MOSAIC LEARNING TRUST
Raising Aspirations, Empowering Futures

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2026/2027

SOUTHLANDS HIGH SCHOOL

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IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs. L Hardman

Designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Mrs. A Forshaw

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO): Mis. S Gage

Welfare Team

Mrs. F McGladrigan - SENCO

Miss M Miller - Student and Family Support Worker

Mrs Robinson - Year 7 Manager

Mr Hitchen - Year 8 Manager

Mrs Eastham - Year 9 Manager

Miss Tomlinson - Year 10 Manager

Miss Mohammed - Year 11

Manager

Mr Callow and Mrs Howard - Director of Key stage 3 and 4

Mr Farrell – Head of Year 7 and Transition

Mrs. Lang - Welfare Officer

Miss Carey - Attendance Improvement Officer KS3
Ms. Neill - Attendance Improvement Officer KS4

Designated Teacher of LAC: Mrs. L Hardman
Designated Senior Leader of Mental Health: Miss S. Gage

1. Aims of the Policy

To provide all staff and governors with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities and secure the welfare of Students.

To ensure consistent good practice in accordance with current legislation.
To use the policy as a working document and source of information when dealing with child protection and or welfare issues, and for promoting the welfare of Students.
To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding the welfare of Students and protecting them from harm.

2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This document is one of a series in the school's integrated safeguarding portfolio which explains how this school, Southland's High School (SHS), safeguards and promotes the welfare of children. This policy also includes guidance and procedures.

This document should also be read in conjunction with the following Southlands' policies

- Attendance policy (which includes procedures for a child missing in education)
- Behaviour policy (which includes the use reasonable force and searches)
- Mosaic Learning Trust Child Protection - Statement of Intent
- Mosaic Learning Trust Safer Recruitment Policy and
- Mosaic Learning Trust Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Relationship Sex and Health Education Policy
- SEND policy
- LAC Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SHS Safeguarding and Welfare Handbook*
- Mosaic Learning Trust Whistleblowing Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Exclusion Policy
- Data and E-Security Breach Prevention and Management Plan

*The SHS Safeguarding and Welfare Handbook is an internal document outlining protocols and staff actions in detail.

These school arrangements fully support the Trust's policy, including its aims and ethos, which have been written in line with the statutory DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2026) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), Information Sharing Duty Guidance 2026, the Governance Handbook and follow Lancashire's Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP).

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and 2011 requires Local Authorities and governors of schools to make arrangements to ensure the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children. This policy sets out how Southlands will fulfil this function and has regard to the following safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004 amendment
- Section 175 of The Education Act 2002 and 2011
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by Section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015)
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026)
- Mobile Phones in Schools 2026
- the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Equality Act 2010

- The Rehabilitation of Offender Act 1974
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009
- Statutory Guidance on FGM
- Statutory Guidance on The Prevent Duty 2023
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Restrictive Interventions Including Reasonable Force 2026.
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (2024)

The academy trust is the proprietor and its principal safeguarding duty arises through the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the funding agreement; describe the Local Governing Body role under the Trust scheme of delegation.

3. Who this Policy Applies to

The policy applies to the whole school community, including the Headteacher, governors, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, volunteers and temporary staff. Students and parents are also made aware of the arrangements set out in the policy, which is available on the school's website.

4. Principles and Values

We believe that the welfare of all Students is paramount, and we endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued, and where their physical and mental health and well-being is secured.

We believe that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children is everyone's responsibility.
Wherever possible we seek to identify needs early, and work with parents and carers to prevent escalation of need into crises.

We believe in treating all Students equally, and that they have the right to protection from abuse without exception, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.

We believe in a child-centered and coordinated approach, working together with other agencies to ensure Students receive the best level of service to protect their safety and well-being. We act in the best interests of child. We support parents and carers as much as possible without compromising the safety and wellbeing of the child.
We believe in doing our best to provide the right help for Students and families at an early stage to prevent the risk of harm to Students in the future.

The voice of the child is vital and must be sought when considering their needs. We believe in British values and applying those to daily school life.

We are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of looked after children, previously looked after children and care leavers

5. Terminology

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means: protecting children from abuse and maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online; preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care. Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge. Making sure that children grow up in circumstances consistent

with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Neglect is a form of abuse and 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.

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

Students or Child / Children includes anyone under the age of 18.

The following 3 safeguarding partners are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority (LA)
- Integrated care boards (previously known as clinical commissioning groups) for an area within the LA
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

Victim is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

Alleged perpetrator(s) and perpetrator(s) are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

Parents refer to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers, legal guardians and adoptive parents.

6. Equality Statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities or health conditions
- Are young carers
- Pregnant or in parenthood
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Displaying early harmful behaviour
- Have repeated classroom removals
- On a part-time timetable

- Have a medical condition
- Parental offending
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Students who may have a social worker
- Students who may have experienced adversity or trauma
- Are looked after or previously looked after
- Are missing from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

Young Carers

The school recognizes that young carers—children who provide care, assistance, or emotional support to a family member with a physical or mental illness, disability, or substance misuse issue—face unique challenges that can significantly impact their education and personal development.

Early Identification and Indicators

- **Proactive Identification:** Staff must actively maintain professional curiosity to identify young carers. **The school does not require a child to self-identify before staff act on indicators of caring responsibilities.**
- **Key Indicators**: Staff must remain alert to signs that may indicate a pupil has hidden caring roles at home. These include, but are not limited to:
    - Frequent lateness, irregular attendance, or a sudden decline in attendance.
    - Unexplained drops in academic attainment, missed homework, or chronic fatigue.
    - Sudden changes in behaviour, emotional withdrawal, high levels of anxiety, or signs of stress.
    - Difficulties participating in extra-curricular activities or a lack of parental engagement at school events.

Sensitive Recording and Student Voice

- **Confidential Tracking:** When a young carer is identified, this information will be recorded sensitively and securely on the school's central safeguarding software (e.g., CPOMs). Access is strictly restricted to essential staff to prevent stigmatisation.
- **The Voice of the Child:** The school will prioritize student voice. Staff will speak with the child regularly and sensitively to understand their unique lived experience, their perspective on their responsibilities, and how they feel best supported.

Assessment of Needs and Multi-Team Liaison

- **Holistic Assessment:** The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and pastoral team will complete a holistic assessment of the child's specific needs across four distinct pillars: **attendance, attainment, behaviour, and overall wellbeing.**
- **Internal Coordination:** The safeguarding team will work in direct, ongoing **liaison with the attendance and inclusion teams**. This collaborative approach ensures that attendance interventions, flexible learning arrangements, academic support, and behavioural policies are adapted dynamically to accommodate the student's caring duties without punitive bias.

Referral Pathways and External Support

- **Local Young Carer Assessment & Family Help:** The DSL will work proactively with the family to initiate local **Family Help** routes. The school will support the family in requesting a statutory Local Authority **Young Carer's Needs Assessment** to ensure the wider household receives appropriate civic and social care support.
- **External Partnerships:** The school will maintain strong links with external young carers' charities, support groups, and healthcare partners to connect the child with respite opportunities, peer support networks, and specialised counselling.

Review of Arrangements

- All individualised support plans, attendance flexibilities, and pastoral interventions for young carers are dynamic. The DSL and inclusion teams will formally **review these arrangements at regular, predetermined intervals** to ensure the support remains effective, meets the child's changing family circumstances, and promotes both their academic progress and emotional wellbeing.

Safeguarding Children with SEND and Medical Conditions

The school explicitly recognises that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or complex medical conditions face significantly increased risks of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Staff must maintain enhanced vigilance and professional curiosity, actively working to overcome the specific statutory barriers identified by Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE):

- **Diagnostic Overshadowing and Assumptions:** Staff must never assume that indicators of potential abuse—such as sudden changes in behaviour, a deterioration in mood, or physical injuries—arise automatically from the child's underlying disability, SEND profile, or medical condition without comprehensive exploration.
- **Isolation and Prejudice-Based Bullying**: Children with SEND are statistically more prone to peer isolation and targeted, prejudice-based bullying. Staff must recognize that this isolation limits a child's peer support network and reduces their opportunities to report harm.

Disproportionate and Silent Impact: Pupils with SEND or medical conditions can be disproportionately impacted by abusive or bullying behaviours without outwardly displaying any visible indicators or emotional signs of distress.

Communication Barriers: Speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) can create profound difficulties for children attempting to manage or report safeguarding challenges. Furthermore, cognitive barriers mean some children may not fully understand that what is happening to them legally constitutes abuse, or they may struggle to differentiate between fact and fiction in online spaces.

Adult Dependency and Intimate Care: A heightened reliance on adults for daily care, mobility, or personal/intimate care inherently increases vulnerability to exploitation and abuse.

The Medical-Condition Safeguarding Framework

In alignment with the statutory medical-condition safety threshold, the school establishes a clear distinction between standard medical management and active child protection concerns:

- **Medical Management vs. Referral:** The fact that a medical incident or allergy-related issue occurs during the school day does not, in and of itself, warrant or require an automatic safeguarding referral to local authorities.
- **Abuse and Neglect Indicators:** A formal safeguarding referral will be triggered immediately if an incident or a persistent pattern of behaviour gives rise to a legitimate concern that a child is at an increased risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation (whether within or outside the family unit).
- **Repeated Failure to Provide Medication:** The school classifies the repeated failure to provide essential medication (e.g., auto-injectors, inhalers, or daily required doses), the withholding of critical medical information from school staff, or sending a child to school repeatedly without necessary medical provisions, as a primary indicator of potential medical neglect that requires immediate intervention from the safeguarding team.

Integrated Tri-Lead Safeguarding Function

To guarantee that no safeguarding concern is missed due to a lack of overlapping operational details, the school mandates a formal, integrated data and communication link between three key personnel roles:

1. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
2. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)
3. The Medical Lead

These three leads will systematically cross-reference individual pupil profiles. Where a child with complex needs demonstrates changes in school attendance, attainment, or presentation, a joint review will be conducted to ensure that multi-agency support is aligned, Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) are updated, and safeguarding interventions are seamlessly deployed.

Support for Gender-Questioning Students and Requests for Social Transition

Mandatory Staff Boundaries and Confidences

The school provides a supportive environment where all pupils can discuss their feelings openly.

- **The Role of Staff:** A private conversation between a member of staff and a student about their gender identity or feelings does not itself require a breach of confidence, unless a related, actionable safeguarding risk arises during the conversation.
- **Strict Operational Boundary:** No member of staff may ever initiate a student's social transition, nor may they independently adopt or implement any changes to a student's name, pronouns, uniform, or facilities usage. Any such request must be formally directed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The Decision-Making and Involvement Matrix

Any request by a student or parent to implement aspects of social transition (such as changes to names, pronouns, uniform choices, or the use of single-sex facilities) will trigger a formal, documented school decision process.

- Parental Involvement: The school maintains that parents or carers must be actively involved in this process from the outset. The only exception to this rule is in the rare and exceptional circumstance where the DSL determines that involving the parents would create an immediate, clear, and significant safeguarding risk to the child.
- The Assessment Process: The DSL will lead a comprehensive, child-centred assessment before any formal accommodations are agreed or made. This assessment must thoroughly evaluate and document:
    - **Welfare and Best Interests:** The overall psychological and physical well-being of the individual child.
    - **Family Context:** The views, values, and supportive dynamics within the child's home environment.
    - **SEND and Mental Health:** Any underlying Special Educational Needs, Disabilities, or neurodivergence (ensuring close collaboration with the SENCO) alongside any active mental health requirements.
    - **Safeguarding Risks:** Any current or potential exposure to abuse, exploitation, or peer-on-peer isolation.
    - **Legal Duties:** The school's statutory equality and human rights duties under UK legislation.
    - The Impact on the Wider School: The practical and social effect that any proposed changes would have on other children and the broader school community.
    - **The Child's Views:** The explicit perspective, wishes, and feelings of the child, captured through sensitive, direct dialogue.

Formal Recording and Review Protocols

The school will not implement informal or undocumented arrangements. Every formal request for support with social transition will culminate in a securely stored, written record managed by the DSL.

- **The Record:** This document will explicitly detail the final decision, the comprehensive evidence-based reasons behind it, the precise agreed arrangements (if any are approved), and a mandatory review date.
- **Dynamic Review:** All agreed arrangements are dynamic. They will be formally reviewed by the DSL, the student, and the parents at regular, predetermined intervals (or immediately if there is a shift in the child's wellbeing or family context) to ensure the framework remains safe, supportive, and legally compliant.

Premises and Sports Safeguards
Students must not use toilets or changing rooms designated for the opposite biological sex. SHS provides separate toilets for boys and girls. In the mixed-sex block, the toilet is an individual lockable room for one student opening onto a public area.

Students aged 11 or over must not undress in front of the opposite sex. SHS has suitable individual alternatives without removing single-sex provision for those students who maybe gender questioning and has undergone safeguarding support for this and this provision is agreed by school and parents. For sports where sex separation is necessary for safety, there must be no exception.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the 3 safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

The school plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing students for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by our:

- Behaviour policy
- Pastoral support system
- Planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly, tackling issues such as:
    - Healthy and respectful relationships
    - Boundaries and consent
    - Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
    - Body confidence and self-esteem
    - How to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)
    - The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) and how to access support
    - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they're always unacceptable

7.1. Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. This includes online safety, and understanding our filtering and monitoring processes on school devices and school networks to keep students safe online. She works with the local authority and other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

The DSL and deputies receive updated training every two years and attend local authority briefings and conferences whenever possible. The DSL and Deputies receive bulletins from CSAP together with regular supervision throughout the year. The role of the DSL and deputies is outlined in Southland's Safeguarding and Welfare Handbook.

During term time the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) is always available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Preferably this is face-face but if there is an occasion where it is not possible to meet with the DSL (or the DSL is absent) then see the DDSL, or dedicated DSO. Failing this please see a member of the SLT or phone through to the Contact Centre and make a referral. The Lancashire Safeguarding Team can be contacted on 0300 123 6720 or 0300 123 6722 out of hours.

The DSL and Deputy will have a good understanding of safeguarding concerns including harmful sexualised

behaviour. The school's response to managing cases of sexual violence and harassment will be in line with procedures followed by the police and local authority children's social care.
The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputy are set out in their job description and the SHS Safeguarding & Welfare Handbook.

7.2. The role of the Governing Body

The governing body should ensure that:

- There is a named DSL for child protection who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and who has undertaken training in interagency working, in addition to child protection training appropriate for DSLs.
- There is a named governor linked to CP, Safeguarding and Prevent.
- Be aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and our school's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- Evaluate and approve this policy at each review, ensuring it complies with the law and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.
- The DSL has appropriate authority to discharge duties, and is given the time, funding, training and support to provide advice and support to other staff, including time to contribute to strategy discussions, inter- agency meetings and assessments of children.
- Child protection policy and procedures are in place and are consistent with MSP requirements, reviewed annually and made available to parents on request.
- The DSL liaises with the Local Authority and contributes to interagency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- There are procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff including allegations made against the Headteacher, namely the governors, to liaise with LA and /or other agencies.
- Staff always act in the interest of the students and that staff do not promise confidentiality.
- Safer recruitment procedures include requirement for appropriate checks and evidence including: DBS checks, barred list checks and prohibition checks together with references and interview information.
- Procedures for handling allegations against staff and volunteers are in place.
- Procedures are in place to handle allegations against other students.
- The students' wishes are taken in to account when determining what action to take and what services to provide for them, by ensuring that systems are in place for students to express their views.
- All staff, including the Headteacher, receive annual child protection training, which is updated regularly in line with advice from the local authority, and that the DSL receives refresher training at two yearly intervals.
- All temporary, supply staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection.
- The curriculum provides teaching on safeguarding issues and ensures this is delivered in an effective way.
- There is a designated teacher responsible for children who are looked after (LAC) and previously LAC to ensure that procedures are in place for ensuring those students' safety and promote educational achievement and progress including those in Kinship Care.
- Appropriate responses are provided for children who go missing from education settings, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including child sexual exploitation and to help prevent risks of their going missing in future.

All governors will read KCSIE in its entirety.

7.3. The role of the Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including ensuring that:

- The child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff.

- Sufficient time and resources are allocated to enable the DSL and Safeguarding Team to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of Students and the attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings.
- All staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with whistleblowing procedures.
- Ensure that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers: 1) Are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction 2) Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Students' welfare and safety is addressed through the curriculum.
- This policy is communicated via the school website.
- Ensure that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and updating the content of the training regularly.
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate.
- Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL on this

7.4. Virtual school heads

Virtual school heads have a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment and progress of students with a social worker. They should also identify and engage with key professionals, e.g. DSLs, SENCOs, social workers, mental health leads and others.

7.5. All Staff

All staff will read and understand part 1 of KCSIE 2026 part 1 in full.

All staff will sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have reviewed the guidance. Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents and carers. This includes making parents aware of what we ask children to do online (e.g., sites they will be asked to visit and who they will be interacting with online).

Staff will provide a safe space for students who are LGBT to speak out and share their concerns.

Staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy the behaviour policy, online safety which includes the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.
- Their responsibilities to ensure the safety of students and promote their welfare and provide a safe environment in which students can learn.
- Of the role they play in identifying concerns early, sharing information and taking prompt action to avoid escalation of concerns.
- What to do if a child tells them they are being abused, neglected or exploited, including on specific issues such as Child on Child abuse and FGM.
- The need to attend regular training and read the policy and other updates, such as e-bulletins when they are issued, making themselves fully familiar of all arrangements and knowledge of safeguarding issues.
- The school's procedures for raising concerns.
- The need to retain an appropriate level of confidentiality with regard to any CP or safeguarding matters, whilst liaising with the safeguarding team and/ or social care.
- The need to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and

kept safe.

- They never promise a child they will not tell anyone about any concern disclosed to them.
- They conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate way, adhering to the expectations set out in the staff Code of Conduct and within this policy.
- The need to seek out the DSL or Deputy DSL (or a PSM if DSL/DDSL not available) if they have an urgent concern about the potential risk to a child. Staff should not send the child home without raising a concern face to face.
- The early help / family help assessment process (sometimes known as the common assessment framework) and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment.
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home.
- The fact that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bi or Gender Questioning (LGBT) can be targeted by other children.
- What to look for to identify children who need help or protection and the different signs of abuse across the different risk ranges.

8. Recordkeeping, Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Information Sharing Policy Update (Effective 30 September 2026)

From 30 September 2026, the school has a duty to share relevant safeguarding information with external organisations or practitioners if it helps them assess risk, make decisions, or protect a child's welfare.

Staff do not require family consent or a specific statutory threshold to share this information. The only exception is if sharing the data would cause greater harm to the child than withholding it.

Whenever information is shared under this duty, staff must formally record their consideration of: **relevance, recipient function, detriment, proportionality, accuracy, security, transparency, and any risk mitigation.**

The school recognises that timely, accurate and proportionate information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The school will have due regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education, Working Together to Safeguard Children and relevant information sharing guidance.

Fears, about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and protect children.

Staff will share information with relevant professionals and agencies in accordance with safeguarding responsibilities, local procedures and statutory guidance. Where there are concerns about a child's safety, welfare or wellbeing, staff will act promptly and share information.

The DSL keeps an up to date and accurate record of all concerns raised by staff. Concerns are recorded on CPOMS which is a confidential and secure online reporting and record keeping software.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- A note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome

Chronologies and all associated documents are maintained on CPOMS and a hard copy is kept on students' child protection files which are stored securely at all times and away from the students' main files.

The child protection files, both hard copies and electronic, are confidential and are not accessible by students, parents or most staff. The Safeguarding and Welfare Team and the Headteacher are the only staff who have access to these records.

Records will be held in line with our records retention schedule.

Safeguarding records which contain information about allegations of sexual abuse will be retained for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry.

If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded promptly and securely, and separately from the main Students file. In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

The General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018. do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. At times, SHS shares information with other agencies, and this is done, timely, and in line with local safeguarding procedures.

Staff, governors and trustees should use the DfE's data protection guidance for schools so that we:

- Comply with data protection law
- Develop data policies and processes
- Know what staff and student data to keep
- Follow good practices for preventing personal data breaches

All staff know that they have a duty to share any concerns they have about a child within a safeguarding context and should report them immediately to the DSL either in person initially (in the case of an immediate risk) or via CPOMs.

All staff will receive training on GDPR and will be expected to comply with the new rules and expectations (Information Sharing 2018). See the SHS Safeguarding and Welfare Handbook for further guidance, including '7 golden rules' information.

If the victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment, there's no definitive answer, because even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there's another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies:

- The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children
- The DSL should consider that:
    - Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
    - The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care
    - Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains

Regarding anonymity, all staff will:

- Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system

- Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved

Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities

The government's information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information

If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or deputy).

Students who leave Southlands to attend another school will have their records transferred within 5 days of the request made by the new school or college.

9. Recognising Abuse and Taking Action

At Southlands we ensure that staff know the different kinds of abuse they should be alert to, and students are aware of the different kinds of abuse they could be subject to. We are aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

We ensure that staff are aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside of these environments.

Staff have a responsibility to pass on any concerns they may have and if they are not happy with the action taken to raise such a concern with the DSL.

If staff continue to remain dissatisfied, then they should raise the concern with the Headteacher and refer to the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy (see website).

Definition of abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Physical abuse: 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: the persistent 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, causing or inciting a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (rape or penetration with an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include noncontact 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. Sexual abuse also involves sexual violence and sexual harassment between children. Children can be sexually abused within the family, an institution or a community setting, and are more likely to know their abuser than not. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it. There are specific offences for children under 13, who can never provide valid consent to sexual activity and there are specific offences which make clear that sexual activity with a child under 16 is an offence, regardless of whether they agreed to that activity.

Neglect: 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; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care- givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

The school recognizes that abuse can include the harm children cause to other family members. This is explicitly recognised as **child-to-parent** or **caregiver abuse**. Staff must maintain professional curiosity if they notice indicators that a pupil is exhibiting early signs of abusive, violent, or controlling behaviours.

Faith-Based Prejudice and Discriminatory Abuse: The school recognizes that abuse, harassment, or bullying can be fuelled by prejudice against a child's faith, religion, or belief system. Staff must remain vigilant to how religious discrimination can intersect with other forms of harm, ensuring that faith-targeted rhetoric or behaviours are treated with the highest safeguarding severity.

Stalking in Teenage Relationships: Peer-on-peer and child-on-child abuse includes stalking and coercive control within adolescent and teenage relationships. Staff must recognize that behaviours such as obsessive monitoring, tracking, or persistent unwanted attention—whether in person or via digital platforms—constitute serious relationship abuse.

Verbal Abuse (Emotional Harm): Emotional abuse and neglect can manifest as severe verbal abuse. This includes persistent criticism, belittling, mocking, or name-calling directed at a child by adults, peers, or family members. This behaviour deeply damages a child's self-esteem and mental well-being and must never be dismissed as mere banter.

Overlapping

Safeguarding concerns and signs of abuse rarely occur in isolation. All staff must understand that different forms of harm are frequently interconnected. A single indicator may reveal a complex web of risk. Concerns must be viewed holistically and understood as potentially overlapping across online and offline spaces, as well as spanning intra-familial (within the home) and extra-familial (outside the home, such as in the community or via peer groups) environments.

Indicators of abuse include the following but are not exhaustive:

- Recurrent or multiple injuries or burns at one time
- Delayed presentation of or reporting of an injury

- Admission of excessive punishment from parents / carers
- Inconsistent or absent explanation from parents / carers
- Associated family factors such as substance misuse, mental health problems, and domestic violence and abuse
- Other associated features of concern e.g. signs of neglect such as inadequate supervision, poor clothing, hygiene and / or nutrition
- Significant or sudden behaviour change.
- exhibit early signs of abusive, violent, and/or harmful behaviours, including child-to-parent or caregiver abuse
- toward parents, guardians, or carers at home.
- Unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education
- Unable to contact parents
- Is concerned for younger siblings or a parent / carer without explaining why
- Becomes secretive and reluctant to share information
- Talks of running away
- Is reluctant to get changed for sports or wears clothes to cover injuries etc.
- Fear of physical contact or flinching
- Continual self-deprecation or inability to accept praise
- Suicide attempts, self-harming or risk-taking behaviour
- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy
- Eating disorders, depression, anxiety
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Inability to concentrate and or decline in academic progress

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong.

If a student shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree, you should record your concern using CPOMS.

If a child is in immediate danger, suffering or likely to suffer harm, you must see the DSL / DSL immediately and write up your report later. In the unlikely event that the DSL / DDSL is absent you can see another member of SLT. If no staff are available, you must make a referral to the Lancashire Children's services or MASH team via the numbers in this policy.

If a child discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and open up.
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- Do not ask leading questions but reflect back what they have said in their own words for clarity.
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Take the Students to the DSL / DDSL as soon as possible.
- Write up your conversation on CPOMS as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it.

Do not disclose the information to anyone else unless told to do so by a relevant authority involved in the safeguarding process (DSL, Children's Services).

Bear in mind that some children may:

- Not feel ready, or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected
- Not recognise their experiences as harmful
- Feel embarrassed, humiliated or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers.
- None of this should stop you from having a 'professional curiosity' and speaking to the DSL, if you have concerns about a child.

Safeguarding Issues - All staff should have an awareness of the following safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. We are also aware that some students may be more vulnerable to risk of harm than others including those who may have a SEND status, Looked After status or has a social worker.

9.1. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Modern Slavery

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal or sexual. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

It is the policy of this school that **it is impossible for a child to consent** to being exploited, abused, or trafficked. Staff must recognise that a child may not understand that exploitation is occurring. Children identified as potential victims of modern slavery networks will be protected as victims; any criminal or antisocial behaviours coerced by handlers (e.g., carrying drugs or weapons) will be addressed through a safeguarding lens rather than pure punitive measures.

- **Financial Exploitation:** Exploitation is not limited to sexual or physical harm. It frequently involves financial exploitation, where children are used to launder money, forced into debt bondage, or coerced into financial scams and "money mule" schemes.
- **Organised Networks:** Exploitation rarely happens in a vacuum. It is heavily driven by structured, organised criminal networks and gangs who systematically target, groom, and manipulate vulnerable children.
- **Modern Slavery Referrals:** Because these networks cross legal thresholds of human trafficking, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must explicitly consider whether a **Modern Slavery referral or a National Referral Mechanism (NRM)** alert is required alongside standard child protection procedures.
- **Victims, Not Offenders:** Children trapped in these networks are victims of coercion. The school firmly maintains that **coerced children must not be treated as offenders**. Any criminal, antisocial, or disruptive behaviour resulting from their exploitation will be handled through a safeguarding and supportive lens rather than purely punitive or disciplinary measures.

Indicators of CCE can include a child (not exhaustive):

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation

- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Go missing from school or home and are subsequently found in areas away from their home
- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education.
- Persistent absence and parental worry
- Change in friendship or relationships with older individuals or groups
- Unexplained acquisition of money, phones and clothes
- Excessive receipt of texts and calls
- Relationships with controlling individuals/ groups
- Leaving home without explanation
- Carrying weapons
- Have been the perpetrator or alleged perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime), as well as the victim

9.2. County Lines

County Lines is the police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas, market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phones and 'deal lines'. It involves child criminal exploitation (CCE) as gangs use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money. Social media is a major form of initial contact with children.

9.3. Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

CSE can include both physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity. It can also happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam. CSE may also occur without the victim's immediate knowledge, for example through others copying videos or images.

Indicators of CSE

- Signs of child sexual exploitation may include the child or young person:
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late
- Skipping school or being disruptive in class
- Appearing with abundant gifts or possessions that can't be accounted for
- Experiencing health problems that may indicate a sexually transmitted infection
- Having mood swings and changes in temperament
- Using drugs and alcohol
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviours, such as over familiarity with strangers, dressing in a sexualised manner or sending sexualised images by mobile phone (YPSI or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes).
- Showing signs of unexplained physical harm such as bruising and cigarette marks

- Having older boyfriends or girlfriend.
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation

Staff should also be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation do not recognise themselves as such.

At SHS we provide prevention and intervention through assemblies, 1-1 mentoring with outside agencies, workshops and liaison with the local police, and information to parents. We are aware both CCE and CSE can occur both on and offline.

If you have a concern about a child in relation to CCE or CSE, report to the Safeguarding team immediately. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

9.4. Child-on-Child abuse including harassment and violence

Safeguarding issues may manifest themselves via Child-on-Child abuse, which means that children may be harmed by other children or young people. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school. It can also take place both face-to-face and online and can occur simultaneously between the two.

Southlands have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, and that even if there are no reports, that doesn't mean that this kind of abuse isn't happening.

The Continuum of Harm

The school recognizes that sexualised behaviours do not occur in isolation but exist on a progressive continuum of harm. This ranges from **developmentally inappropriate behaviours to sexual harassment** (such as unwanted sexual comments, jokes, or online harassment), extending to **sexual violence** (including sexual assault, assault by penetration, and rape). Staff must maintain professional curiosity across this entire spectrum. **Critically, a behaviour does not need to be frequent, repeated, or widespread before it becomes a safeguarding concern;** a single isolated incident of harassment or violence will trigger an immediate safeguarding response.

This policy applies equally to all forms of serious violence and physical harm. The presence, use, or threat of weapons (including knives or blunt objects) constitutes a severe safeguarding emergency. Threats of physical or sexual harm involving a weapon will instantly elevate the school's response to emergency services liaison and strict multi-agency intervention.

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

- Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (this is sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- 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 nude 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
- 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)

If staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse, or a child makes a report to them, they must report it to the DSL / DDSL.

How we act upon a report of Child-on-Child abuse at SHS

We recognise that children can abuse other children. As a result, staff should treat Child on Child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment between children as a safeguarding concern and refer to the Safeguarding team. Staff should never pass off inappropriate comments between peers as 'banter'.

Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up", as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for students. We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse. However, all child-on- child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. We are mindful that abuse can happen in intimate personal relationships between children and is sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse'.

Upon receiving any report or disclosure of sexual harm or serious violence, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will conduct **an immediate, formal risk-and-needs assessment** on a case-by-case basis. This assessment will immediately establish safety plans to manage ongoing risks, secure the school environment, and determine whether immediate internal separations or dynamic supervisions are required to protect all students.

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

When considering instances of harmful sexual behaviour between children, we will consider their ages and stages of development. We recognise that children displaying harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma and will offer them appropriate support.

There will be occasions where a students' behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. This child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:
- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put students in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves students being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, up-skirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes)

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

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

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

Safeguarding and Support for Every Child Involved
The school adopts a strictly child-centred approach. **Every child involved in an incident of sexual harm or serious violence will receive dedicated safeguarding and pastoral support**. The needs of the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator will be assessed and handled separately. The school recognizes that the instigator of the behaviour may themselves be a victim of wider exploitation or trauma and will ensure that appropriate therapeutic and behavioural interventions are deployed alongside necessary behavioural sanctions.

When supporting victims of Child-on-Child Abuse, staff will:

- Reassure victims that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them
- Regularly review decisions and actions, and update policies with lessons learnt
- Look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, and decide on a course of action where we identify any patterns
- Consider if there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled inappropriate behaviour to occur and whether revising policies and/or providing extra staff training could minimise the risk of it happening again
- Remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting signs that a child has experienced sexual violence, and show sensitivity to their needs

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with disabilities, who are three times more likely to be abused than their peers, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and Gender Questioning children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

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

If a student makes an allegation of abuse against another student, staff will:

- Record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it
- The DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence.
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed. This will include considering school transport as a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator(s)
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

If the incident is a criminal offence and there are delays in the criminal process, the DSL will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator. We will ask the police if we have any questions about the investigation.

We will ensure that:

- Any form of bullying by students is dealt with in accordance with our Behaviour and Anti- bullying policies.
- All victims are re-assured that their report will be taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- The victim will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Child on Child abuse can be a one-off incident such as distributing an image around school. Such incidents will be dealt with seriously and may result in a referral to Children's Social Care or the police, depending on the incident.
- The wishes of the victim on how to proceed are taking into consideration
- When supporting victims, staff will reassure them that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them
- Parents of both parties are informed and support for the victim and alleged perpetrator/s put in place immediately.
- This could mean that victims and alleged perpetrators will be kept apart in classrooms and other shared spaces, and consideration will be given about travel to and from school. The emphasis is on ensuring that the victim can continue their normal routines.
- We consider the conduct of the alleged perpetrator as part of the school behaviour policy on the 'balance of probabilities' and apply appropriate and proportional consequences.

Creating a supportive environment in school and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of Child-on-Child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female students, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate students about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensure students are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems both online and offline
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners
- Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed
- Consider intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:
- How to recognise the indicators and signs of Child-on-Child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
- That even if there are no reports of Child-on-Child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of "it could happen here"
- That if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
    - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
    - A friend may make a report

- A member of staff may overhear a conversation
- A child's behaviour might indicate that something is wrong

- That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation
- That a student harming another child could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
- The important role they have to play in preventing Child on Child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it
- That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns
- That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side

The DSL will take the lead role in any disciplining of the alleged perpetrator(s). We will provide support at the same time as taking any disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action can be taken while other investigations are going on, e.g. by the police. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident doesn't (in itself) prevent our school from coming to its own conclusion about what happened and imposing a penalty accordingly. We will consider these matters on a case-by-case basis, considering whether:

- Taking action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution – we will liaise with the police and/or LA children's social care to determine this
- There are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational for us to reach our own view about what happened while an independent investigation is ongoing

At SHS we make clear that:
Sexual violence and harassment is never tolerated and not an inevitable part of growing up

- We will not accept sexual violence or harassment being 'played down' or dismissed as 'banter', 'having a laugh' or 'boys being boys'.
- We will not tolerate physical sexual gestures such as grabbing bottoms, breasts or genitals, or making sexually provocative comments.

At SHS we recognise that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and Gender Questioning (LGBT) children are at greater risk.

Contextual Risk and Vulnerable Times/Locations
The school recognizes that child-on-child abuse and serious violence are at greatest risk of occurring during specific, vulnerable periods surrounding the school day and within less-supervised environments. Consequently, the school mandates a comprehensive, contextual risk assessment of all on-site and off-site locations and times. This explicitly includes the periods immediately before and after the school day, student travel and transport routes, lesson transitions, toilet blocks, and unsupervised areas on the school estate. The findings from these contextual assessments are dynamically fed into staff duty deployment schedules, individualised student safety plans, the safeguarding curriculum, and ongoing strategic liaison with the police and local community partners. All staff are reminded that disclosures or reports of abuse that arise outside of school hours or off school premises must still be handled with the same urgency through our standard internal safeguarding and child protection procedures.

9.5. Making of sharing nudes and semi-nudes, including AI-generated or digitally altered images.
Staff should be aware that incidents of YPSI being sent or received are becoming increasingly common and that when a student sends (distributes) such images they may be breaking the law and leaving themselves vulnerable to exploitation by third parties. In addition, there is increasing evidence that such activity may result in depression, self-harm and, in extreme cases, suicide. We take this area of safeguarding very seriously and do not underestimate the harmful impact it may have on our students. In all such cases, SHS will follow

UKCCIS, the UK Internet Safety (UKCIS) Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (2024) Sexting in Schools and Colleges Guidance (2016) and conduct a risk assessment to inform the appropriate response.

Every incident requires a safeguarding response whether consensual or non-consensual.

Image sharing incidents may include:

- Children and young people digitally manipulating images, or using artificial intelligence (AI) to generate nude and semi-nude images
- Children and young people creating and sharing images with an adult pretending to be a child to groom, sexually abuse or blackmail them
- Sextortion: adult offenders using images to coerce or blackmail children and young people to send more pictures or to send money

Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

If you are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos, you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must not:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a student to share or download it (if you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL)
- Delete the imagery or ask the student to delete it
- Ask the student(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the student(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved

You should explain that you need to report the incident and reassure the student(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

Refer to the DSL immediately and complete a CPOMS report. The device should be confiscated and made secure. Staff must not say anything to shame the student.

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will: hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff – this may include the staff member who reported the incident and the safeguarding or leadership team that deals with safeguarding concerns. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to student(s)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care
- If it is necessary to view the image(s) in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, images or videos should not be viewed)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the image(s) has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images or videos from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the students involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the students involved (in most cases parents/carers should be involved)
- Signpost to the NSPCC Report Remove tool and Take It Down

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care if:

- The incident involves an adult
- There is 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 SEN)
- What the DSL knows about the images or videos suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any student in the images or videos is under 13
- The DSL has reason to believe a student is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care. The decision will be made and recorded in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

In line with managing internally, the school may decide that the children involved do not require referral to statutory services but may benefit from early help or family help. Early help or family help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse.

Early help or family help can be particularly useful to address non-violent HSB and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

Further review by the DSL
If at the initial review stage a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review to establish the facts and assess the risks.

They will hold interviews with the students involved (if appropriate).

If at any point in the process there is a concern that a student has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

Informing parents/carers
The DSL will inform parents/carers at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the student at risk of harm.

Referring to the police
If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through via 101

Recording incidents
All incidents of sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, and the decisions made in responding to them, will be recorded.

Curriculum coverage
Students are taught about the issues surrounding the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes as part of our PSHCE Curriculum and computing programmes. Teaching covers the following in relation to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes:

- What it is
- How it is most likely to be encountered
- The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive and when it may be deemed as online sexual harassment
- Issues of legality
- The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation

Students also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

- Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
- The receipt of such images

This policy on the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes is also shared with students so they are aware of the processes the school will follow in the event of an incident.

9.6. Serious Violence

Preventing violence in schools and colleges can require a mix of universal, targeted or specialist interventions. Many students at SHS live within a community that is subject serious violence and criminality, including knife crime.

At SHS we consider students to be at risk of being involved, whether by association or as victims, whether at the present time or in the future.

There are lots of reasons why young people feel the pressure to join gangs. They might be bored and looking for excitement or feel attracted to the status and power it can give them. They might join due to peer pressure, money or family problems. Gang membership can also make a child feel protected and that they belong.

Children and young people involved with, or on the edges of, gangs might be victims of violence or they might be pressured into doing things like stealing or carrying drugs or weapons. They might be abused, exploited or put into dangerous situations.

For lots of young people, being part of a gang makes them feel part of a family so they might not want to leave. Even if they do, leaving or attempting to leave can be a really scary idea. They might be frightened about what will happen to them, their friends or their family if they leave.

Indicators which may signal that a child is at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime may include:

- Increased absence from school
- Repeated suspension or exclusion
- Disrupted education
- AP history
- Weapons and knife possession
- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions (this could indicate that the child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation (see above))

Risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include:

- Being male
- Having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- Having experienced child maltreatment
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery

Staff are to be vigilant and report any concerns via the CPOMS system.

In the case of a student's carrying weapons or banned items (refer to behaviour policy and safeguarding and

welfare handbook), you must urgently refer to DSL or a member of SLT, who will arrange a search, will confiscate the item and inform the police.

In the case of emergency ring 999.

9.7. Honour Based Abuse

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All forms of HBA are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

9.8. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM.

FGM comprises of procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'. The Serious Crime Act 2015 places a statutory duty on all teachers to notify the police if FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18). Failure to report is likely to result in disciplinary sanctions.

Signs that FGM is about to happen or has already taken place

There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A student confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/student already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
    - Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
    - Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
    - Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
    - Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
    - Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
    - Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period
    - Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
    - Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
    - Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
    - Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Potential signs that a student may be at risk of FGM include:

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider)
- FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social

care in relation to other safeguarding issues

- A girl:
  - Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
  - Having limited level of integration within UK society
  - Confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman"
  - Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents/carers stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
  - Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
  - Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion)
  - Being unexpectedly absent from school
  - Having sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

What to do if you have concern

Tell the DSL immediately together with CPOMS referral. If you believe a girl is at immediate risk or is likely to have undergone FGM you must personally report this to the Police via 101. The DSL will support you to do this and will obtain a crime reference number, and notify the Contact Centre in line with MSP procedures. This is a mandatory statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it. Further guidance can be found in DfE, Multi- agency statutory guidance on FGM (April 2016), multi-agency guidance (April 2016).

9.9. Forced marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of 1 or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

It is also illegal to cause a child under the age of 18 to marry, even if violence, threats or coercion are not involved.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the '1 chance' rule, i.e. we may only have 1 chance to speak to the potential victim and only 1 chance to save them.

Indicators of forced marriage

Signs that a child or young person may be forced into marriage include:

- Absence and persistent absence.
- Request for extended leave of absence and failure to return from visits to country of origin.
- Fear about forthcoming school holidays.
- Surveillance by siblings or cousins at school.
- Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality.
- Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility.
- Not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities.
- Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger.
- Prevented from going on to further/higher education.
- Anxious, depressed and emotionally withdrawn with low self-esteem.
- Girls presenting with cut/shaved hair for punishment or for 'dishonouring' the family.
- A report that a girl has been taken to a private practice to examine if she is a virgin.

If a member of staff suspects that a student is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the student about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the student about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or fmu@fco.gov.uk
- Refer the student to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate.

There may be occasions when a student does not return to education after a holiday, or they may stop attending school during term time. In these situations, staff may have a suspicion that forced marriage is an issue. If a member of staff suspects that a student has been removed from, or prevented from, attending education as a result of forced marriage, the DSL will refer to the Contact Centre and the police, together with a referral to the LA informing them that the student is missing from school.

9.10. Mental Health

Mental health is about our own feelings, thoughts and emotions. Each and every one of us has mental health and it is just as important to look after it as it is our physical health. At times we might need to talk to someone about what we are thinking and feeling so that our emotions don't become overwhelming. In some cases, poor mental health can be an indicator that a child is or at risk of suffering from abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff at SHS are not mental health trained professionals but we are well placed to monitor 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.

Indicators of poor mental health include the following but are not exhaustive:

- Irritable
- Anxious
- Upset
- Low mood
- Angry
- Listless
- Directionless
- Self-harming which might include: cutting, scratching, marking, biting, punching
- Extreme highs followed by very low periods
- Obsessive behaviours
- Addiction
- School refusal
- Poor sleep habits
- Eating and diet concerns

What to do if you have a concern

Report any concerns about a Students through CPOMS to the welfare team. Further support including a possible referral to CAMHS will be offered to the students. In the case of self-harm, if a student has self-harmed in school, First-Aid must be sourced immediately followed by a referral to the welfare team. If the wounds are from historic harming (not fresh cuts), you must refer the information through CPOMS.

Staff do not diagnose mental health concerns.

9.11. Domestic abuse

Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse and/or violence at home where it occurs

between family members. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

School participates in Operation Encompass and is notified whenever there has been a visit to a family home for a domestic incident.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, coercive control, teenage relationship abuse, child to parent abuse, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse (abuse in intimate personal relationships between children) and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. It can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological or emotional. It can also include ill treatment that isn't physical, as well as witnessing the ill treatment of others – for example, the impact of all forms of domestic abuse on children.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background, and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. Children who witness domestic abuse are also victims.

Older children may also experience and/or be the perpetrators of domestic abuse and/or violence in their own personal relationships. This can include sexual harassment.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children and affect their health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn.

If police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any children in the household have experienced the incident, the police will inform the key adult in school (usually the designated safeguarding lead) before the child or children arrive at school the following day.

The DSL will provide support according to the child's needs and update records about their circumstances.

Indicators of domestic abuse
The following may be indicators that a child is living in an abusive environment:

- Taking part in dangerous or harmful behaviours
- Getting into trouble
- Are unhappy or worried
- Are angry and have violent outbursts
- Find it difficult to control emotions
- Have sleep difficulties
- Are afraid of getting hurt or are afraid of someone else getting hurt.

In most circumstances' children exposed to domestic abuse can be defined as Children in Need. Staff should refer to the DSL and record on CPOMS. The DSL will then make a referral to the Contact Centre for signposting to other services, or for Child in Need assistance. It may be sufficient to complete an Early Help Assessment or Family Help Assessment to secure assistance from other agencies. A referral to MARAC may take place, which is a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference where agencies share information on high risk cases of domestic violence and abuse and put in place a risk management plan.

9.12. Children Who Are Absent from Education
At SHS we are aware of the potential safeguarding concerns for students who are absent from education, such as child sexual exploitation, travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage. As such, attendance is recognised as an early indicator of potential safeguarding or child protection concerns. The SHS Attendance and Admissions policies, in line with Lancashire Authority procedures and Children Missing Education (CME) DfE statutory guidance 2016, and Education Regulations 2016 will be referred to and followed when a child is absent from school or is missing from education.

When a Child Misses Education at SHS we:

- Follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and CME.
- Treat it as a safeguarding concern and inform the LA of the details of students who fail to attend regularly, or on 10th consecutive school day of absence have not returned to school after an agreed authorised or unauthorised absence. This is in order to prevent the child going missing from education.
- Make every attempt through reasonable enquiries to locate the students.
- Remove the Students from the admission register and notify the LA when, after failure to make reasonable enquiries, a student has not returned to school for twenty days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days and their destination is unknown, except if absence is due to illness, or unavoidable causes, or if the child has moved to another country or moved out of the area (reasonable distance).
- Arrange full-time education for excluded students from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion.
- Have a commitment to seek at least two emergency contacts for each family.

9.13. Homelessness

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

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to children's social care.

9.14. Private Fostering

Private Fostering is when a parent makes an arrangement for their child under 16 years old (or under 18 if disabled) to live with someone for 28 days or more by private arrangement (without the involvement of a local authority) with someone who is not a parent or a close relative. A close relative can be defined as a brother, sister, aunt, uncle, grandparent or stepparent, guardian or a person with parental responsibility). Private foster carers might be friends of the child's family; someone willing to care for the child of a family they don't know; or relatives not mentioned in the list above, for example a cousin or great aunt.

At Southlands we recognise that privately fostered children and young people in Chorley, might be diverse and come from a variety of backgrounds and circumstances. Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases, privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or be involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

What to do if a student is privately fostered

We have a mandatory duty to inform the Local Authority through Children's Services if we become aware or suspect that a student is subject to a private fostering arrangement. Staff should notify the DSL and record on CPOMS. The DSL will inform Children's Services who is looking after the Student and where they live. It is an offence for the carer and parent not to notify the Local Authority; a private foster carer could be putting themselves and their family at risk and miss out on help and support. On admission to the school, we will take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child who is being registered.

9.15. Preventing Radicalization and Extremism.

- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups
- **Extremism** is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces
- **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 Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, places a duty on all schools, in the exercise of their functions, to have the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. This duty is known as the Prevent duty, to ensure SHS fully meets this duty, we will have full regard to DfE, Prevent duty guidance (updated 2023).

The use or threat of terrorism 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 case.

Safeguarding children from all risks of harm is an important part of our school's work and protecting them from extremism is one aspect of that.

The school has training sessions provided through the Lancashire Prevent Partnership Prevent offer.

Building children's resilience to Radicalisation
We build students' resilience to radicalisation by promoting our school and British values and enable them to develop critical thinking skills and challenge extremist views within a safe environment. We provide a safe place for students to understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the skills to challenge it, through inclusion in PSHCE lessons. We ensure students know their Single Point of Contact is the DSL.

We also recognise how the 2012 Teachers' Standards are relevant to combating extremism. For example, the standards say that teachers must:

- show tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
- not undermine fundamental British values.
- ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways that exploit

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period of time.

Staff will be alert to changes in students' behaviour.

The government website Educate Against Hate and charity NSPCC say that signs that a student is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem or are victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.

If there is a concern a child may be at risk
Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include Channel, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism or the local authority children's social care team.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which school staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a students. You can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

Checking the identity and suitability of visitors
Visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff upon entry to the school building.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are expected to sign in via Inventry and wear a visitor's badge.

Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and school improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- The organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an appropriate level of DBS check has been carried out (if this is provided, we will not ask to see the DBS certificate)

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise students or staff.

9.16. Non-collection of children
If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we will:

- Attempt to contact all numbers on the school system.
- If no contact is available, we will, where possible, ask the student to contact other relatives and the member of staff to ask if they can contact parents.
- With consent of family members ensure student has transportation home, including walking.
- If school are unable to contact any parent or close family member, then a referral to the contact centre for advice and guidance is needed.

9.17. Missing Students
Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child goes missing, we will:

- Conduct a search of the school grounds including through the use of CCTV
- If it is deemed the student has left the site a call to the police will be made and the parent
- If the parent is able to get in contact with the student, we will inform the police.

Further procedures can be located in the Staff Safeguarding and Welfare Handbook

10.What staff should look out for:

All Southlands staff should be aware of signs of abuse and neglect and be able to identify cases of students who may be in need of help or protection. There will be occasions when staff suspect a students may be at risk, but there is no real evidence to hand.

The students' behaviour may have changed, the artwork may be bizarre, increased lateness or absence, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or staff may have noticed physical but inconclusive signs. In these circumstances staff should try and give the opportunity for the student to talk. The signs may have been due to a variety of factors e.g. pet died, moving house, and grandparent ill. It is fine to ask if the student is all right and ask if you can help in any way.

10.1. What staff should do if they have concerns about a student

The process for dealing with Child Protection concerns are:

- Recognise
- Respond
- Record and Refer
- Support

Staff should always act in the interests of the student when concerned about his/ her welfare and raise any concerns with a member of the Safeguarding Team without delay. This should be done by verbal communication (if the child is at immediate risk) followed by CPOMs completion. Visitors, volunteers or supply staff should visit reception to say they need to speak with the DSL. If staff are unsure about what to do or the level of concern, they should speak with the DSL, (if unavailable speak with a member of the Welfare Team or SLT).

In the exceptional case where no member of the Safeguarding Team or SLT is available, or the referring staff disagrees with the DSL's decision not to refer, or action is not taken swiftly enough by the DSL, then the staff member can refer their concern directly to:

- The Contact Centre - Children's Social Care: 0300 123 6720
- Or NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000
- **If a child is believed to be at immediate risk of harm: Police 999**

If staff hear of, or know of, a student who has gone missing, they should report it immediately to the DSL

10.2. Referral to Social Care

If the DSL suspects the students to be at risk of, or is suffering from significant harm, then a referral to social care will be made and a s47 Enquiry (Child Protection Enquiry - see Children Act 1989) may commence.

Lancashire Children's services also operate a low-level concern reporting form.

10.3. Notifying parents or carers

Informing parents of concerns must be handled sensitively, and the DSL will contact the parent unless the school believes that doing so could increase risk to the student or exacerbate the problem. In such cases the school will require Social Care to contact parents.

Parents will not be informed of a referral if it is thought that a parent is the abuser, it is unclear who the abuser it or if it could jeopardise a police investigation.

If no assessment is recommended, then an Early Help or Family Help assessment may be. The DSL should ensure Social Care provide a rationale about their decision and record it.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents or carers of all the children involved. We will think carefully about what information we provide about the other child involved, and when. We will work with the police and/or local authority children's social care to make sure our approach to information sharing is consistent.

11. Preventing Abuse

Preventing abuse is a key element of the child protection and safeguarding work of SHS. Our staff training aims to ensure that all staff are fully alert to any kind of abuse and know what to look for and listen out for.

The Curriculum

At Southlands we are committed to ensuring that students learn to be prepared for life in modern Britain. We encourage them to be respectful citizens who are open to new experiences and are tolerant of others. Our values support the development of the whole child as a reflective learner within a safe respectful learning environment. For example, in lessons, students are encouraged to ask and answer questions and not be afraid to touch on controversial issues.

Our PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education) and RSHE curriculum which is delivered to all students, ensures that all students learn about safeguarding issues, both on and off-line, including what they mean, the harm they can bring, together with the signs and risks involved with each, and how to deal with them. We strive to equip our students with confidence, self-belief, respect and tolerance as well as setting high standards and expectations for themselves. We teach students to calculate risks, build resilience, develop critical thinking skills and promote good emotional wellbeing.

Students are regularly taught about how to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it. Students are encouraged to recognise that people are not always who they say they are online. They are taught to seek adult help if they are upset or concerned about anything they read or see on the internet.

Community Based Early Help (school offer) and Family Help (Lancashire Offer)

Where concerns about a child's welfare are identified, the school will work with relevant agencies to ensure children and families receive the right help at the right time. This may include early help, Family Help, child in need support, child protection intervention or other statutory services, as appropriate.

We are committed to identifying needs early, so we can reduce the chance of concerns escalating to a more serious level of need in the future. However, there are times when students' needs mean they require an enhanced level of support, either due to their own increasing complexity of need, or the impact of external factors. When early support is needed, the school welfare team work to ensure that the child is supported via the best service either through internal or external means. Please see SHS Safeguarding and Welfare Handbook for further information.

We are alert to the potential need for family help for a vulnerable Students who is:

- Disabled and has specific additional needs.
- Has special educational needs.
- A young carer.
- Is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups.
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation.
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- In a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems and domestic abuse.
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- Has returned home to their family from care.

- Is a privately fostered child.
- In a secure setting.
- Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in alternative provision or a student referral unit
- Has a parent or carer in custody (previously it was 'family member in prison'), or is affected by parental offending

Further information relating to Early Help, Family Help, local threshold guidance, referral pathways and multi-agency safeguarding procedures in Lancashire can be accessed using the links below:

Early Help Assessment - information for professionals - Lancashire County Council

Lancashire Safeguarding Partnership - Early Help & Support for Families

Lancashire Safeguarding Partnership - Children's Policies and Procedures

Mobile Phone Free School
Southlands is mobile-phone-free by default throughout the whole school day. This ensures that children's mental health is a priority and occurrences of bullying and other safeguarding behaviours are reduced by being a phone free school. Please refer to the Behaviour policy for full details.

12.Reporting Systems for our Students

Students at SHS can access the SHARP (Self Help and Reporting Tool) form the school website to raise any concerns they have be it about home or school. Access to this can be from any device at any time via the school website. They can also tell a dedicated adult, another trusted adult, or a friend if they have any concerns

13.Online Safety

Most of our students will use digital devices in and outside school. However, we know that some men, women and young people will use these technologies at sometime to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails to enticing children to engage in extremist behaviour, sexually harmful conversations and webcam or face-to-face meetings.

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

To address this, our school aims to:

- Have robust processes (including filtering and monitoring systems) in place to ensure the online safety of students, staff, volunteers and governors
- Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate
- The DHT and IT review the effectiveness of the school's filtering and monitoring systems at least once a year.
- Check provider block lists and alert workflows
- Use multi-factor authenticator for secure access to systems such as CPOMS
- A cyber breach or data incident with a safeguarding impact reaches the DSL and DPO immediately.

The Updated 4Cs Risk Model

The school categorises online safety risks using the statutory 4Cs framework, fully updated to reflect automated and AI-facilitated harms:

- **Content:** Exposure to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful material. This includes extreme sexual or physical violence, radicalisation, hate speech, and AI-generated misinformation, disinformation, or conspiracy content.
- **Contact:** Harmful online interactions with other users, and explicitly, interactions with generative AI applications that simulate human interaction (e.g., companion bots, persona-imitation tools, or relationship roleplay platforms). This covers grooming, exploitation, and manipulation by both real individuals and artificial agents.
- **Conduct:** Personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm. This explicitly includes the creation, manipulation, distribution, and receipt of explicit or nude/semi-nude images, including deepfakes, digitally altered media, or images wholly generated using AI. It also includes online bullying and targeted harassment.
- **Commerce:** Exposure to commercial risks, including online gambling, inappropriate targeted advertising, phishing, financial scams, or automated financial exploitation.

School-Wide Generative AI Safeguarding Framework

This framework governs all teacher-facing and student-facing uses of Generative AI on school networks, devices, or during school-directed activities.

A. Approved Tools and Age Suitability

- **Approved Catalogues:** Staff and students may only utilize Generative AI tools explicitly vetted and approved by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the IT Provider.
- **Age and Terms Verification**: No tool may be introduced unless its terms of service align with the chronological and developmental age of the user base. Tools with commercial profiles or adult age gates (e.g., 18+) are strictly prohibited for student use.

B. Supervision and Instructional Use

- **Student Face-to-Face:** Student interaction with generative AI platforms must be actively supervised by an educator. Independent, un-monitored student execution of AI prompts during the school day is forbidden.
- **Teacher Responsibility:** When staff use AI to create educational resources, they remain fully responsible for the accuracy and appropriateness of the final output. AI must never replace professional pedagogical judgment.

C. Data Protection: Personal and Special-Category Data

- In accordance with the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, staff and students are strictly prohibited from entering any personal data, identifiable student information, or special-category data (e.g., medical conditions, safeguarding notes, or behavioural records) into external or non-enterprise generative AI platforms. All inputs are treated as public domain disclosures unless explicitly governed by a data protection agreement signed by the school.

D. Input Prompts, Outputs, Bias, and Content Accuracy

- **Prompt Rules:** Prompt engineering by staff or students must adhere to the school's behavioural expectations; prompts intended to jailbreak, bypass safety filters, or generate inappropriate material are a disciplinary violation.
- **Algorithmic Bias:** Users must be explicitly taught that AI outputs reflect algorithmic training patterns and may output biased, discriminatory, racist, or misogynistic content.
- **Fact-Checking:** AI-generated information is treated as inherently unverified. Staff and students must systematically triangulate and cross-reference all outputs against authoritative, primary educational sources.

E. Deepfakes, Grooming, and Harms

- Targeted Exploitation: The creation or dissemination of digitally altered images or deepfakes targeting peers, staff, or community members is treated as a major category of child-on-child abuse and a potential criminal offence.
- AI Grooming Dynamics: The school recognizes that AI companion apps can generate emotional dependency, manipulate vulnerable students, or mimic grooming tactics. Such interaction profiles will be aggressively intercepted through behavioural tracking and system monitoring.

F. Assessment Misuse (AI Plagiarism)

- The presentation of AI-generated text, code, or artwork as a student's own unaided creation is treated as academic malpractice. Assessment frameworks must include validation methodologies to verify authentic student generation.

G. Escalation Procedures

- If an AI system generates harmful, explicit, radicalising, or deeply inappropriate content, or if a user attempts to bypass system constraints, the incident must be documented and immediately escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Data Protection Officer (DPO) as a core safeguarding event

To meet our aims and address the risks above we will:

- Educate students about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:
  - The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
  - Keeping personal information private
  - How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
  - How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring students are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than a victim
- Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying and the risks of online radicalisation. All staff members will receive refresher training at least once each academic year
- Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:
  - Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when students are not present
  - Staff will not take pictures or recordings of students on their personal phones or cameras
  - Make all students, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and governors aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in school, use of the school's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology
  - Explain the sanctions we will use if a student is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones
- Make sure all staff, student and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search students' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the school's IT systems, this will be overseen by the Trust Central IT team with an annual review undertaken to ensure harmful content is blocked.
- Carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our school community
- Provide regular safeguarding and children protection updates including online safety to all staff, at least annually, in order to continue to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to

safeguard effectively
- Review the child protection and safeguarding policy, including online safety, annually and ensure the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly
- If the school decides to use AI we will consult with the published guidance: Generative AI: product safety expectations to support our use safely.

Filters and monitoring systems
The school has in place monitoring systems which monitor:
- The internet, network and email traffic of the school.
- The domain names and/ or IP addresses of internet sites visited and domain, and IP addresses of email received.
- Data storage by individuals.

The school has filters in place which can identify improper use. These are monitored by staff trained to use the system and will notify the Year Managers of any concerns regarding the safeguarding and welfare of children. These will then be investigated and if necessary escalated to the DSL to follow child protection procedures which may include notifying parents and or a referral to children's social care, the police, channel or other services.

Cyber-bullying by students, via texts and emails, will be treated seriously, just as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures, and also may be considered as a child protection issue depending on the nature of the incident.

Multi-Modal Safety: The school's filtering and monitoring systems must actively apply to generative AI platforms accessible on school networks. The IT department must ensure systems block known unvetted AI apps and dynamically monitor query prompts and returned text/image arrays for safeguarding triggers.

Annual Verification: The efficiency and coverage of AI filtering are reviewed and formally recorded at least annually by the SLT, the DSL, and the IT network team.

14.Staff Training

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures and online safety, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect.

This training will be regularly updated and will:
- Be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole-school safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning
- Be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners
- Include online safety, including an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff around filtering and monitoring
- Have regard to the Teachers' Standards to support the expectation that all teachers:
- Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe environment
- Have a clear understanding of the needs of all students

A register is kept of all those staff that have received training which is added to our Single Central Record.

All staff, including the Headteacher and governors, will receive training that is updated at least every year and the DSL will receive training every two years at the level for their role and responsibility, currently 'level 3'. All staff have been issued with Part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) Regular training offered to staff supports them to understand their statutory requirements and have regard to the teachers' standards to ensure they can ensure a safe environment as well as understanding students' needs.

Staff will be regularly updated on any changes and will receive regular bulletins and useful safeguarding information as appropriate to ensure that safeguarding remains a live issue and a priority for staff. Training will be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach, wider staff training and curriculum planning. All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

Supply staff, volunteers and temporary staff will receive training by the DSL or Deputy DSLs and will be given the school's Visiting Staff Leaflet.

Contractors such as the caterers and cleaners will receive KCSIE updates and training in line with their contract and SLA.

15. Accountability

The DSL provides a termly report to governors to ensure that governors are fully aware of what the school is doing to ensure the safeguarding of all students, and that they are aware of any updates to legislation or guidance. Regular meetings are held for safeguarding and prevent to support and challenge the DSL regarding the safeguarding policy and practice. Regular reports enable the governors to discharge their responsibilities for safeguarding.

The DSL and DDSL each receive half termly supervision by an experienced and qualified safeguarding consultant. This enables them to reflect on their safeguarding practices, and provides support to manage caseload effectively and cope with the emotional demands of the role. Members of the wider team receive supervision on a needs basis completed by the DSL or Deputy. This policy will be reviewed annually by the DSL. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

16. Photography and Images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children, do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. However, some people may abuse children through taking or viewing images. There may also be children in SHS who may be placed at risk by photographs being taken and shared, for example, children who are looked after or adopted or have been subject to previous abusive situations, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.

To protect students at Southlands we:

- Seek their consent by parents for photographs to be taken or published e.g. on our website or in newspapers or publications.
- Seek parental consent on an annual basis.
- Use only the students' first names with an image.
- Ensure students are appropriately dressed.
- Encourage students to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.
- Ensure that photographs will only be taken on a school device.
- Ensure that photographs are only taken for reasons defined e.g. educational activity, evidence progress, promotional and celebratory.
- Ask that parents do not share any images of other children that may feature in the background of photographs that they have taken of their child Data protection does not prevent parents from taking photographs of their children at school events.
- Take seriously as a safeguarding concern any incident where a student has taken a photograph or video of another student/s, distributed it and/or uploaded it onto the internet.

Images for school publications

- The school will only take and use images that are appropriate and are considered to not be open to misuse. If an image of a student is used, the student's full name will not be published. If a name is published, no image will be used without specific consent.

- students will be made aware of why their picture is being taken and how it will be used.
- students will be given the option to not have their image used if they are the sole focus of the picture.
- students and parents should be encouraged to recognise the value of group photographs or recordings of school events.
- Images will be kept securely and held by the school for the duration of the student's time there, after which they will be destroyed. Images of students from the school will not be used to illustrate controversial subjects.

Images for the school website
School websites are part of the internet and are more easily accessible than paper-based school publications. The school will make sure that only appropriate images are used. Image filenames will avoid using children's names.

Images taken by parents, carers or family members
- Parents, carers or family members and friends can take images of their child and friends participating in school activities for family and personal use.
- Parents should ask for their permission before photography is allowed.
- Before they are allowed to take images during school activities, parents or carers should have signed an agreement that any images they take will not be used inappropriately.
- Parents or family members wishing to take images during an activity will be asked to sign a dated register agreeing not to share any images of other children that may feature in the background of photographs that they have taken of their child.

Photography and video filming will be limited to designated areas.

17.Safer Working Practices for Staff

Expected standards for all staff are set out in SHS Staff Code of Conduct. Alongside this, all teachers are expected to adhere to the Teacher Standards 2012 and all staff should adhere to the Safer Recruitment Consortium, 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Who Work with Children' (2015). 'All staff' includes anyone working in the school.

In accordance with the Teacher Standards 2012, all staff at Southlands (including support staff and the Headteacher), have a duty to safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
All staff at Southlands are expected to identify students who may require extra help, or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. All staff have a duty to take appropriate action in accordance with this policy.

All staff are expected to follow the staff Code of Conduct and always conduct themselves professionally and appropriately, always maintaining professional boundaries.

All staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards students is unacceptable and that their conduct towards students must be professional at all times and beyond reproach, maintaining professional boundaries.
All staff have a responsibility to ensure that the unequal balance of power between staff member and students is not used for their personal advantage or gratification.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offence Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relation with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if that relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of school staff and a student under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that student is over the age of consent.

Poor practice amongst staff

The school takes seriously any complaint or concern raised by parents, students or other staff regarding poor practice towards students, which does not initially reach the threshold for child protection action.

Upon investigation of the complaint or concern, it is likely that the school's disciplinary procedures will be followed if the complaint or concern is substantiated. Our complaints and disciplinary procedure will be followed where a student or parent raises concern about poor practice towards a student (see website for complaints procedure).

Examples of poor practice includes:

- Singling a student out
- Using sarcasm or humiliation as a form of control.
- Bullying or belittling a student or discriminating against them in some way.

These practices are not exhaustive.

The Headteacher, senior staff and governors manage complaints. Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Communication with students using Information Technology

Communication between staff and students should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes use of mobile phone text messaging, emails, social media websites, digital cameras, blogs, videos, webcams and websites.

Staff should not give students, parents or carers, their personal contact details e.g., mobile phone number, or details of any blogs or personal websites e.g., Facebook and not to any past Students who is under 25 years old. This also applies when staff are on a school trip.

Staff should only contact students for professional reasons and only in accordance with the school's policy. They should not request or respond to any personal information from the students other than that which is appropriate to their professional role. All communications should be open and transparent. Any concern or doubt about levels of communication with or from students should be discussed with DSL, Safeguarding Team, or if unavailable, a member of SLT.

When staff are out with students on a school trip, staff should use the school mobiles to communicate with students, not their personal mobile phones.

They should not give students their mobile number, unless in the exceptional circumstance of the school mobiles being lost, stolen or broken and this has been agreed with the Headteacher or DSL. Staff should ensure the school phones are fully charged.

Staff should not use the internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to students.

Staff should ensure that if a social networking site is used, details are not shared with students and privacy settings are set to maximum. It is also advised that staff should avoid using an identifiable profile picture or their full name as known in school

18.Safer Recruitment

This section should be read alongside the Mosaic Learning Trust Safer Recruitment Policy.

At Southlands High School, we work to ensure that our recruitment, selection, and pre-employment vetting are secure and strictly follow the statutory procedures required in Part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) which includes:

- The recruitment and selection process
- Pre appointment and vetting checks
- Other necessary checks
- How to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of children and legal responsibilities of employers

To ensure we recruit suitable people, the school mandates that all interview panels will include at least one person who has successfully completed accredited Safer Recruitment training. Where feasible, the school aims to train all senior leaders and governors involved in the employment of staff to work with children.

Staff responsible for recruitment and management of volunteers will ensure that the volunteer roles are reviewed against the regulated activity criteria and that the appropriate DBS and barred list checks are obtained in accordance with current statutory guidance.

We have established the comprehensive steps detailed in this policy to demonstrate our absolute commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Staff working in alternative provision settings

Where we place a student with an alternative provision provider, we obtain written confirmation from the provider that they have carried out the appropriate safeguarding checks on individuals working there that we would otherwise perform. We will only use an alternative provision provider that we are satisfied meets the needs of the student. Furthermore, due diligence will be done before placement including visits to placements, staff meetings, safeguarding policies checked. Students will remain the responsibility of SHS safeguarding and welfare procedures whilst on placement.

We will regularly review the alternative provision placement at least half term, to provide assurance that the students are attending, making progress and that the placement continues to be safe and meet the needs of the child. Where concerns are raised, the placement will be immediately reviewed and terminated, if necessary, unless or until those concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.

19.Allegations of Abuse Made Against Teachers and Other Staff

This section should be read alongside the Mosaic Learning Trust Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

19.1 Managing Safeguarding Allegations That May Meet the Harms Threshold

This section is based on 'Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harms threshold' in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff—explicitly including permanent employees, supply teachers, trainee teachers on placement, volunteers, or contractors—has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or
- 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 (including behaviours occurring outside of the school environment or online).

When managing allegations against staff, the school will recognise the distinction between concerns / allegations that may meet the harm threshold and concerns / allegations that do not, referred to for the purpose of this policy as "low-level concerns".

If we're in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, we will consult our local authority

designated officer (LADO).

This policy applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place on the school premises or elsewhere. It operates in direct alignment with local multi-agency procedures and necessitates immediate liaison with the Local Authority – Lancashire's Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership.

All allegations against staff, supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, contractors and any person who may use or hire the school premises, will be managed in line with the Trust's safer recruitment and managing allegations against staff Policy – a copy of which will be provided to, and understood by, all staff at induction (this may also include concerns over practice). The school will ensure all allegations against staff, including those who are not employees of the school, are dealt with appropriately and that the school liaises with the relevant parties.

If the allegation concerns the Headteacher, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will act as the Case Manager and will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Allegations concerning the CEO will be managed by the Chair of Trustees. The Headteacher will normally be the Case Manager for allegations against school staff.

We will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation. Allegations will be concluded using one of the following outcomes substantiated, false, malicious, unsubstantiated, unfounded. This will be managed in line with the Mosaic Learning Trust's Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

Where an individual is removed from regulated activity, dismissed, resigns or otherwise ceases employment because they have harmed a child or may pose a risk of harm to a child, consideration must be given to referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and, where applicable, the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

If we receive an allegation of an incident happening while an individual or organisation was using the school premises to run activities for children, we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures and inform our LADO.

Further information, LADO referral information and flowchart of how allegations are managed: Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - Lancashire County Council includes the threshold matrix.

Referrals will be made using the required format below when necessary: Management of allegations notification

The 24-Hour Notification Window: If the basic enquiry suggests the harm threshold is met, the Headteacher or person designated by the headteacher must contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours. This consultation will analyse the nature, content, and context of the allegation to determine the appropriate multi-agency pathway.

Suspension must not be an automatic response when an allegation is made. Consideration should first be given to alternative arrangements that safeguard children while allowing the member of staff to continue working.

Decisions regarding suspension should be taken only after consultation with the LADO and consideration of the risks to children, the staff member and the integrity of the investigation. The rationale for any suspension decision should be clearly recorded.

Confidentiality: Information relating to allegations must be shared only with those who have a legitimate need to know. All parties should maintain confidentiality throughout the process to protect children, staff and the integrity of any investigation.

References: Safeguarding allegations that are substantiated and meet the criteria set out in the Trust policy will be included in employment references in accordance with statutory guidance and Trust procedures.

Learning Lessons: Following the conclusion of any allegation investigation, consideration should be given to whether improvements can be made to safeguarding practice, procedures, supervision, training or support arrangements.

19.2 Low Level Concerns

Southlands High School ensures that all staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviours from inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour in themselves and others and how to report low level concerns around staff behaviour or conduct.

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or humiliating pupils.

Southlands High School will promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school (including supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers, contractors or those that have hired/let the premises) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Southlands will strive to embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the school's values and expected behaviour set out in the staff code of conduct are lived, monitored and reinforced constantly by all staff.

We will ensure that staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

All staff are clear on how to report low level concerns and will be empowered to do so. Staff must report their concerns to the Head teacher. If concerns are surrounding the Head teacher, this must be referred to the Chair of Governors.

Guidance from Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026, will be followed in view of recording and storage of such concerns. If in doubt whether the concern is a low-level concern, the HT will consult with LADO for guidance.

The Governing Body will ensure low level concern procedures and staff behaviour expectations are clearly addressed within the staff code of conduct and procedures are implemented effectively, ensuring that appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard children and facilitate a whole school or college approach to dealing with any concerns.

Non-recent allegations
Abuse can be reported, no matter how long ago it happened.

We will report any non-recent allegations made by a child to the LADO in line with our local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations.

Where an adult makes an allegation to the school that they were abused as a child, we will advise the individual to report the allegation to the police.

Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold.
The section is based on 'Section 2: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This section applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including trainee, supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold set out in section 1 above.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- Suspicion
- Complaint
- Safeguarding concern or allegation from another member of staff
- Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside the school
- Pre-employment vetting checks

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

Definition and Recognition of Low-Level Concerns

The Statutory Definition
The term 'low-level' concern refers to any concern—no matter how small, and even if it is initially no more than a causing a sense of unease or a "nagging doubt"—that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate or compromising conduct outside of work or online; and
- Does not meet the high harms threshold set out in Section 1 of this policy, and is otherwise not considered serious enough to warrant an immediate referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Categorised Behavioural Indicators
Inappropriate behaviour exists on a wide spectrum, ranging from inadvertent or thoughtless actions to deliberate boundary violations intended to enable abuse. To assist staff in maintaining professional boundaries, concerns are grouped into four primary categories:

Category A: Professional Boundaries and Familiarity

- Being overly friendly or over-familiar with children.
- Demonstrating favouritism toward a specific child or family (e.g., buying a pupil gifts, giving special privileges, or using pet names/terms of endearment).
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door contrary to the school's lone-working protocols.
- Transporting a pupil alone in a personal vehicle without prior senior leadership approval.

Category B: Digital Communications and Media

- Taking photographs or videos of children on a personal mobile phone or electronic device, in direct breach of the school's technology policies.
- Sharing personal contact details, phone numbers, or social media handles with current pupils.

- Communicating with a child via a personal account, or joining a student-only online group chat or gaming lobby

Category C: Communications and Language

- Using inappropriate, sexualised, intimidating, or highly offensive language in front of or toward students.
- Verbally humiliating students, mocking them, or using sarcasm that creates a sense of shame or belittlement.
- Making remarks or jokes about a child or parent within internal staff communication channels or private group chats.

Category D: Conduct Outside of Work

- Behaviours in the local community, online spaces, or during a secondary job that conflict with the school's values or compromise the adult's professional standing.

Contextual Vetting

The school explicitly notes that context is vital. An action that appears concerning in one setting may be entirely appropriate in another if properly authorised—for example, a pre-approved one-to-one counselling session behind a closed door with a fully vetted school counsellor. Where any ambiguity exists, staff must err on the side of caution and report the matter to allow a professional assessment to take place.

Sharing low-level concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns as per section 7.7 of this policy
- Empowering staff to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to identify any weakness in the school's safeguarding system

Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the headteacher will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- To the individual involved and any witnesses

The headteacher will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the school's staff code of conduct. The headteacher will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL.

Record-Keeping and Retention for Low-Level Concerns

The school enforces strict statutory record-keeping protocols for all low-level concerns to protect the privacy of staff, maintain professional transparency, and ensure that cumulative patterns of behaviour are tracked accurately [Keeping children safe in education 2026].

Structure of Content

All low-level concerns must be recorded formally in writing. In addition to the specific details of the incident or observation, each record must explicitly document:

- The full context and environmental factors in which the concern arose.

- The explicit rationale for the triage decision made by the Headteacher (explaining why the matter did not meet the high harms threshold).
- Any internal actions taken (e.g., professional advice issued, updates to the Staff Code of Conduct, or supportive adjustments).

Secure and Separated Storage

- The Safe Storage Mandate: To comply with data laws and protect staff confidentiality, low-level concern records will never be stored on an individual's standard HR personnel file while they are being investigated or monitored.
- Restricted Access Vaults: Records will be held on a highly secure, restricted-access digital safeguarding drive or in a dedicated "Low-Level Concerns" repository managed directly by the Headteacher. Standard staff members and line managers will have zero visibility of these files.

Statutory Retention and Destruction Timelines

The school applies strict retention thresholds that look beyond standard employment duration [Keeping children safe in education 2026]:

- Records will be retained in accordance with the Mosaic Learning Trust retention schedule and safeguarding record retention requirements.
- Purging Files: Records will not be kept indefinitely without purpose. Once the statutory threshold has elapsed, files will be securely deleted and cross-referenced on a neutral, anonymized master log to satisfy future inspection audits.

Pattern Tracking and Threshold Escalation

- Systematic Pattern Reviews: The Headteacher will conduct a formal, systematic review of the low-level concern repository at least termly to identify potential patterns of concerning, problematic, or inappropriate behaviour over time.
- Escalation to LADO: Where a cumulative pattern of low-level behaviour is identified regarding a single individual, the school will evaluate the risk holistically. If the repeated behaviour demonstrates a deliberate defiance of boundaries or a cumulative risk that moves the concern into meeting the high harms threshold, the Headteacher will immediately suspend internal monitoring and refer the matter to the LADO within 24 hours [Keeping children safe in education 2026].

Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

19.3 Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the term used when a worker passes on information concerning wrongdoing.

It is important that all professionals have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they are unhappy with anything and that they will be supported by the school to do this.

Whistleblowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous, illegal activity or any wrongdoing within the school e.g.:

- Potentially vital information about health and safety risks
- Possible fraud.
- Harm of children or vulnerable adults
- Concerned or worried about someone's behaviour

It is essential these issues are addressed immediately, so, 'blowing the whistle' as early as possible is important in order to prevent further harm being done.

If you have concerns about a colleague
Concerns relate to allegations that a member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a student or may have harmed a student.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a student.
- Behaved towards a student in a way that indicates s/he would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues must be reported immediately to the Headteacher.

If the Headteacher is absent, then the concern must be raised with the DSL. In the absence of the DSL, raise a concern with the DDSL. The concern must not be discussed with other colleagues. Complaints about the Headteacher should be reported to the Chair of Governors.

If you have concerns about safeguarding practices within the school
Whistleblowing is the term used when a worker passes on information concerning wrongdoing.

All staff should feel they are able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failure in the safeguarding regime with the SLT, knowing they will be taken seriously.

It is important that all professionals have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they are unhappy with anything and that they will be supported by the school to do this.

Whistleblowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous, illegal activity or any wrongdoing within the school e.g.:

- Potentially vital information about health and safety risks
- Possible fraud
- Harm of children or vulnerable adults
- Concerned or worried about someone's behaviour.

However, if a staff member feels unable to do this or that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they can contact:

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline (08000 280285) / email help@nspcc.org.uk

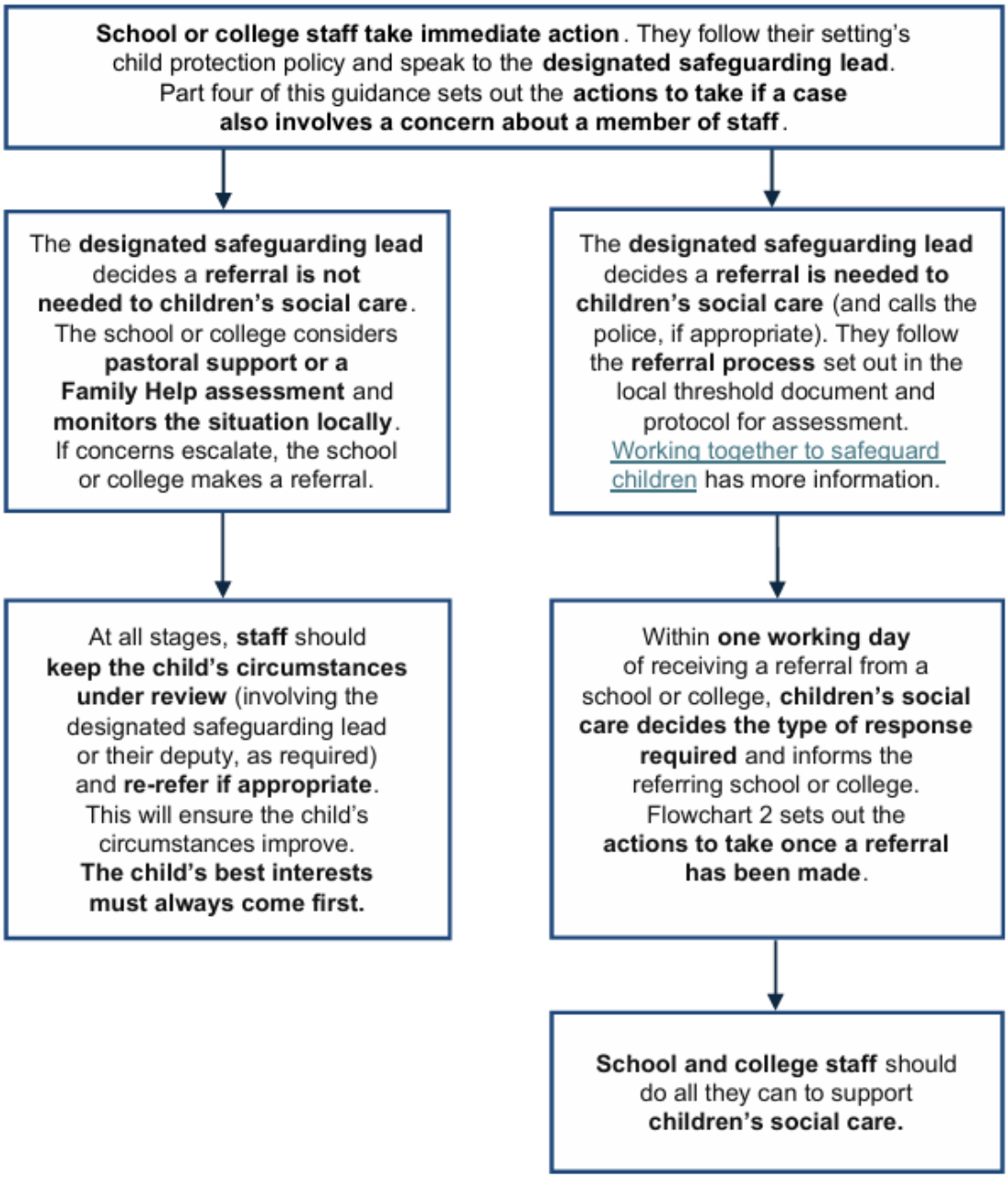
Furthermore, you can see the Mosaic Learning Trust Whistleblowing Policy.

20. Afterschool and Off-Site Arrangements

Where after school activities are provided and managed by the school, our own Child Protection policy and procedures apply.

Use of School Premises by external providers
As an active part of the local community, on occasion, school facilities may be let out to community groups, sports clubs or other organisations. These lettings are overseen by Northwest School Hire Ltd. All associated lettings agreements and necessary safeguarding information linked to Northwest School Hire Ltd Lettings can be found on Northwest School Hire Ltd website. Should a safeguarding issue arise, or an allegation be made against an adult during school site community use, Northwest School Hire Ltd would deal with this in the first instance in line with their safeguarding protocols and would notify school asap. When the school becomes aware of a concern or allegation arising from an organisation or individual using the premises for activities involving children,

the school must follow its own safeguarding and allegations procedures, including informing the LADO as appropriate. The hirer must cooperate, preserve evidence and make its own required referrals, but the school must not wait for or defer entirely to the hirer's process. Retain the power to suspend or terminate use.

Appendix 1: KCSIE 2026 Actions Flowchart

Flowchart 1: actions taken by a school or college when there are concerns about a child