. The school will follow statutory guidance on supporting pupils with medical conditions and allergy safety.

Young Carers
The Orchards School will be alert to the needs of young carers and recognise the potential effect of caring responsibilities on attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing. We will identify young carers early and coordinate timely internal and external support, including from local authority and health services where appropriate.

Children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, and children who are questioning their gender.
Being lesbian, gay or bisexual is not itself a risk factor for harm. However, children who are, or are perceived by others to be, lesbian, gay or bisexual may be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying. The school will take a strong, proactive approach to preventing and responding to all such bullying, including applying appropriate sanctions.

Children who are questioning their gender: the school will not initiate action relating to social transition. It will respond only where a child or parent/carer raises a request for support. Staff will take time to understand the child's thoughts and feelings, exercise appropriate professional curiosity about the full range of the child's experiences, remain alert to wider vulnerabilities including bullying, family or peer relationships, mental health and psychosocial needs, health issues or neurodiversity, and avoid rigid rules based on gender stereotypes. No member of staff will adopt a change relating to social transition unless a decision has been made by the school following careful individual consideration and the child's parents or carers have been involved, except in the rare circumstances where involving them would create a greater safeguarding risk. The decision-making process will consider the child's age and maturity, wishes and best interests; safeguarding and wider needs; the views of parents/carers; any available clinical evidence or advice; relevant non-clinical professional advice, including from the DSL and SENCO where appropriate; the effect on other children; and duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998.

Parents and carers have the leading role and will be engaged as a priority. Their views will carry great weight and be properly considered. Where a child confides feelings but does not request changes, confidentiality will not be broken unless the conversation raises a related concern about the child's wellbeing or safety, in which case normal safeguarding procedures will be followed. The school recognises social transition as an active intervention and will take a very careful approach. Primary schools will exercise particular caution. Any agreed arrangement will be recorded clearly, communicated only to those who need to know, kept under regular review and adjusted where necessary in the child's and other children's best interests.

Restrictive Interventions and reasonable force
Staff may use reasonable force only where lawful and necessary, using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time. The decision is based on professional judgement and individual circumstances. The school will not adopt a "no contact" policy that prevents staff from safeguarding pupils. For pupils with SEND, mental health needs or medical conditions, staff will

consider additional vulnerability, reasonable adjustments and proactive individual support plans in line with DfE restrictive-intervention guidance.

13. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF, INCLUDING SUPPLY STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, CONTRACTORS AND TRAINEE TEACHERS

The Orchards School recognises its duty to create a culture of openness, transparency and safeguarding where concerns about adults working with children can be identified, raised, recorded and managed appropriately. All staff are expected to maintain professional standards and understand that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility.
All staff are aware of their duty to raise concerns about the conduct, behaviour or practice of colleagues where they believe this may pose a risk to children or be inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct.
The school operates clear procedures for:

- Managing allegations that meet the harm threshold.
- Managing concerns that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns).
- Whistleblowing.
- Professional conduct and safer working practice.

The school will ensure that all concerns are dealt with promptly, fairly, consistently and in accordance with statutory guidance.

Whistleblowing
All staff should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential safeguarding failures. Concerns should generally be raised with the Headteacher. Concerns relating to the Headteacher should be raised with the Trust CEO and Chair of Governors. Where concerns relate to the Headteacher and there is no appropriate governance route available, concerns may be referred directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Staff who raise genuine concerns in good faith will be supported and protected in accordance with the school's Whistleblowing Policy.

Allegations That Meet the Harm Threshold
An allegation meets the harm threshold if an adult working in or on behalf of the school has:

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

This includes behaviours that may have occurred both inside and outside of school. Any allegation that may meet the harm threshold must be reported immediately to the Headteacher. Where the allegation concerns the Headteacher, the matter must be referred immediately to the Chair of Governors. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) before undertaking any investigation or speaking to the individual concerned, except where immediate safeguarding action is required. The school

will work in partnership with the LADO, Children's Social Care, the Police and other relevant agencies to determine the appropriate next steps.

Low-Level Concerns

The school promotes a culture where low-level concerns can be shared openly and professionally to help safeguard children and maintain high standards of conduct. The term **low-level concern** does not mean that the concern is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, including a concern that causes a sense of unease or a "nagging doubt", that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a manner that:

- Is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including conduct outside work; and
- Does not meet the harm threshold; or
- Is otherwise not serious enough to consider referral to the LADO.

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Being over-familiar with children.
- Showing favouritism.
- Taking photographs of children on a personal device contrary to school procedures.
- Meeting with a child alone behind a closed door without appropriate justification.
- Using inappropriate language.
- Humiliating, belittling or intimidating a child.
- Inappropriate use of social media or communication platforms.
- Failing to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

The school recognises that such behaviour can exist on a spectrum ranging from inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour through to behaviour that may ultimately enable abuse.

All low-level concerns will be:

- Reported to the Headteacher.
- Recorded appropriately.
- Reviewed and responded to proportionately.
- Considered within the wider context of safeguarding practice.

The purpose of recording low-level concerns is to identify patterns of behaviour, support staff where appropriate and help prevent more serious concerns from developing.

Self-Reporting

Staff are encouraged to self-report where they believe their behaviour may have been misunderstood, misinterpreted or may not have met expected professional standards. The school recognises that self-reporting demonstrates openness and professional responsibility and will be considered as part of the management of the concern.

Record Keeping

The Headteacher will ensure that:

- All allegations and low-level concerns are recorded appropriately.
- Records are maintained securely and confidentially.

- Information is retained in accordance with statutory guidance and data protection requirements.
- Patterns of behaviour are identified and addressed.
- Appropriate information is shared during recruitment processes where required and permitted by law.

Further Information
Detailed procedures for managing allegations, whistleblowing and low-level concerns are set out within the schools:

- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy

14. SAFER RECRUITMENT

The Orchards School is committed to ensuring that all recruitment, selection and appointment processes promote safeguarding and protect children from harm. The school follows the safer recruitment requirements set out in:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.
- The Education Act 2002.
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations.
- Relevant employment legislation.
- Trust safer recruitment procedures.

The school adopts a robust and consistent safer recruitment process to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children. All recruitment panels will include at least one member who has completed appropriate safer recruitment training.

The school will undertake all required pre-employment checks, including:

- Verification of identity.
- Verification of right to work in the UK.
- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks
- Children's Barred List checks where the role requires this.
- Prohibition from teaching checks where applicable.
- Section 128 direction checks where applicable.
- Verification of qualifications where required.
- Employment history checks.
- References.
- Online searches in accordance with KCSIE.
- Any other checks required by statutory guidance.

Volunteers
The school recognises that volunteers play an important role within the school community.

Appropriate safeguarding and suitability checks will be undertaken for all volunteers in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and Trust procedures.
The level of checking undertaken will be determined by:

- The nature of the role.
- The frequency of contact with children.
- Whether the volunteer is undertaking regulated activity.
- The level of supervision provided.

The school will obtain:

- An Enhanced DBS Certificate.
- A Children's Barred List check.
- Any other checks required by law or school procedures.

The school will not use risk assessments as a substitute for statutory safeguarding checks.

Single Central Record (SCR)
The school maintains a Single Central Record (SCR) in accordance with KCSIE 2026/ The SCR records all required recruitment and safeguarding checks undertaken on:

- Staff.
- Supply staff.
- Agency workers.
- Volunteers where applicable.
- Governors and Trustees where applicable.
- Contractors where required.

The SCR is maintained by designated members of the senior leadership team and is reviewed regularly to ensure accuracy and compliance. Safeguarding oversight of the SCR forms part of the school's quality assurance processes. Regular audits are undertaken by school leaders and safeguarding governors.

Visitors and Contractors

- Read and comply with safeguarding procedures, including the school's mobile and smart device policy

The school operates robust visitor management procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils. All visitors and contractors are required to:

- Report to the school reception on arrival.
- Sign in using the school's visitor system.
- Provide proof of identity if requested.
- Always wear a visitor identification badge and lanyard.
- Follow staff instructions while on site.

The level of supervision provided will be determined by:

- The purpose of the visit.
- Whether safeguarding checks have been undertaken.
- The areas of the school being accessed.

- The potential contact with children.

Visitors who have not undergone appropriate safeguarding checks will be appropriately supervised at all times. Possession of a DBS certificate does not automatically entitle an individual to unsupervised access to children. Decisions regarding supervision and access will always be based on safeguarding considerations and the nature of the individual's role within the school.

15. CONFIDENTIALITY, INFORMATION SHARING AND RECORD KEEPING

The Orchards School recognises that effective safeguarding depends upon appropriate information sharing, accurate record keeping and maintaining confidentiality in accordance with statutory guidance and data protection legislation. Information sharing is essential for the identification, assessment and support of children who may be experiencing abuse, neglect, exploitation, modern slavery or other safeguarding concerns. The school will share information where necessary to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and will do so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 UK GDPR, KCSIE 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children and the DfE's Information Sharing Duty: statutory guidance for safeguarding organisations and their practitioners.
All staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors have a responsibility to share relevant safeguarding information with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL. Staff must never assume that someone else will take action.

Staff will be proactive in sharing information as early as possible. There is no requirement for a child to meet a particular statutory threshold before relevant information can be shared under the Information Sharing Duty; this includes information relating to early help, prevention and unmet need. Information shared will be relevant to safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare. Relevant information about another individual connected to the child may also fall within the duty.
The Information Sharing Duty is subject to a narrow limitation: information need not be shared where, through professional judgement, the school/college considers that sharing it would be more detrimental to the child than not sharing it. A decision not to share on this basis should be carefully considered, recorded and kept under review. Where possible, staff should consider whether any adverse consequences can be mitigated so that relevant information can still be shared safely.

Confidentiality
Where a child discloses information to a member of staff, the child will be listened to carefully, reassured and taken seriously. Staff must never promise confidentiality to a child. If a child requests that information is kept secret, staff should explain sensitively that they have a responsibility to pass information to the DSL in order to help keep the child safe. The school will only share information on a need-to-know basis and will always seek to maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality. The welfare of the child is paramount, and concerns will be shared without consent where necessary to protect a child from harm or to promote their welfare.

Recording Concerns
All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, welfare concerns, actions, decisions and outcomes must be recorded promptly and accurately. Any member of staff who has a safeguarding concern must:

- Record the concern on CPOMS without delay.
- Discuss the concern directly with a member of the DSL Team.
- Ensure the concern has been acknowledged before the child leaves school that day.

Safeguarding concerns, actions, decisions and outcomes will be recorded on CPOMS in accordance with the school's safeguarding recording procedures.
Records will be:

- Factual, accurate and contemporaneous.
- Clearly dated and signed electronically.
- Securely stored.
- Reviewed and updated where appropriate.
- Where information is shared, or a decision is made not to share, under the Information Sharing Duty, the record will include the decision and rationale.

Working with Parents and Carers
The school recognises the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
The school will:

- Help parents understand the school's safeguarding responsibilities.
- Work openly and honestly with families wherever possible.
- Share concerns appropriately and sensitively.
- Provide advice, support and signposting to services where additional help may be required.
- Maintain an up-to-date Early Help and Family Support Offer on the school's website.
- Ensure safeguarding and child protection policies are available on the school website and upon request.
- Operate a clear and accessible complaints procedure.

There may be circumstances where informing parents of concerns could place a child at increased risk of harm or prejudice a statutory investigation. In such circumstances, the DSL will seek advice from Children's Social Care, the Police or other relevant agencies before contacting parents or carers.

Data protection law continues to apply to information sharing. Where the Information Sharing Duty applies, section 16LA provides a legal obligation to share information when its criteria are met; an appropriate lawful basis under UK GDPR and, where special category personal data is involved, an appropriate condition for processing must still be identified. Consent is not required to share information under the statutory duty, although the school/college will be open and transparent with children and families about sharing where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Storage of Records
Safeguarding and child protection records are kept separately from a child's main educational record. Records are stored securely and access is restricted to authorised staff with legitimate safeguarding responsibilities. The school will maintain safeguarding records in accordance with:

- KCSIE 2026.
- The Data Protection Act 2018.
- UK GDPR.
- The school's Data Protection Policy.
- The school's Records Retention Schedule.

Information Requests
Requests for safeguarding information from external agencies, professionals or the Police will be managed by the DSL and/or Headteacher.

The school/college will share relevant information with other organisations and practitioners in accordance with section 16LA of the Children Act 2004, the DfE Information Sharing Duty statutory guidance, data protection law and the published arrangements of the relevant local safeguarding partners.

Transfer of Safeguarding Records
When a child transfers to another school, college or educational setting, safeguarding and child protection records will be transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file. The DSL will ensure that:

- The receiving setting is informed that safeguarding records exist.
- Records are transferred securely and as soon as possible -5 days for an in-year transfer, or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term.' Receipt of the records is confirmed and recorded.
- A record of the transfer is maintained by the school.
- Where information indicates a risk to the child or to others, the receiving setting will assess risk and put a safety and support plan in place.

Retention of Records
Safeguarding records will be retained and disposed of in accordance with the school's Records Retention Schedule, data protection requirements and national guidance relating to child protection records.

16. EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

As an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provider, The Orchards School recognises its responsibilities under the Childcare Act 2006, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE) 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children. The school will ensure that all safeguarding and welfare requirements are fully implemented and that the welfare of every child remains paramount.
The school recognises that safeguarding is particularly important in the early years and will ensure that all children are provided with a safe, secure, inclusive and nurturing environment in which they can learn, develop and thrive.
The school will:

- Ensure children are cared for in a safe, secure and stimulating environment.
- Create an environment where children are seen, heard, valued and supported.
- Promote a culture of safeguarding, vigilance and professional curiosity.
- Take all necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Maintain appropriate policies and procedures which are understood and implemented by all staff.
- Ensure all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to identify and respond to concerns.
- Provide appropriate supervision, support and professional development for staff.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers and external agencies to safeguard children and promote their welfare.
- Maintain accurate records and share information appropriately in line with statutory guidance and safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure children can be seen and heard at all times within a safe learning environment.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
EYFS provision has access to a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs who take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety.
The DSL will ensure that:

- Safeguarding concerns are responded to promptly and appropriately.
- Staff receive safeguarding training and updates.
- Safeguarding records are maintained appropriately.
- Referrals are made to Children's Social Care and other agencies where necessary.
- Appropriate support is provided for children and families where concerns are identified.

Safeguarding Training
All EYFS staff will receive safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, as part of their induction and will receive regular safeguarding updates to ensure their knowledge remains current and reflects local and national safeguarding priorities. All staff working within the EYFS provision will understand their responsibilities under Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE) 2026, the EYFS Statutory Framework and the school's safeguarding procedures.
Staff will be provided with opportunities for ongoing professional development, safeguarding briefings and updates throughout the academic year.

Staffing, Qualifications and Supervision
The school will ensure that:

- Staffing arrangements meet the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework.
- Appropriate adult-to-child ratios are maintained at all times.
- Staff possess the qualifications, experience and skills required for their role.
- Safer recruitment procedures are followed.
- Suitable arrangements are in place for student placements, volunteers and visitors.
- Staff receive regular supervision, support and safeguarding updates.
- Children's individual needs are met through appropriate staffing arrangements.

Suitability of Staff
The school will ensure that all adults working within the EYFS provision are suitable to work with children. Appropriate safer recruitment checks will be undertaken in accordance with statutory guidance and the school's Safer Recruitment Policy. These checks may include:

- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.
- Children's Barred List checks where required.
- Verification of identity.
- Verification of qualifications where appropriate.
- Employment history checks.
- References.
- Disqualification checks where applicable.

The school will ensure that no person whose suitability has not been appropriately assessed is left unsupervised with children.

First Aid
The school will ensure that:

- At least one person who holds a current full Paediatric First Aid qualification is available whenever children are present.
- First aid equipment is readily available and appropriately maintained.
- Parents and carers are informed of accidents or injuries in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Appropriate action is taken should a child become ill or injured.

Health, Safety and Welfare

The school will promote children's health, safety and welfare by:

- Maintaining safe premises, equipment and resources.
- Undertaking regular health and safety checks and risk assessments.
- Implementing effective hygiene and infection control procedures.
- Taking reasonable steps to prevent the spread of infection.
- Ensuring children are adequately supervised at all times.
- Taking appropriate action when children are ill or injured.
- Following statutory guidance regarding exclusion periods for infectious illnesses.
- Routinely monitoring health and safety practices to promote children's safety and welfare.

Medicines and Intimate Care

The school will ensure that:

- Medicines are administered safely and in accordance with the school's Administration of Medicines Policy.
- Written parental consent is obtained where required.
- Appropriate records are maintained.
- Intimate care is provided safely, respectfully and in accordance with the school's Intimate Care Policy.
- Children's privacy, dignity and welfare are always protected.

Mobile Phones, Cameras and Smart Devices

The school recognises the importance of safeguarding children from the risks associated with the misuse of technology. Appropriate arrangements are in place regarding the use of mobile phones, cameras, smart watches and other electronic devices within the EYFS provision. Staff, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors must follow the school's policies and procedures regarding the safe and appropriate use of technology. EYFS staff must not use personal mobile phones during contact time with children and must comply with the school's procedures relating to photography, recording devices and electronic communications. The use of technology within the EYFS provision will always be managed in a way that promotes children's safety, privacy and wellbeing.

Key Person System

Each child within the EYFS provision will be assigned a Key Person. The Key Person will help to ensure that every child's care, learning and developmental needs are effectively supported and that positive relationships are established with both the child and their family.

The Key Person will:

- Support children's emotional wellbeing and development.
- Help children become familiar with routines and expectations.

- Monitor children's learning and development.
- Act as a key point of contact for parents and carers.
- Support the identification of emerging needs or concerns.
- Contribute to safeguarding and early help processes where appropriate.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

The school recognises that effective safeguarding relies upon positive relationships with parents and carers.

The school will:

- Develop effective partnerships with parents and carers.
- Share information about children's learning, development and welfare.
- Support parents and carers in promoting children's wellbeing and development.
- Signpost families to additional support services where appropriate.
- Work openly and collaboratively with families wherever it is safe to do so.
- Liaise with parents and carers to support children's learning, development and welfare.

Online Safety in EYFS

The school recognises that even very young children may access technology and online content both within and beyond the school environment.

Age-appropriate online safety education will therefore be incorporated into the EYFS curriculum to help children develop an understanding of:

- Safe use of technology.
- Trusted adults.
- Personal information.
- Seeking help when worried or upset.
- Safe and unsafe situations.

Online safety forms part of the school's wider approach to safeguarding and promoting children's wellbeing.

Early Help and Child Protection

The school recognises that concerns about a child's welfare may arise at any time. Where concerns are identified, staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

- Record concerns promptly on CPOMS.
- Inform the DSL without delay.
- Work in partnership with relevant agencies where appropriate.

The school will take appropriate action to safeguard children who may be suffering, or are at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect, exploitation or significant harm.

Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns

Any safeguarding concern, allegation or low-level concern relating to an adult working within the EYFS provision will be managed in accordance with:

- The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- The Low-Level Concerns Policy.
- The Staff Code of Conduct.

- Allegations Management Procedures.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE) 2026.

Concerns will be managed promptly, fairly and consistently, with the welfare of the child remaining paramount at all times.

Learning and Development
The school recognises that children's personal, social and emotional development is an important part of safeguarding.
Through the EYFS curriculum, children will be supported to:

- Develop confidence and resilience.
- Form positive relationships.
- Understand routines and boundaries.
- Express their thoughts, feelings and wishes.
- Develop age-appropriate awareness of personal safety.
- Build the foundations for safe and healthy relationships.

Vigilance and Professional Curiosity
The school recognises that safeguarding concerns may present differently in younger children and that children in the EYFS may be unable to communicate concerns verbally. Staff working with younger children will therefore remain vigilant to changes in behaviour, appearance, presentation, development and patterns of interaction that may indicate a safeguarding concern. Concerns will be recorded promptly on CPOMS and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures stated in section 4.
The welfare of the child will remain the school's paramount consideration at all times.
be alert to the indicators above and all concerns relating to CCE will be managed in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

17. SCHOOL PREMISES, TOILETS AND CHANGING FACILITIES

The school will provide toilet, washing and changing facilities in accordance with statutory requirements, safeguarding guidance and relevant health and safety legislation.
The school will:

- Provide separate toilet facilities for boys and girls aged eight and above.
- Provide separate changing facilities for boys and girls aged eleven and above.
- Ensure that children aged eleven and over do not undress in the presence of pupils of the opposite biological sex.
- Not permit children to use toilet, changing or shower facilities designated for pupils of the opposite biological sex.
- Maintain facilities that promote privacy, dignity, safety and wellbeing for all pupils.
- Ensure facilities are appropriately supervised and managed in accordance with safeguarding requirements.
- Make reasonable, lawful and proportionate arrangements to support individual pupils where required, whilst maintaining the privacy, dignity, safety and welfare of all pupils and complying with relevant legal and safeguarding requirements.

- Consider whether alternative facilities, such as a self-contained toilet or changing facility, can be provided where appropriate and practicable, provided that doing so does not compromise the safety, privacy, dignity or wellbeing of other pupils or undermine the provision of single-sex facilities.

The school recognises that decisions relating to toilets, washing and changing facilities must be made on a case-by-case basis, taking account of safeguarding, health and safety, equality duties, the needs of the individual child and the rights and welfare of other pupils. The Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and relevant senior leaders will ensure that any arrangements relating to toilet, washing or changing facilities are risk assessed where appropriate and reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain safe, lawful and in the best interests of all pupils.

18. SPORT

The school recognises the importance of physical education, physical activity and participation in sport for all pupils. The school may separate pupils by biological sex in sporting activities where physical strength, stamina, safety, privacy, dignity, fairness or competitive integrity considerations make this necessary. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking account of:

- The age and stage of development of the pupils.
- The nature of the sporting activity.
- Health and safety considerations.
- Safeguarding responsibilities.
- Relevant sporting body guidance.
- The rights, welfare and wellbeing of all pupils.

Where there are no concerns relating to safety, fairness or competitive integrity, the school will consider requests for participation in sporting activities in accordance with its legal responsibilities and the individual circumstances of the pupil The welfare, safety, dignity and wellbeing of all pupils will remain central to decision-making. The school will ensure that arrangements for physical education and sport are implemented fairly, sensitively and in a manner that safeguards all participants.

19. ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

Where a pupil attends Alternative Provision, the school retains responsibility for promoting the safeguarding and welfare of that child.
The school will:

- Obtain assurance that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.
- Monitor attendance regularly.
- Maintain oversight of educational progress and welfare.
- Share safeguarding information appropriately.
- Liaise regularly with the provider.
- Act promptly on safeguarding concerns.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure robust communication arrangements are maintained with all alternative providers used by the school.

20. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Local Governing Committee

21. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Safer Use of AI
- Behaviour and Relationships
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment and Selection
- Whistleblowing
- Anti-Bullying
- Complaints
- Health and safety
- Attendance and Absence
- Online safety
- Equality Information and Objectives policy
- Relationships and Sex Education
- First aid (including Allergy awareness)
- CLA
- Privacy notices