



Sidcot
Live Adventurously



Policy Name: Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Policy Number 2.1

Date: September 2026

Policy Number: 2.1
Sources of Advice in relation to this document: Safeguarding in Education Lead, North Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership
This policy replaces: 2.1- previous Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Approved by: Sidcot Board
Date displayed on Sidcot School web site: <u>September 2026</u>
Date due to be reviewed by responsible person or body: 01/09/2026

North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

In North Somerset the three key partners are:

- **North Somerset Council**
- **Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group**
- **Avon and Somerset Police**

Schools and educational settings, including early years (Section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006), are vital safeguarding partners. The North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership builds on the existing strong relationships with schools, college and early years settings to ensure educational settings contribute to making the voices of children and young people heard within an educational safeguarding context.

The North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership have six safeguarding principles:

1. empowerment - we will support and encourage people to make their own decisions and give informed consent
2. prevention - we will strive to take action before harm occurs
3. proportionality - we will give the least intrusive response to risks
4. protection - we will give support and representation for those in greatest need
5. partnership - we will provide local solutions through local community services. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse
6. accountability - we insist upon accountability and transparency in all safeguarding practices

Full published arrangements can be found at <https://nsscp.co.uk/>

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PART 1: Policy

1.1 Definitions

Safeguarding is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- 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.

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

1.2 Introduction

At Sidcot School

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children, their families and carers, has a role to play.
- In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should always consider what is in the **best interests** of the child.
- We take an '**it can happen here**' approach where safeguarding is concerned.
- **Everyone** who comes into contact with children has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.
- Victims of harm should **never** be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Sidcot School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by:

- The provision of a safe environment in which children can live and learn.
- The provision of high-quality residential provision which nurtures and develops our children and young people to achieve and thrive.
- Acting on concerns about a child's welfare immediately.
- Fulfilling our legal responsibilities to identify children who may need early help assessment or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. As a boarding school we are mindful that safeguarding duties extend into this area and have senior staff available and out of hours. The Head (DDSL) lives on the school site.
- As a boarding school, Sidcot recognises that safeguarding responsibilities extend beyond the classroom and throughout the residential provision. The School maintains appropriate safeguarding oversight, supervision and pastoral support for boarders, including during evenings, weekends and overnight periods. Boarding staff, safeguarding staff and the wider pastoral team work collaboratively to identify emerging concerns, support students' welfare, promote healthy relationships, safeguard international students and boarders living away from home, and ensure that all boarders know how to access safeguarding support at any time. Safeguarding arrangements for boarders are implemented in accordance with this policy and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.
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All action taken by Sidcot School will be in accordance with:

- **Current legislation** (these are summarised within [Working Together to Safeguard Children: statutory framework](#))
- **Statutory, national, and local guidance – this includes:**
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
 - Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
 - Independent School Standards Guidance (DfE, 2026)
 - National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (2022, as updated)

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- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
 - Children and Social Work Act 2017
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
 - Prevent Duty Guidance
 - Online Safety Act 2023
 - Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education Statutory Guidance (DfE, 2025)
 - EYFS Statutory Framework (current edition)
 - **Local Guidance from the Local Safeguarding Partnership:** Information on arrangements can be found on the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership Website at this link: <https://nsscp.co.uk/>

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- 1.2 Missing Child Policy and Procedure (Senior School)
- 1.2a Missing Child Policy and Procedure (Junior School)
- 1.4 Uncollected Child Procedure
- 2.2 Staff to Student Code of Conduct
- 2.3 Child on Child Abuse Policy
- 2.5 Restrictive Interventions including Use of Reasonable Force
- 2.10 Supervision of Students (Senior School)
- 2.10a Supervision of Students (Junior School)
- 2.15 Low level Concerns
- 3.14 Hiring and Letting of Facilities Policy
- 4.1 Medical Policy
- 4.4 Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- 5.1 Behaviour and Discipline (Senior School)
- 5.1a Behaviour and Discipline (Junior School)
- 5.1b Behaviour and Discipline – Out of School Care and Holiday Clubs
- 5.1c Behaviour and Discipline - EYFS
- 5.4 Anti-bullying Policy (including cyber-bullying)
- 5.6 Smoking, Drugs and Alcohol
- 5.10 Search and Confiscation Policy
- 5.11 Permanent Exclusions Policy
- 5.12 Mobile Phone Policy
- 6.3 Attendance Register Policy
- 7.1 PSHE Policy (Senior School)
- 7.1b PSHE Policy (Junior School)
- 7.3 RSE Policy (Senior School)
- 7.3b RSE Policy (Junior School)
- 8.1 Health and Safety Policy
- 9.13 Recruitment Selection and Disclosure Policy
- 9.8 Discipline Rules and Procedure (staff)
- 9.26 Providing References Policy
- 9.9 Whistleblowing Policy
- 9.14 Volunteers Policy
- 9.27 Supervision of Staff Policy
- 9.30 Resident Staff Policy
- 12.1 Digital Safety Policy
- 12.2 Digital Security Policy

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- 12.3 Acceptable Use Policy (staff)
 - 12.4 Acceptable Use Policy (students)
 - 12.5 Digital Technology Acceptable Use (visitors)

The Head should ensure that the above policies and procedures, adopted by governing bodies and proprietors, are accessible, understood and followed by all staff, parents and where appropriate, children.

The Behaviour Policy (5.1) is one of many policies published online and available to parents.

1.3 Equalities Statement

With regards to safeguarding we will consider our duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and our general and specific duties under the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#). General duties include:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
2. Advance equality of opportunity and good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it and not unlawfully discriminating against students because of their protected characteristics.
3. Taking positive action, where appropriate, to deal with the disadvantages faced by people with protected characteristics.

All children regardless of age, gender, culture, language, race, ability, sexual identity, or religion have equal rights to protection, safeguarding and opportunities.

Details of our specific duties are published under Sidcot School equality statement, 2.11 Equal Opportunities Policy Students, which can be found on the School's intranet. Staff should be aware that students with protected characteristics may be more at risk of harm.

Staff are aware of the additional barriers to recognising Abuse, Neglect and exploitation in children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This will be addressed in line with our Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy which can be found on the School's intranet

Sidcot School also adheres to the principles of and promotes anti-oppressive practice in line with the [United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child](#), and the [Human Rights Act 1998](#), which sets out that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, may breach children's rights.

1.4 Overall Aims

This policy will contribute to the safeguarding of children at Sidcot School by:

- Clarifying safeguarding expectations for members of the school community, staff, governing body, learners, and their families.
- Contributing to the establishment of a safe, resilient, and robust safeguarding culture in the school built on shared values; that learners are treated with respect and dignity, taught to treat each other and staff with respect, feel safe, have a voice and are listened to.
- Supporting contextual safeguarding practice recognising that the school site can be a location where harm can occur.
- Setting expectations for developing knowledge and skills within the school community (staff, learners, parents/carers) to the signs and indicators of safeguarding issues and how to respond to them.
- Early identification of need for vulnerable learners and provision of proportionate interventions to promote their welfare and safety.
- Working in partnership with learners, parents, and other agencies in the Local Safeguarding Partnership.
- Promoting early identification of need and timely intervention through effective partnership working with children, families, Family Help services and other agencies.

1.5 Professional expectations, roles, and responsibilities

1.5.1 Role of all staff

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- All staff, including governors, volunteers and those who do not work directly with children, will read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition). Appropriate mechanisms will be in place to support staff in understanding and discharging their safeguarding responsibilities.
 - 2026 All staff will be aware of the systems in place which support safeguarding including reading the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy; the Behaviour Policies; the Staff to Student Code of Conduct; safeguarding response to children absent and children missing from education; and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
 - Know who and how to contact the DSL and any deputies, the Chair of Governors, and the Governor responsible for safeguarding (**Appendix E** Contact Information).
 - All staff will be able to identify vulnerable learners and take action to keep them safe. Information or concerns about learners will be shared with the DSL where it includes those:
 - who may need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect;
 - requiring mental health support;
 - may benefit from early help assessment;
 - where there is a radicalisation concern;
 - where a crime may have been committed.
 - Be clear as to the setting's policy and procedures about child-on-child abuse, online safety, children absent and children missing education and those requiring mental health support.
 - Be involved where appropriate, in the implementation of individual plans to further safeguard vulnerable learners and understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.
 - Record concerns appropriately and in a timely manner using CPOMS,
 - To be aware of the need to raise to the senior leadership team any concerns they have about safeguarding practices within the school.

1.5.2 Early Years Provision

Details of safeguarding arrangements for Early Year Provisions can be found at **Appendix G** (Early Years Provision). This should be read in conjunction with the Supervision of Children – Junior School incorporating EYFS (Policy 2.10a).

1.5.3 Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026,)

Details of our DSL, Deputy DSLs and Safeguarding Officers are available on the Sidcot School intranet, on posters displayed around the school and are printed in school literature e.g. the Blue Book

The DSL is a senior member of staff who undertakes lead responsibility for safeguarding (including online safety) and child protection within the setting. This should be explicit in the role holder's job description.

- The DSL works with the Head, SENCO, Designated Teacher and other relevant strategic leads to support the educational attainment and wellbeing of pupils in school
- The DSL is also responsible for any work undertaken by any Deputy DSLs.

DSL main duties:

- Providing advice and support to staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters
- Refer children and families who have been identified in need of early intervention or where suspected or known abuse is taking place to Children's Social Care (with consideration to consent)
- Manage referrals – to e.g. Children's Social Care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring service, the Police, CAMHS
- Risk assessment of children and environments
- Act as a point of contact for outside agencies about safeguarding, liaising with the partnership and police where required, ensuring that there is an appropriate adult present during police investigations.
- Coordinate safeguarding training for staff, including governors, and raise awareness in the school community of policies and practice in relation to safeguarding. Help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about vulnerable learners with relevant staff. Ensure appropriate safeguarding cover and availability during term time/any out of hours/out of term activities managed by the school.
- Ensure that safeguarding records (for those students moving schools) are transferred or received from the other school within the definitive timeframe (five working days).

1.5.4 Role of the Governing Body

Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026, Part 2)

There is a senior board level lead who takes responsibility for the setting's safeguarding responsibility to ensure that safeguarding and child protection practice, process, and policy (including online safety) is effective and is compliant with legislation, statutory guidance, and Local Safeguarding Partnership arrangements.

- The appointed Safeguarding Governor will liaise with the Head and the DSL to produce an annual report for governors and complete an annual safeguarding review of the School under the terms of Section 157 of the Education Act 2002.
- Ensure that the School remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to its attention without delay;
- Ensure that this document is updated annually (or when there are significant updates)
- Ensure that the DSL is an appropriate senior member of setting's senior leadership team and ensure that they have adequate time, funding, training, resources, and support to carry out their role effectively.
- Ensure that the training and learning for the school community is robust and effective.
- Ensure that learners are taught about safeguarding on the curriculum including [online safety](#) and [Relationships and Sex Education](#) in compliance with statutory guidance
- To ensure that teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors have appropriate checks carried out in line with statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026, Part 3).
- Ensure that there are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns or allegations against teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors who may not be suitable to work with or pose a risk to learners, this includes having a process to manage low level concerns.
- Ensure that systems are in place for learners to effectively share a concern about a safeguarding issue they are experiencing, express their views and give feedback.

- Ensure that the School has systems in place to prevent, identify and respond to child-on-child harm (including sexual abuse and sexual harassment) and mental health concerns, and review the effectiveness of the setting's online safety practices.
- Appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement for children in care and other care arrangements.

1.6 Safeguarding training for staff

1.6.1 All staff:

- Governing bodies and proprietors will ensure that all staff, including Governors undergo safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) training at induction. This includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- Will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) refresher training at least annually (via formal training, email e-bulletins and staff meetings).
- All staff must understand their legal duty under the Mandatory FGM Reporting Duty.
- All staff must complete Prevent awareness training. This is to ensure that they can comply with the legal expectations under the Prevent duty.
- Staff training includes clear reference to internal whistleblowing policy and guidance for escalating concerns.

1.6.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies:

- Will undergo formal training to provide them with the knowledge and skills (including online safety) required to carry out the role. The training will be updated every two years.
- Deputies will be trained to the same level as the DSL.
- The DSL and any deputies will liaise with the Local Safeguarding Partnership to ensure that their knowledge and skills are updated via e-bulletins, attend DSL network meetings, and take time to read and digest safeguarding bulletins.

1.6.3 Other training considerations:

- The governing body will ensure that at least one person on any appointment panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training, in line with School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009.
- Members of the Senior Leadership Team will make themselves aware of and understand their role within the local safeguarding arrangements. This will ensure that those who have responsibility for the management of behaviour, inclusion, Special Educational Needs, attendance, and exclusions will carry out their duties with a safeguarding consideration.
- The Designated Teacher for Children in Care will undergo appropriate training to fulfil their role to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are in care.
- The mental health lead has access to appropriate training.
- Training around safeguarding topics in Annex B (including online safety) will be integrated, aligned, and considered as part of a whole school safeguarding approach.
- Appropriate colleagues have received training in relation to use of reasonable force and positive handling.

1.7 Safeguarding in the curriculum

Sidcot School is dedicated to ensuring that learners are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. We recognise that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all learners, and a more personalised or contextualised approach for more

vulnerable learners, victims of abuse and some SEND children might be needed. This is part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

This includes:

- Working within statutory guidance to deliver appropriate Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and health education Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, to explore key areas such as self-esteem, emotional literacy, assertiveness, power, building resilience to radicalisation (as part of the Prevent Duty bullying, online safety, healthy relationships, consent, sexual harassment and violence).
- Appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to ensure that 'over-blocking' does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what learners can be taught about online safety and safeguarding.
- The curriculum will be shaped to respond to safeguarding incident patterns in the setting identified by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding team (e.g., to respond to an increase in bullying incidents).
- Providing engagement opportunities with parents and carers to consult on key aspects of the curriculum.
- Learners can inform the curriculum via discussions with the School Council, Officer Holder meetings and Boarders' Forum.

1.8 Safer recruitment and safer working practice

1.8.1 Safer recruitment

Sidcot School pays full regard to the safer recruitment practices detailed in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2026) Part 3)

- This includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history, and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. References are always obtained, scrutinised and concerns resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed. Online searches of shortlisted candidates will be carried out.
- It also includes undertaking appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the barred list checks and prohibition checks (and overseas checks if appropriate), dependent on the role and duties performed, including regulated and non-regulated activity.
- All recruitment materials will include reference to Sidcot School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of learners.

1.8.2 Use of reasonable force

'Reasonable force' refers to the physical contact to restrain and control children using no more force than is needed.' The Department believes that the adoption of a 'no contact' policy at a school or college can leave staff unable to fully support and protect their pupils and students. It encourages headteachers, principals, governing bodies, and proprietors to adopt sensible policies, which allow and support their staff to make appropriate physical contact. The use of reasonable force is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and will be determined by individual circumstances and the vulnerability of any child with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) will be considered.

- The use of reasonable force will be minimised through positive and proactive behaviour support and de-escalation and will follow government guidance ([Use of Reasonable Force in Schools 2013](#); [Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention, 2019](#)).

- Staff should be mindful of the School Policy on Restrictive Interventions including use of Physical Restraint (2.5)
- There is robust recording of any incident where positive handling or restraint has been used. Further review of the incident is carried out to reflect on how the incident could be avoided, this will involve the child and their family.

Any concerns about a staff member's handling of a child should be discussed with the Head.

1.8.3 Whistleblowing procedures

Staff are aware that the school has a whistleblowing policy (policy 9.9) any concerns around staff and volunteers should be addressed with the Head, the DSL in the absence of the Head, or the safeguarding governor. Any concern relating to the Head should be addressed to the chair of Governors. Staff are also aware of the details of the LADO should they feel that they cannot raise concerns internally.

Further guidance can be found at:

Advice on whistleblowing <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>.

- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available [here](#) for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.
- The above channels are clearly accessible to all staff (in the staff handbook, code of conduct, staff notice boards and in addition, the Whistleblowing Policy is available on the school's intranet.
- Parents and carers should also have access to this policy and know the channels they can use if they have a concern about a staff member.

1.9 Key safeguarding areas

These topics are themes that can impact on children and families, there are specific areas of safeguarding that the setting has statutory responsibilities to address which are hyperlinked:

- Children in the court system
- Children affected by parental offending/imprisonment.
- [Children missing from education](#) – including persistent absence.
- [Child Exploitation](#) (including both Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation and county lines, modern day slavery and trafficking)
- Cybercrime
- [Domestic Abuse](#)
- Homelessness
- So-called Honour based Abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage). Since February 2023 it has been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.'
- [Online Safety](#)
- [Mental health](#)
- [Child-on-child abuse](#):
 - Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying). Sidcot School has a separate Anti-Bullying policy (Policy Number 5.4) which is accessible from the school's website and intranet. This policy (5.4) includes a

proactive approach to educate students about behaviour expectations through our Sidcot Community wheel which promotes kindness, tolerance, respect and an understanding of equality.

- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos.
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm; and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).
- Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), including misogyny, harmful gender stereotypes, sexual harassment, sexual violence and behaviours which contribute to abusive cultures.
- [Preventing Radicalisation \(The Prevent Duty\)](#)
- [Serious Youth Violence](#)
- Substance Misuse
- [Private Fostering](#)
- [Young Carers](#)
- [Looked after Children](#)

Additional information about key safeguarding areas can also be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026; Annex B); and the [NSPCC website - Types of Abuse](#);

PART 2: Procedures

2.1 Reporting concerns

- All staff are clear about recording and reporting concerns to the DSL/DSL deputies/Safeguarding officers in a timely way. Staff record all concerns (including low level concerns) on CPOMS. All staff have access to such platform. In the case of a serious safeguarding concern, staff will inform the DSL/DDSL immediately. If a learner is in immediate danger, staff should phone the police.

All staff are aware of and follow the procedures to respond to a concern about a child detailed in **Appendix B** (Reporting a Concern). This includes responses to child-on-child harm and learners who present with a mental health need.

At Sidcot School, learners can raise their concerns by talking to their tutor, a teacher, any member of staff, a Student mentor or any of the Safeguarding Team and they will be treated seriously. They can speak face-to-face, make contact via Teams, email or report a concern on the School's website.

2.2 Confidentiality, Information Sharing and GDPR

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

Staff should be proactive in sharing as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to Local Authority Children's Social Care.

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

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

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and HM Government Information Sharing and Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers, May 2024. Sidcot School will consider where appropriate information sharing prior to the child's formal transfer to their new setting, this could also include key staff from their new setting to be invited to meetings e.g. Child Protection, Core group or Team Around a Family (with consent of parents and professionals).

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

Information sharing is guided by the following principles:

- **Necessary and proportionate** - When taking decisions about what information to share, you should consider how much information you need to release. Not sharing more data than is necessary to be of use is a key element of the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, and you should consider the impact of disclosing information on the information subject, and any third parties, including anonymous referrers. Information must be proportionate to the need and level of risk.
- **Relevant** - Only information that is relevant to the purposes should be shared with those who need it. This allows others to do their job effectively and make informed decisions.
- **Adequate** - Information should be adequate for its purpose. Information should be of the right quality to ensure that it can be understood and relied upon.
- **Accurate** - Information should be accurate and up to date and should clearly distinguish between fact and opinion. If the information is historical then this should be explained.
- **Timely** - Information should be shared in a timely fashion to reduce the risk of missed opportunities to offer support and protection to a child. Timeliness is key in emergency situations and it may not be appropriate to seek consent for information sharing if it could cause delays and therefore place a child or young person at increased risk of harm. Practitioners should ensure that sufficient information is shared, as well as consider the urgency with which to share it.
- **Secure** - Wherever possible, information should be shared in an appropriate, secure way. Practitioners must always follow their organisation's policy on security for handling personal information.
- **Record** - Information sharing decisions should be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share. If the decision is to share, reasons should be cited including what information has been shared and with whom, in line with organisational procedures. If the decision is not to share, it is good practice to record the reasons for this decision and discuss them with the requester. In line with each organisation's own retention policy, the information should not be kept any longer than is necessary. In some rare circumstances, this may be indefinitely, but if this is the case, there should be a review process scheduled at regular intervals to ensure data is not retained where it is unnecessary to do so.

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

We will ensure that images of children used within publications, publicity and on the website has written parental consent prior to any images being taken and used. This consent will be obtained in line with school's annual data collection process.

2.3 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners

The DSL and Deputy DSL will regularly review and monitor those students who have been identified as vulnerable. This can include reviewing attendance data, behaviour data, attainment data and safeguarding records. This is to ensure that:

- Proportionate early intervention, Family Help and safeguarding support can be provided to promote the safety and welfare of the child and prevent escalation of harm.
- Information about vulnerable learners is shared with teachers and school and college leadership staff to promote educational outcomes.

- Learners who currently have, or have had, a social worker will have their academic progress and attainment reviewed and additional academic support will be provided to help them reach their full potential.
- Reasonable adjustments are made in relation to school-based interventions – for example responding to behaviour.

2.4 Multi-agency working

Sidcot School is a relevant agency in the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership and will work with appropriate agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children to identify and respond to their needs. This is in compliance with statutory guidance Working Together to safeguard children 2023.

Sidcot School recognises the importance of early identification and intervention. Where appropriate, the School will work with families, Family Help services, Early Help services and other agencies to provide support at the earliest opportunity. Staff should be alert to children and families who may benefit from additional support and will work collaboratively with safeguarding partners to help prevent concerns from escalating and to improve outcomes for children.

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

- If the child is in need under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (including when a child is a young carer and or subject to a private fostering arrangement).
- Or if the child needs protection under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 where they are experiencing significant harm, or likely to experience significant harm.

Referrals in these cases should be made by the DSL (or Deputy DSLs) to Children's Social Care in the local authority in which that child resides.

Where the child already has a social worker, the request for service should go immediately to the social worker involved or, in their absence, to their team manager. If the child is a child in care, notification should also be made to the Virtual School.

Sidcot School will co-operate with any statutory safeguarding assessments conducted by children's social care: this includes ensuring representation at appropriate inter-agency meetings such as Team around the Family (TAF) initial and review child protection conferences and core group meetings.

The School will work with local Family Help and Early Help arrangements where appropriate and contribute proactively to multi-agency assessments and support plans.

2.4.1 Additional considerations:

- Where a learner and/or their family is subject to a child protection plan or a multiagency risk assessment conference (MARAC) meeting, the setting will contribute to the preparation, implementation, and review of the plan as appropriate.
- In situations where a child in care may be put on to part time timetable, the school will consult with the Virtual School following local procedures.
- If there is a risk of harm, the police should be called via 999. For other concerns of criminality, Avon and Somerset Police have produced a helpful guide [When to Contact the Police](#) or schools can contact the local PCSO/School Police Beat Officer/School Officer for advice.

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- In the rare event that a child death occurs, or a child is seriously harmed, Sidcot School will notify the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership as soon as is reasonably possible.

2.5 Suspensions, permanent exclusions, and commissioning of Alternative Provisions

(To be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policies)

When the setting is considering suspending or permanently excluding a learner where additional vulnerability is identified it is important that the learner's welfare is a paramount consideration. The Head will consider their legal duty of care when sending a learner home.

Sidcot School will exercise their legal duties in relation to their interventions. This includes:

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

2.5.1 Actions to take

- An assessment of need should be undertaken with multi-agency partners with a view to mitigate any identified risk of harm in line with section [2.3 of this policy, Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners](#).
- If the child is subject to a child protection plan or where there is an existing child protection file, we will call a multiagency risk-assessment meeting prior to making the decision to exclude.
- In the event of a one-off serious incident resulting in an immediate decision to exclude, the risk assessment *must* be completed prior to convening a meeting of the governing body.

2.5.2 Commissioning Alternative Provisions

In the event that Sidcot School commissions an Alternative Provision, the commissioning school should carefully consider what providers are available that can meet the needs of their pupils, including the quality and safety of the provision, costs and value for money. A personalised plan for intervention should be prepared by the commissioner setting clear objectives for improvement and attainment, timeframes, arrangements for assessment and monitoring progress, and a baseline of the current position against which to measure progress. Plans should be linked to other relevant information or activities such as EHCPs for children with SEND. The school commissioning the placement should maintain ongoing contact with the provider and pupil, with clear procedures in place to exchange information, monitor progress and provide pastoral support. The school commissioning the placement should maintain a full record of all placements they make, including a pupil's progress, achievements and destination following the placement. This should also include the pupil's own assessment of their placement

Sidcot School will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that learner and will make necessary checks on the provider to meet the needs of the learner. Written confirmation from the alternative provider will be obtained of the checks on staff that we would otherwise perform for our own staff.

2.6 Children Absent from Education and Children Missing from Education

(To be read in conjunction with the Attendance Register Policy)

2.6.1A learner missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, or maybe an indicator of need for early help assessment support. Staff should follow procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. These should be reported to the DSL and reviewed in line with [2.3 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners](#).

2.6.2 Sidcot School will follow the guidance detailed in [Children Missing Education \(2016\) Government guidance](#) and [Children Missing Education North Somerset Policy](#)

This will include notifying the local authority in which the child lives:

- of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly,
- or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority.
- Children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation – particularly county lines.
- With concerns raised around school attendance, Sidcot School follows the statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance August 2024 at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

2.7 Responding to incidents of child-on-child harm

2.7.1 All staff should recognise that children can abuse their peers (including online). Incidents of abuse and harm should be dealt with in reference to the safeguarding and behaviour policies.

2.7.2 Examples of child-on-child harm can be found under section [1.9 Key Safeguarding Areas](#).

At Sidcot School:

- We have a 'zero tolerance' approach to abuse. Incidents are taken seriously. These will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter,' just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up.' Banter and teasing can and should be acknowledged and recognised as bullying behaviour and may require proportionate intervention.
- Even with a zero-tolerance approach, we take steps to educate and take action to mitigate the risk of contributing to a culture of unacceptable behaviours or a culture that normalises abuse.
- It is understood that child-on-child harm may reflect equality issues, those who may be targeted are more likely to have protected characteristics.

2.7.3 There are clear systems in place (which are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible) for learners to confidently report abuse. Our school has taken steps to ensure students know how their concerns will be dealt with as detailed in section [2.1 Reporting a concern](#) of this policy. Sidcot School will handle initial reports of harm by:

- Ensuring the immediate safety of learners involved in an incident and sourcing support for other young people affected.
- Listening carefully to the child, being non-judgmental, being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed, not asking leading questions and only prompting

the child where necessary with open questions using the Tell, Explain, Describe (TED) method.

- Ensuring that victims will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. They will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Ensuring the child's wishes are taken into consideration in any intervention and any action is taken to ensure safety of the target and other members of the wider peer cohort.
- Not promising confidentiality as it is highly likely that information will need to be shared with others.

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

Reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024, Part 5) should be made in relation to taking protective action. Sidcot School will take the following actions when responding to incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- Incidents will be reported immediately to the DSL/ Deputy DSL who will undertake further assessment of what action should be taken proportionate to the factors that have been identified. [The Brook - Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Assessment Tool](#) should be utilised by trained staff to inform assessment of risk and actions to subsequently take. This may include seeking additional advice from Children's Social Care
- When an incident involves an act of **sexual violence** (rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault, causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent) the age and wishes of the victim should be taken into consideration. Victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered.
- Immediate consideration should be given as to how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator (and any other children involved/impacted). It is made clear to all that the law is in place to protect rather than criminalise perpetrators. Particular importance is placed on understanding intra-familial harms and support offered to siblings affected by an incident.
- When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. Sexual harassment can include: sexual comments, such as telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes or appearance and calling someone sexualised names, sexual jokes or taunting. Also, physical behaviour such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes.

There are 4 different pathways schools may wish to take based on a case-by-case basis

- Manage internally
 - Early help assessment
 - Referral to children's social care
 - Report to the police
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- Schools should refer to the guidance as set out in KCSIE 2026 when considering next steps and should ensure involvement in all discussions with statutory safeguarding partners.
 - Where the report includes an online element, the setting will follow [Searching, screening and confiscation at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal

images of a child. The highlighted advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable.

- Risk assessments and or safety plans will be developed for individual children who have been involved in an incident. This should be reviewed every 3 months or every time there is an occurrence of an incident. These should involve the child and parents/carers and address contextual risks.

2.7.5 Contextual safeguarding approach to child-on-child harm:

Sidcot School will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by taking a contextual approach to safeguarding by increasing safety in the contexts of which harm can occur – this can include the school environment itself, peer groups and the neighbourhood.

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

2.8 Responding to allegations of abuse made against professionals

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

- 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 he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

2.8.1 Immediate action must be taken:

- Do not speak to the individual it concerns.
- Allegations or concerns about colleagues and visitors must be reported directly to the Head (or the DSL in the absence of the Head) who will follow guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026 Part Four: Allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff).
- If the concern relates to Head it should be reported to the Chair of Governors, who will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO – previously known as DOFA) and they will decide on any action required.
- If there is a conflict of interest which inhibits this process of reporting, staff can report directly to the LADO.
- If allegations are regarding a member of supply staff, the school will take the lead and progress enquiries with the LADO, whilst continuing to engage and work with the employment agency.
- Allegations regarding foster carers or anyone in a position of trust working or volunteering with children should be referred to the LADO on the day that the allegation is reported. The allocated social worker should also be informed on the day. The school should not undertake any investigation unless the LADO advises this.
- If the school ceases to use the services of a member of staff (or a governor or volunteer), because they are unsuitable to work with children, there will be a prompt and detailed report to the Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) and where relevant, to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) (Refer to policy 9.8: Discipline Rules and Procedure)

2.8.2 Low level concerns

This should be read in conjunction with the Staff Code of conduct policy(2.2), the Low Level Concerns policy (2.15) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026, Part 4). A low-level concern is not insignificant. This process should be used in events where a concern about professional conduct does not meet the threshold set out at the beginning of this section.

- Reports should be made to the Head (or the DSL in the absence of the Head). Sidcot School creates an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation and there is a clear procedure for confidentially sharing a concern.
- The Head, in consultation with the DSL, will address unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct it at an early stage providing a responsive, sensitive, and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised.
- Review and correct any deficits in the setting's safeguarding system. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) makes it clear that learning lessons applies in all cases, not just those which are concluded and found to be substantiated.
- Low level concerns shared about supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers.

If there is an increase of low levels concerns about a member of staff, the school would instigate a safeguarding investigation.

Low level concerns relating to staff will be recorded and monitored on Staff Safe or latest system in use. Only the Head, DSL, Head of the Junior School and Director of Operations have access to this recording platform for low level concerns relating to staff.

2.9 Mental health and wellbeing

Schools and colleges have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their learners, both within the school environment and within the residential provision. Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation, and or may require early help assessment support. Staff should be alert to concerns relating to self-harm, suicidal ideation and other indicators that may suggest a child requires safeguarding support.

The School recognises that boarders, particularly those living away from home or studying internationally, may experience additional challenges relating to wellbeing, relationships, adjustment and independence, and appropriate pastoral and safeguarding support is available.

When supporting children experiencing poor mental health school can explore resources such as:

[Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-recovery-support>

DSLs should be aware of the mental health services available in North Somerset to support children and young people and how to refer to these services when thresholds are met for additional support. In North Somerset these services include Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Mental Health Support Teams and the School Nursing Team. DSLs should ensure that staff work collaboratively with mental health agencies to ensure

that children get appropriate mental health support. This includes making onward referrals when criteria are met. Schools should follow the advice of mental health professionals to safeguard children and support their mental wellbeing.

Sidcot School will commit to undertake the following.

- The appointment of a senior mental health lead who can support the development of knowledge and act as a point of expertise to promote the wellbeing and mental health of learners. This colleague will have sufficient training in mental health and safeguarding for them to carry out their role effectively.
- Ensure that learners can report and share concerns in line with section [2.1 Reporting a concern](#) of this policy.
- Staff will follow a safeguarding process in terms of reporting concerns so the DSL/Deputy DSLs (and wider members of the safeguarding team such as the SENDCo) can assess whether there are any other vulnerabilities can be identified and proportionate support considered.
- Staff will ensure the immediate health and safety of a learner who is displaying acute mental health distress. This may require support from emergency services via 999 if the learner is at risk of immediate harm.
- DSLs/Deputies will consider whether a case can be managed internally, through early help assessment, or should involve other agencies as required in line with section [2.4 - Multi-Agency Working](#).
- The setting will communicate and work with the learner and parents/carers to ensure that interventions are in the best interests of the child.
- DSLs will liaise with staff to ensure reasonable adjustments are made and develop ways to support positive educational outcomes.
- Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem – DSLs and the senior leadership team should be able to access specialist advice through targeted services or through their locality. The [North Somerset Emotional Health for Children and Young People](#) guide highlights services in our area.

2.9.1 Contextual safeguarding approach to mental health

Sidcot School will ensure that preventative measures in terms of providing safeguarding on the curriculum will provide opportunities for learners to identify when they may need help, and to develop resilience.

The setting will take a 'whole school approach' to:

- deliver high quality teaching around mental health and wellbeing on the curriculum.
 - having a culture and environment that promotes mental health and wellbeing;
 - making sure pupils and staff are aware of and able to access a range of mental health services;
 - supporting staff wellbeing being committed to pupil and parent participation
- Refer also to the DfE advice, Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (2018)

2.10 Online Safety

Online safety is an integrated and interwoven theme with other safeguarding considerations. It is essential that the DSL takes a lead on ensuring that interventions are effective. This means coordinating support and engaging with other colleagues in the setting who may have more technological expertise such as the IT Manager.

Our students increasingly use electronic equipment on a daily basis to access the internet and share content and images via social media sites such as TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat.

Unfortunately, some adults and other children use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts or emails, to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexual behaviour such as webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. Students may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate material such as pornographic websites or those which promote extremist behaviour, criminal activity, suicide or eating disorders. Students need to understand the negative impact of misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories when learning about online safety risks.

The School recognises emerging safeguarding risks associated with artificial intelligence including AI-generated intimate images, deepfakes, impersonation, online manipulation, exploitation and technology-facilitated abuse.

Sidcot School has a digital safety policy (12.1) which explains how we try to keep students safe in school and how we respond to online safety incidents.

School will also provide advice to parents when students are being asked to learn online at home and consider how best to safeguard both students and staff.

Students are taught about online safety throughout the curriculum and all staff receive online safety training which is regularly updated including an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. Sidcot School is committed to addressing online safety issues around content, contact and conduct. This includes:

- Ensuring that online safety is included in relevant policies and procedures.
- Online safety is interwoven in safeguarding training for staff and safeguarding on the curriculum for learners.
- Acknowledging that child-on-child abuse can happen via mobile and smart technology between individuals and groups. This should be approached in the same process outlined in section [2.7 Responding to incidents of child-on-child harm](#) and read in conjunction with Sidcot School's Digital Safety Policy on the use of mobile smart technology, available on the school's intranet
- The effectiveness of the setting's ability to protect learners through filtering and monitoring, which should be regularly reviewed. Information security and access management alongside the above will be reviewed annually.
- The school will use the Department for Education's *Plan Technology for Your School* guidance to regularly review and implement appropriate filtering and monitoring systems that meet the latest standards. Sidcot School will ensure these systems are effective in identifying and blocking harmful content, including misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories, while allowing access to educational resources. The school recognises the opportunities and risks presented by generative artificial intelligence and will only use AI tools in ways that are lawful, ethical, age-appropriate, and in line with our safeguarding duties. All AI use will be risk-assessed, monitored, and subject to ongoing staff training to ensure that emerging technologies are deployed safely and responsibly.
- Filtering and monitoring systems will be reviewed at least annually and following any significant safeguarding incident or technological change.
- The leadership team and relevant staff are aware of and understand the systems in place, manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.

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- Sidcot School inform parents of the procedures in place to keep children safe online, including the systems in place to filter and monitor online use, informing parents of what children are being asked to do online and who they are expected to interact with online at school and the system in place for such interaction.

2.12 Use of School premises by third parties

- The latest advice (KCSIE 2026) places a duty on schools to have procedures in place to deal with safeguarding allegations that occur when an individual or organisation is using the School premises for non-school activities for children.
- When services or activities taking place on Sidcot School premises are provided under the direct supervision or management of School staff, this policy will apply in relation to any safeguarding concerns or allegations. But where services or activities are **not** under the direct supervision or management of the School, the School primarily seeks assurances that the individual or organisation has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place.
- The School also ensures that there are arrangements in place for the individual or organisation to liaise with the School on safeguarding matters where appropriate. This duty applies regardless of whether or not children who attend any of these services or activities are on the School roll
- Should any safeguarding incidents take place on the School premises which, at the time, is under the responsibility of a third party hirer/lease arrangement, the incident should be reported to the School's DSL as soon as possible and will be reported to the LADO, if appropriate. Lease agreements with the School, and the School's Leasing Policy reflects this responsibility.

Document Change History

Date	Update
23.04.2015	1.5 Job Descriptions inserted for Deputy DSLs. 4.2 No differentiation between children in need / children at risk in terms of no requirement to have parental consent for contact to be made with social care. 5.3 insertion of the word “immediate” regarding referral to DOFA. 5.17.2 Insertion of the word “promptly” regarding legal duty to refer to refer to DBS / the police. 5.23 re retention of documentation arising from allegations against staff amended to 60 years from 10 years.
5.09.2016	Updated in line with new version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (May 2016) and the September 2016 version of ISI Handbook for the Inspection of Schools – Commentary on regulatory requirements. All references to “pupils” replaced with “students.” Paragraphs reordered to make policy more accessible. 1.5 and 1.8 Key contacts updated and all designated persons inserted. Cross reference to hiring and lettings policy 2.2 reference to prompt action 2.7 reference to particular categories of student particularly vulnerable to bullying Reference to annual training updates for staff re notification of changes New flow chart inserted from updated version of KCSIE. Paragraph 4 Reordered to make procedures for staff clearer. Paragraph 5 Personal duty on teaching staff to report FGM to the police Missing and lost children procedures separated out for clarity – information re uncollected children inserted into separate policy for snr school (1.4) updated in light of KCSIE 2016 and ISI regulatory handbook. Whistleblowing policy removed and cross referenced to separate policy. Reference to NSPCC helpline. Appendices reordered. Appendix 1 abuse redefined in accordance with KCSIE September 2016. App 2 contacts updated App 4 – related policies section updated, Existing flow chart removed and inserted into main body of policy <i>Changes approved by Chair of Governors and Governor with responsibility for safeguarding.</i>
8.10.2016	Revised policy adopted by Board of Governors at Annual Safeguarding Review.
09.02.2017	References updated in line with changes to digital security policies, deletion of some duplication. Time for retention of documentation re child protection concerns extended to indefinite in line with digital security policy.
20.04.2017	Addition to para 18 and Appendix 1 to give greater prominence to “Sharing nudes and semi nudes” offences.
22.06.2017	Paragraph 2 – clarification in Paragraph 2, “Scope”, that this policy applies to those in regulated activity.
07.10.2017	2.7 Recognition of gender issues as per KCSIE.

	4.10 Ensure transfer of any child protection file as soon as possible, in the event that a student leaves for another school 11.13.5 Clarification of the interrelation of the disciplinary policy 11.13.6 Review to be undertaken in the event that an allegation is substantiated to prevent reoccurrence of similar events in the future. 17 Informal training updates to be provided to staff
27.04.2018	Policy reviewed in the light of Dfe 2017 guidance “Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools.” 2.6 confirmation that policy applies if alleged incident takes place between students off school premises 6.5 Options available to the DSL in terms of appropriate courses of action 9. Minor amendments to the procedure for staff where a child alleges possible abuse 9.5.6 Staff should not assume that someone else is dealing with the alleged incident and should report it, if in doubt. 10.6 Response to the perpetrator’s behaviour will be on a case by case basis 10.7 Liaison with parents as appropriate 11.35.2, and 3 – further detail around support for students who have made an allegation – including immediate risk assessment to be undertaken. 17 Reference to training for staff regarding sexual violence and harassment between children 19 Further detail regarding support for students who have been abused
22.06.2018	Reviewed by Board Policy updated to reflect changes to May 2018 DFE guidance – Sexual violence and sexual harassment in schools The terms “victim” and “perpetrator” replaced with “children” Para 2.7 Further guidance re children with SEND and who are, or perceived to be, LGBT. Para 6.5 Reporting to the police – if the child is less than 10 years of age (the age of criminal responsibility) the matter will still be reported to the police, who are to adopt a welfare rather than criminal response. Para 10.6 and 10.7 Inclusion of contextual safeguarding, Para 19.5 Regardless of whether the police take action, the School will continue to support the child who feels that they have suffered abuse

	Consider what support should be offered to the student who is alleged to have carried out the behaviour – depending on the context, severity, and the application of the disciplinary policies.
01.09.2018	Updated in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 1.1 “Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility” moved to afford it greater prominence. 4.3 “Staff should not assume that somebody else will take action, and must share any information appropriately to ensure that a child is kept safe.” 4.10 – The DSL will “adopt a contextual approach to safeguarding which takes account of wider environmental factors.” 4.10 – The DSL will ensure that child protection files are transferred to a new school, “the School understands and appreciates that the sharing of relevant information with any new school/college is important, and can be vital to support the secure transition of a child.” 6.3 Data protection law will not prevent information sharing in appropriate cases to safeguard a child. 6.6 The signs of a child who may need “Early help assessment ” are included 11.14 – New category of an “unfounded allegation.” 11.18 If the School ceases to use the services of a member of staff (or a governor or volunteer) because they are unsuitable to work with children, there will be a prompt and detailed report to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (irrespective of whether the individual has been deployed to an area of work not within the scope of regulated activity) References to NCTL updated to TRA 11.23 – References to Disqualification by association removed. 17. Induction for staff to include Part V of KCSIE
06.10.2018	Reviewed and adopted by Board of Governors at Annual Safeguarding Review.
30.04.2019	Updated contact details for the designated officer for the local authority (DOFA).
21.06.2019	Additional paragraph include, approved by Board. 11.24 Providing references Only line managers may provide a reference for a member of staff, they must adhere to the providing references policy. Failure to do so is likely to constitute a disciplinary matter.
02.09.2019	Updated in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 1.5 Key contacts updated 2.7 reference to “upskirting” (definition included)

	References to the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board replaced with North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership 4.10 definition of contextual safeguarding amended to include factors, “which are present in a child’s life which are a threat to their safety or welfare” 4.11 – process for staff reporting concerns amended in line with the adoption of the “CPOMS” programme 5 – Expectations of staff members amended in line with Keeping children safe in education to include: Adopting a child-centred approach at all times – this means that they should consider at all times consider what is in the best interests of the child Needing to understand the basic principles of information sharing as appropriate Being clear on the school’s policy with regarding to child-on-child abuse and bullying Being aware of the indicators which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with violent crime 10.1 Guidance around what may constitute peer abuse 11.1 Removed due to duplication Appendix 1 – paragraph included around “serious violence” in line with KCSIE 2019 Appendix – Safeguarding Concern Form deleted (in view of use of CPOMS) Appendix 5 – References updated
5 October 2019	Policy reviewed and adopted by Board at Annual Safeguarding Review.
2 January 2020	Additional paragraph inserted at paragraph 6.8 to cover information sharing when a child is not enrolled as a student at the school but attends holiday club.
25 January 2020	Change approved by Governors
2 April 2020	COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection Addendum
6 October 2020	Adapted into North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership policy template. Contact details updated Para 2.9 – specific reference to mental health being a possible indicator of safeguarding issues Para 3.1 – definition of abuse extended to specifically cover mental and physical health Para 12.1 additional bullet point regarding allegations against staff members where there is an incident in school which may indicate that they are unsuitable to work with children

	Paragraph 12.2 confirming that procedure regarding allegations against staff includes supply staff Page 16 Definition of CSE broadened
4 November 2021	1.5.3 Addition of online safety to the DSL JD 2.8.1 Addition of sentence regarding reporting to the DBS/TRA 2.8.2 Addition of sentence regarding accumulation of low-level concerns leading to an investigation
8 th August 2022	Policy reviewed and updated in line with KCSIE 2022 amendments. Details of school's response to Covid 19 removed. The term peer-on-peer replaced with child-on-child. Early Help renamed as Early Help Assessment. Reference added regarding governors receiving safeguarding training. 1.2 DfE guidance – list to include during a school closure 1.3 Equality statement – clear statement on support for those with protected characteristics 1.5.3 Role of the DSL – added that they ensure that an appropriate adult is present in all police investigations 1.8.3 Whistleblowing procedures – inclusion that staff can report a concern to the DSL in the absence of the Head 1.8 Safer recruitment – inclusion of statement re online searches of shortlisted candidates 2.1 Reporting concerns – addition of reference to the use of CPOMS 2.8.2 Low Level concern – Addition of the 'Confide' to report low level concerns about staff 2.10 Low Level concerns – terminology regarding online safety monitoring and system filters, notification of concerns to employers of supply staff and contractors, informing parents of systems in place 2.7.1 KCSIE now includes DFE guidance on sexual violence/harassment Appendix A – Domestic Abuse – added definition of this type of abuse Appendix B – Reporting a concern – additional information about reporting a concern including using a child's initials to identify them in the body of the text Appendix C – Domestic Abuse – further explanation of this abuse type Appendix C – Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence – inclusion of making children aware the law is to protect them and considering support required for family members
6 th July 2023	Policy reviewed and updated in line with KCSIE 2023 amendments.

	Addition of paragraph 2.7.4 regarding the definition of sexual harassment. Additional paragraph at 2.6 regarding safeguarding implications of children missing education. Addition of extra wording around filtering and monitoring, the school's responsibility for training staff in this area, its' regular review and reference to blocking harmful content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning. Other minor formatting changes and updating of staff details in appendices. Paragraph added at 2.11 regarding use of the School Premises by third parties and the safeguarding incident reporting responsibilities. Replaced reference to MyConcern with CPOMS ahead of change to this system Autumn 2023
10.10.2023	Reviewed and Approved by Board as part of the Annual Safeguarding Review
21.12.2023	Updated name and contact details for new Head
1 September 2024	KCSIE 2026 changes Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges withdrawn. Available within KCSIE 2026 Appendix B - Inserted flow charts for managing safeguarding concerns and assigning case managers.
October 2024	Added PREVENT Lead against Sam Drew's name in contact sheet on page 42. Appendix G- The Prevent Duty
September 2025	Policy updated in line with KCSiE changes 2025 Page 3 – updated the NSSCP safeguarding principles as per their website Page 7 – included reference to the Low level concerns policy Page 16 section 2.2 – updated information on confidentiality, information sharing and GDPR Page 20 – added word 'statutory' to working together to improve school attendance Page 24 section 2.9 Added text on mental health and wellbeing Page 25 section 2.10 Added information on online safety to include KCSiE changes. Included a bullet point on filtering and monitoring and AI in line with KcsiE 2025 Page 33 Appendix A added reference to SENDIASS Page 41 Included section on youth produces sexual imagery
September 2026	Policy updated in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Updated statutory references and legal framework. Amended staff safeguarding reading requirements following removal of Annex A. Strengthened references to Family Help, Early Help and multi-agency working. Added boarding-specific safeguarding and wellbeing provisions. Expanded safeguarding content relating to violence against women and girls (VAWG), misogyny and harmful gender stereotypes.

	Strengthened online safety section to reflect emerging risks including AI-generated content, deepfakes and technology-facilitated abuse. Added references to self-harm, suicidal ideation and mental health safeguarding. Reviewed filtering and monitoring responsibilities and governance arrangements. Changed name of DSL.
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Appendix A – Types of Abuse, Neglect and exploitation

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

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

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

To address these additional challenges, schools and colleges should consider extra pastoral support for children with SEND (KCSIE 2022). The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Services (SENDIASS). SENDIASS offer information, advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND.

The following are the definition of Abuse, Neglect and exploitation as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) however, the ultimate responsibility to assess and define the type of abuse a child or young person may be subject to is that of the Police and Children's Services – our responsibility is to understand what each category of abuse is and how this can impact on the welfare and development of our children and where we have concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of Abuse, Neglect and exploitation (one or more categories can apply) to take appropriate action as early as possible.

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

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

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening or not. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities,

such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Domestic Abuse can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can be detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development and ability to learn

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 occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, an unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs, failing to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) or ensure access to appropriate medical care, treatment or attend or receive an education.

Appendix B - Reporting a concern

- All concerns about children or families whether a serious or low-level concern will be shared with the DSL/DDSL in a timely matter. At Sidcot School, all concerns are recorded via CPOMS. CPOMS or alternative platform in use by the school.
All staff have access to this recording platform; if it is a serious safeguarding concern, staff should report this to the DSL/DDSL immediately. If a child is in immediate danger, staff should inform the Police.

Staff will be mindful that they should write the concern in the child's own words as much as possible, being careful to maintain fact rather than personal opinion or interpretation.

Where injuries are observed this will be recorded on a body map, staff know they must not take photographs of injuries. Any cause for concern will be shared only with those who need to know.

Staff should be mindful that all safeguarding files can be transferred as appropriate, so it is important to protect the identity of other students logged in the concern by using their initials.

The DSL will ultimately decide next steps and, where a referral is required, liaise with the Front Door to Children's Services for next steps. This will be done with consent of the parents unless by doing so it would put the child at further risk.

When reporting concerns about staff, the Head (DSL in the absence of the Head), or Chair of Governors will be contacted. Where this is not possible, staff will contact the LADO. Staff should refer to the whistleblowing policy for more information.

The School's Concerns Flowchart on the following page provides additional information about how to make a referral to North Somerset Council's social care referral and assessment team, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or to report concerns to the NSPCC advice line in instances where they have concerns about the organisations response to child protection, the conduct of staff or they do not feel that appropriate action has been taken in relation to concerns they have raised.

Below we have more detailed flowcharts on managing a safeguarding concern in school and how we assign case managers.

Managing a safeguarding concern

[Click here to see our managing a safeguarding concern flow chart](#)

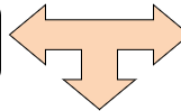
Assigning a case manager

[Click here to see our assigning a case manager flow chart](#)

Action to be taken where there are concerns about the welfare of a child or young person or the conduct/actions of Staff or Visitors

General Information and Advice

Always act in the best interests of the child or young person: the welfare of the child is paramount **Children Act 1989**



Always maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here': Learning lessons from Serious Case Reviews e.g. Daniel Pelka and Nigel Leat

Be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect supporting documents include:

Sidcot School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; Part One: Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020):
What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (DfE March 2015) Advice for Practitioners: Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
These can be accessed on the Sidcot School website and the safeguarding notice board in the staff room



If, a child or young person is in immediate danger or is at risk of significant harm

Anyone can make a referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police (but the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be informed if a referral has been made). **Contact details:** North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership <https://www.northsomersetsafeguarding.co.uk/children-safeguarding-partnership> 01934 888808 / North Somerset Council's social care referral and assessment team / Single Point of Access 01275 888808 / Emergency Duty Team (Evening and Weekends) 01454 618165 or contact **Police on 101 or in an emergency 999**
If you have a concern relating to dangerous or illegal activity or any wrongdoing within the organisation and you do not feel you can raise a concern directly you can contact the **NSPCC** Whistleblowing helpline 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday or Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

How to report child welfare or child protection concerns at Sidcot School

Child Welfare

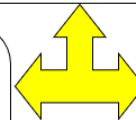
Discuss your concerns with your immediate line manager
Or
Discuss your concerns with the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DSL)



Immediate Concerns and/or immediate action is required

Safeguarding/Child Protection Concerns

The DSL will consider what information is already known, consider indicators of risk and following multi-agency guidelines take appropriate action



Concerns relating to the conduct or actions of a staff member: The DSL will liaise with the Headmaster or you can refer your concerns directly. If concerns relate to the Headmaster the Chair of Governors must be notified. All allegations will be investigated following statutory guidance and advice from the Designated Officer for the Local Authority (DOFA)

Appendix C – Types, Definitions and Signs of Abuse, Neglect and exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse. Both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual or criminal activity.

The abuse may be perpetrated by an individual or groups, males or females, adults or children. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and can be facilitated in-person or wholly online.

Gangs and youth violence

Teachers and designated staff have a range of powers to sanction and tackle problems, including violence, in the school environment. Such powers include the power to restrain violent pupils, and the power to search pupils for prohibited items.

Serious Violence

All staff should be aware of the signs that indicate a child is at risk of, or involved with serious violence, this includes: absence from school, changes of friendship group, unexplained injuries, self-harm, unexplained gifts or possessions. Staff should also be aware of relevant guidance: [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#)

Drugs

As part of the School's duty to promote pupils' wellbeing, we have a role to play in preventing drug misuse as part of our pastoral responsibilities (health and wellbeing/Healthy Schools) and to support the Government's drug strategy (2017). Our school will support students by providing information, advice and support via the curriculum and give students the confidence, resilience and risk management skills to resist risky behaviours and recover.

The Department of Education and Association of Chief Police Officers have provided [Drug Advice for Schools](#) to support this aim.

Schools also have the power to search pupils for drugs where there is a belief this student is in possession of criminal property. Refer to the school's policy 5.6 Smoking, Drugs and Alcohol.

Radicalisation

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

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

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Our school is aware of its responsibilities under the *Prevent Statutory Duty* through the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The duty requires schools to consider the need to safeguard children from being drawn into terrorism. The duty is designed to help ensure that vulnerable individuals who are at risk of radicalisation are supported. We provide a safe environment for our pupils to explore, understand and discuss sensitive topics including terrorism and extremist ideology. We use the curriculum and pastoral care to educate our pupils and to enable them to challenge these ideas and build their resilience to radicalisation. Staff are aware of the risk posed by other students and adults who may have been radicalised and the impact of radicalisation via social media. Staff have received appropriate training and

have the knowledge and confidence to identify pupils at risk of being drawn into supporting terrorism and extremism and challenge extremist ideals. Our IT filters are regularly reviewed and monitored in order to prevent and identify access to terrorist and extremist materials online at the school.

For advice and guidance in making a referral or about a student causing concern: **Tel. 01278 647466.**

Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages. Guidance on Channel is available at: [Channel Guidance](#).

The school or college's Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) should be aware that as a Channel partner, the school or college may be asked to attend a Channel panel to discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required.

[Educate Against Hate](#), a website launched by Her Majesty's Government has been developed to support and equip school and college leaders, teachers, and parents with information, tools and resources (including on the promotion of fundamental British values) to help recognise and address extremism and radicalisation in young people. The platform provides information on and access to training resources for teachers, staff and school and college leaders, some of which are free such as Prevent e-learning, via the Prevent Training catalogue.

Honour Based Abuse

So-called 'honour-based' Abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA (regardless of the motivation) should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

If you have concerns about an individual, the following helplines will be able to support you

Honour Network (Karma Nirvana): **0800 599 9247** (Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm)
Government Forced Marriage Unit **0207 008 0151** or **0207 008 1500** (out of hours)
In emergencies, dial 999.

Further details from the home office on force marriage can be found [here](#)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

Professionals in all agencies, individuals and groups from the wider communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There are a range of potential risk indicators which are detailed in the [Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation](#) issued by the home office.

Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) in regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police via 101 (KCSIE 2022). This should be completed in consultation with the DSL but the responsibility of reporting lies with the staff member who identified the concern.

Child-on-child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse includes:

- Bullying, including cyber bullying
- Physical Abuse including intimate partner abuse
- Sexual Violence including CSE, Sexual Harassment, Sending nudes and upskirting
- Initiation and Hazing type violence including rituals, challenges, and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation as a way of initiating a person into a group
- Gang violence, threats or coercion

All schools are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010. Schools should tackle prejudice and promote understanding between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The definition that has been adopted by the government and should be used when considering prejudice related incidents 'A prejudice related incident is any incident which is perceived to be prejudice by the victim or any other person'

Faith abuse

The National Action Plan to Tackle Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief is intended to help raise awareness of the issue of child abuse linked to faith or belief and to encourage practical steps to be taken to prevent such abuse. Schools should promote equality and awareness around cultural and religious practices and be aware of risk factors such as belief in exorcism and spirit possession and children who are scapegoated or blamed for negative events.

Domestic violence and abuse, Gender-based violence and teenage relationship abuse

Domestic abuse (over 16 years) and teenage relationship abuse (under 16 years) involves any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those who are, or have been in relationships or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It can impact children greatly who witness domestic abuse at home through seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse and/or experiencing it through their own intimate relationships (children are now seen as victims in their own right as per changes to the Domestic Abuse Bill).

The curriculum should enable children and adolescents to understand what constitutes a healthy relationship, consent and tackle gendered stereotypes.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Sexual Violence and harassment can occur between two children of any sex. They can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exists on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that **all** children involved are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

Provisions within the Equality Act allow schools and colleges to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils or students with certain protected characteristics in order to meet their specific need. A school or college, could, for example, consider taking positive action to support girls if there was evidence they were being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or sexual

harassment. There is also a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people.

The law says anyone under the age of 13 **can never legally give consent**. This means that anyone who engages in any sexual activity with a child who is 12 or younger is breaking the law. Sexual activity with a child who is under 13 should **always result in a child protection referral**.

Sexually harmful incidents should be viewed by professionals as a safeguarding concern and both victim and perpetrator should be supported. The school should have systems in place to support both students in the school setting to feel safe and heard should an incident occur. Students should be aware that the law is in place to protect them rather than criminalise them. It is important to understand intra-familial harms and the and any necessary support for siblings following incidents.

School staff should be alert to negative sexualised or gendered language and behaviours and should be robust in tackling these, not brushing them off as 'part of growing up', 'boys will be boys' or 'banter'.

All staff should be confident of their response to child-on-child abuse as detailed in our Anti-bullying Policy, available on the school's intranet

Online Sexual Abuse

Online sexual abuse involves the use of technology to manipulate, exploit, coerce or intimidate a child to (but not limited to) engage in sexual activity, produce sexual material/content, force a child to look at or watch sexual activities, encourage a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or groom a child in preparation for sexual abuse (either online or offline). It can also involve directing others to, or coordinating, the abuse of children online. As with other forms of sexual abuse, online abuse can be misunderstood by the child and others as being consensual, occurring without the child's immediate recognition or understanding of abusive or exploitative conduct. In addition, fear of what might happen if they do not comply can also be a significant influencing factor. No child under the age of 18 can consent to being abused or exploited. Financial gain can be a feature of online child sexual abuse, it can involve serious organised crime and it can be carried out by either adults or peers.

Online Safety

The topic of online safety is considerable and can be linked to issues such as child sexual exploitation, bullying and radicalisation. Issues can be categorised into three areas of risk:

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

The school will ensure it is proactive in addressing online safety through:

- Education of pupils through the curriculum;
- Keeping parents/carers up to date on how to support their children to keep safe online, and reinforcing its importance;
- Reviewing online safety practices as part of a whole school approach to online safety;
- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
 - review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
 - block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.

-
- have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs.
 - Staff training which is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the overarching safeguarding approach;
 - Information sharing to enable the school community to be kept up to date, in particular, parents/carers should be informed about what filtering/monitoring systems are in place, what students are being asked to do online and which staff members will be interacting with students at any given time.

For further information see government guidance [Teaching online safety in school](#)

Youth produced sexual imagery (sexting)

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

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

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

All incidents of this nature should be treated as a safeguarding concern and in line with the UKCIS guidance 'Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people', and 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident'.

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

If a member of staff becomes aware of an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery, they should follow the child protection procedures and refer to the DSL as soon as possible.

Sexting in schools and colleges

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident (UCKIS)

The member of staff should confiscate the device involved and set it to flight mode or, if this is not possible, turn it off. Staff should **not view, copy, or print** the youth produced sexual imagery.

The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff and subsequent interviews with the children involved (if appropriate). Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is reason to believe that involving parents would put the child at risk of harm. At any point in the process if there is concern a young

person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to the Local Authority Children's Front Door and/or the Police as appropriate.

Immediate referral at the initial review stage should be made to the Local Authority Children's Front Door/Police if:

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

If none of the above apply then the DSL will use their professional judgement to assess the risk to pupils involved and may decide, with input from the Headteacher, to respond to the incident without escalation. Such decisions will always be recorded.

In applying judgement, the DSL will consider if:

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

If any of these circumstances are present the situation will be escalated according to our child protection procedures, including reporting to the police or the Local Authority Children's Front Door. Otherwise, the situation will be managed within the school.

The DSL will record all incidents of youth produced sexual imagery, including both the actions taken, actions not taken, reasons for doing so and the resolution in line with safeguarding recording procedure.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health

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

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those

whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered Abuse, Neglect and exploitation, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, attendance and progress.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

Good mental health and resilience are fundamental to our children's physical health, relationships, education and to achieving their potential. The school should promote positive self-esteem and tackling behaviours such as bullying that can impact a young person's self-esteem. Pastoral care should be available to those with mental health concerns as well as staff being aware of pathways for young people to Early help assessment and CAHMS.

In North Somerset, schools are encouraged to have a designated Mental Health Lead and offers Mental Health First Aid training as part of the 2022-2023 training offer to embed positive mental health practice in schools.

Fabricated or induced illness

This supplementary guidance, [Safeguarding Children in whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced \(2008\)](#), sets out a national framework within which agencies and professionals at local level – individually and jointly – draw up and agree upon their own more detailed ways of working together where illness may be being fabricated or induced in a child by a carer who has parenting responsibilities for them.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Alternative Provision

Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the provider meets the needs of the pupil. Schools should obtain written confirmation from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff.

Children and the Court System

A child may at some point experience the court system for a number of different reasons this may include being a witness to a crime or it could be as a result of childcare arrangement being made in the Family Court. Whatever the reasons it is important the child is supported through this process.

Children with a Family Member in Prison

Children and young people whereby a family member is in prison are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The **National Information Centre on Children of Offenders** (NICCO) provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

Appendix D - Dealing with a Disclosure of Abuse

Children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, but when a child tells me about abuse s/he has suffered, what must I remember?

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

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

Recognise – Respond – Reassure – Refer – Record

Appendix E - Contact Information

Name and Role of Designated Persons	Email address	Contact Number
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) PREVENT Lead Sam Drew (Deputy Head - Pastoral)	samuel.drew@sidcot.org.uk	01934 845214 07345 591555
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) (Student Support and Mental Health/Wellbeing Lead)	sarah.rice@sidcot.org.uk	07471 900649
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) Cath Dykes (Headteacher – Junior School)	cath.dykes@sidcot.org.uk	01934 845200
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) – Junior School including Early Years Emma King (Assistant Head Pastoral)	emma.king@sidcot.org.uk	01934 845200 01934 845271/ Ext 401
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) – Junior School including Early Years Lucy Beardsley (Head of Early Years)	lucy.beardsley@sidcot.org.uk	01934 845200
Designated Safeguarding Governor Simon Linnitt	Simon.Linnitt@sidcot.org.uk	
Chair of Governors Jamie Miller	Jameson.Miller@sidcot.org.uk	
Head (also DDSL) James Jones	james.jones@sidcot.org.uk	01934 845216 07545 702496
Digital Safety Lead	Allison.clark@sidcot.org.uk	

The School has appointed a number of staff (listed below) to act as assistant Safeguarding Officers to ensure that the whole campus is covered at all times by at least one person who has undertaken the necessary training and is known to staff and children in the role of a designated person

Safeguarding Officer and DDSL (Head of Boarding)	amandine.smilevich@sidcot.org.uk	
Safeguarding Officer (Teacher)	geoffrey.andrews@sidcot.org.uk	
Safeguarding Officer (Senior Nurse)	hannah.lawerence@sidcot.org.uk	01934 845263
Safeguarding Officer (Head of Lower School)	alexander.lickorish@sidcot.org.uk	
Safeguarding Officer (Pastoral & Wellbeing Lead)	chelsea.jefferies@sidcot.org.uk	01934 845242
Safeguarding Officer (Head of Year, Senior School)	james.vecchio@sidcot.org.uk	
Safeguarding Officer (Head of Wing Boarding House)	james.milne@sidcot.org.uk	
Safeguarding Officer (Out of School Care Manager)	emma.rance@sidcot.org.uk	
Safeguarding Officer (Holiday Club Deputy Leader)	dawn.drakebrockman@sidcot.org.uk	

External Agency Contacts	Telephone or contact
North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (Previously North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board)	https://www.northsomersetsafeguarding.co.uk/children-safeguarding-board 01275 888 808
North Somerset Council's social care Referral and assessment team Single point of access. Front Door to Early help assessment and Children's Social Care (Monday-Thursday 8.45am-5pm, Friday 8.45am-4.30pm)	01275 888 801 01275 888 808
Emergency duty team – out of hours and weekends	01454 615 165
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (Previously DOFA – designated officer for the Local Authority)	LADO@n-somerset.gov.uk
Somerset County Council	0300 123 2224
The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for referrals and safeguarding matters	01325 953 795
Teaching Regulation Authority	0207 5935393
The Charity Commission (reporting serious incidents)	RSI@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk
Police (non-emergency number)	101
In an emergency	999
DfE dedicated telephone helpline and email address for non-emergency advice for staff and governors	0207 340 7264
Channel (agency to protect vulnerable people being drawn into terrorism)	0207 493 9333 0117 945 5539 channelsw@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk info@counterextremism.org Counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk
Independent School's Inspectorate	0207 600 0100 info@isi.net
NSPCC's Whistleblowing Helpline – available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally – available 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday	0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk
Children's Commissioner – Rachel de Souza	0800 528 0731
The Charities Commission	http://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/contact-us/

Appendix F - Early Years Provision

Working Together 2018 states:

- Early years providers have a duty under section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (page 3) states:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS) is mandatory for all early years' providers. It applies to all schools, including maintained nursey schools that have early years provision.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework states:

- Schools are not required to have separate policies to cover EYFS requirements provided the requirements are already met through an existing policy. Where providers other than childminders are required to have policies and procedures as specified below, these policies and procedures should be recorded in writing.
- Providers must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children. These should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The safeguarding policy and procedures must include an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child and in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff and cover the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting.

Early Years Providers must be compliant with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

Below is the link to the EYFS

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

- As an appendix to this policy, Sidcot School ensures that we are compliant with all the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021.

We have a mobile phone and camera policy in place within the provision that details the procedure for use of these devices. This covers the use of Mobile Phones and Cameras in the setting and on visits and includes the settings procedures with regards to mobile phones and cameras for all staff, volunteers and visitors.

APPENDIX G- The PREVENT Duty

1. The aim of Prevent is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Prevent also extends to supporting the rehabilitation and disengagement of those already involved in terrorism.

2. The Prevent duty requires specified authorities such as education, health, local authorities, police and criminal justice agencies (prisons and probation) to help prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It sits alongside long-established safeguarding duties on professionals to protect people from a range of other harms, such as substance abuse, involvement in gangs, and physical and sexual exploitation. The duty helps to ensure that people who are susceptible to radicalisation are supported as they would be under safeguarding processes.

3. In fulfilling the Prevent duty in Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA 2015), we expect all specified authorities to participate fully in work to prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. We acknowledge that how they do this in practice will vary depending on factors such as the local context and risk, the most appropriate type of Prevent activity for them to be involved in, and the nature of their primary responsibilities and functions. As an example, for those who work directly with people who may be susceptible to radicalisation to terrorism, activity is most likely to be around identification and early intervention. Relevant factors may include relationships held with the person or the frequency of interaction.

4. When carrying out the Prevent duty, specified authorities should also ensure that they comply with other legal obligations, particularly those under data protection legislation and the Equality Act 2010 (for example, the Public Sector Equality Duty). Further education and higher education settings should be especially mindful of duties to protect freedom of speech and academic freedom.