



Stella Maris School

Safeguarding Policy

Updated: Sept 2025
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STELLA MARIS SCHOOL Safeguarding Policy

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RATIFIED BY THE GOVERNING BODY	SEPTEMBER 2025
SIGNED:	MR JOHN SIBBALD (CHAIR) MRS SAMANTHA ELLIOTT (SAFEGUARDING TRUSTEE)
TO BE REVIEWED:	SEPTEMBER 2026

At Stella Maris School the following members of the school hold these positions:

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Safeguarding Trustee
Mr Stephen Usher	Mr Ken Brown	Mrs Samantha Elliott

Concerns or allegations about a member of staff or volunteer should be shared with:

The Headteacher	Senior Teacher (in the absence of the Headteacher)	Chair of Trustees (in the event of an allegation against the headteacher)
Mr Stephen Usher	Mr Ken Brown	Mr John Sibbald

Stella Maris School is committed to Safeguarding and promoting the welfare and well-being of all members of the school. All school staff and volunteers who work in the school are expected to share this commitment and vision.

This Policy was written in consultation with the Trustees, Headteacher and the staff of Stella Maris School with due regard to our mission statement.

“At Stella Maris we endeavour to put the children at the centre of everything we do. Our mission is to educate, nurture and instil traditional values and cherish our children. We inspire them to achieve their best in every aspect of their lives.”

INTRODUCTION

By **SAFEGUARDING** we mean:

- Keeping our children safe from all forms of abuse, neglect and maltreatment.
- Ensuring our children are educated in a safe environment.
- Providing every child with the best life chances.

STELLA MARIS SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

At Stella Maris School the health and safety of all our children is of paramount importance. Parents send their children to school each day with the expectation that the school provides a safe and secure environment in which their children can flourish and grow. We therefore ensure that this expectation becomes a reality.

STELLA MARIS SCHOOL is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all its pupils.

We believe that all our children have the right:

- To be protected from any form of harm
- To always feel safe in school or during school activities
- To speak freely and voice concerns about issues at home or at school
- To be encouraged to show respect for each other's beliefs and values
- To be supported to meet their emotional, educational and social needs
- To be able to fulfil their educational potential

STELLA MARIS SCHOOL recognises that all forms of abuse, intimidation, bullying, victimisation, exploitation, discriminatory views and extremism should be prevented from taking place or if there is an incident of the above it is dealt with adequately and robustly in line with our policies. Please refer to our Discipline and Behaviour (including Anti-Bullying) Policy and our Equality and Diversity Policy.

OUTLINE

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is everyone's responsibility at Stella Maris School. Everyone, including all staff and volunteers who have contact with children, their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding them and promoting their welfare. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, all staff and volunteers who come into contact with them have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt and restorative action. In line with this understanding, any adult working or volunteering in the school community has a responsibility to recognise when a child or young person may be in need or be vulnerable in some way, and to respond to this recognition in a timely and appropriate way.

SAFEGUARDING DEFINITION

The definition of 'safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children' has been updated to reflect the changes made in [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (DfE, 2023a). The definition now includes the additional points of:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems arise
- Protecting children from maltreatment, inside and outside the home, and online

CHILD PROTECTION DEFINITION

Child Protection is taken very seriously at Stella Maris School and forms a part of the safeguarding agenda. It refers to the action that is required to be undertaken to protect children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

THIS POLICY ENCOMPASSES CHILD PROTECTION.

RATIONALE

At Stella Maris School we recognise the responsibility we have under Section 175/157 of the Education and Inspections Act 2002, to have arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The Trustee Body approve the S175/157 return to the LA on a yearly basis. This policy demonstrates the commitment of Stella Maris School and compliance with safeguarding legislation.

Staff and volunteers working in our school have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect and referring them to the correct persons or services for support and intervention. Everyone working or volunteering at Stella Maris school is trained to recognise signs of concern and in line with this policy, must report concerns following school and local authority procedures.

Staff and volunteers are regularly updated on safeguarding issues. All staff meetings begin with a 10 min safeguarding update. We cover a whole range of topics and staff who are not present at the meeting read the information in the minutes of the meeting, so that they are aware of information which has been discussed or updated at the meeting. Every two years the whole staff receive certified safeguarding training, provided by Stockport LA or an alternative provider. An annual in-house training session is also given by the DSL and Deputy DSL. Other safeguarding discussions and bite size training takes place in various departmental meetings and whole staff briefings. The culture of safeguarding at Stella Maris School underpins the fact that safeguarding and protecting our children is fundamental to everything which happens in school. All staff and volunteers are aware of this culture and volunteers have regular training sessions with the DSL when they refresh their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding matters. Safeguarding also forms an essential part of the induction process for all new staff who join the school.

At Stella Maris School we believe that the welfare of every child is paramount and therefore, should staff have any concerns they feel are of a safeguarding nature, they are expected to report, record and take the necessary steps to ensure that the child is safe and protected and that key staff in school are informed promptly of any such concerns. We are aware that this can lead to challenge from parents/carers, but we always collectively work to ensure that the child is at the heart of all our decisions and that we act in their best interests. All staff and volunteers understand their responsibility for this.

As part of our commitment to and compliance with safeguarding legislation and guidance; we also refer to:

- [What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015](#)
- [Keeping children Safe in Education 2025](#)
- [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage” \(April 2017\)](#)
- [Guidance for safer working practice for staff working in education settings. October 2015](#)
- [Greater Manchester Police Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Preventing and tackling bullying advice](#)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)
- [School online safety policy](#)
- [Staff Code of Conduct](#)
- [Staff use of mobile phones and Social Media rules/procedures](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children – Update July 2022](#)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the welfare of children is understood and always promoted. At Stella Maris School we understand that the welfare of the child is paramount.

We strive to ensure that all children, regardless of their age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity are protected from harm in all its forms. All staff and volunteers have an equal responsibility to act on concerns, suspicions or disclosures that lead them to suspect or understand if a child may be at risk of harm. As part of our duty of care we also work to ensure that pupils and staff involved in safeguarding and child protection issues receive appropriate support.

All staff and volunteers are required to adhere to our Staff Code of Conduct (including the use of ICT and social media). All staff and volunteers understand what to do if there are concerns or allegations about any adult working or volunteering in our school during or outside of the normal school day.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers, students or anyone working on behalf of Stella Maris School. We expect that this policy takes primacy over other agency policies when work is being delivered on this site on our behalf, as we maintain a duty of care to all in our school community.

LANGUAGE USED IN THIS POLICY

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of children's health or development, ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Early Help refers to mechanisms providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

Child Protection refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the School in either a paid or voluntary capacity and will be used from this point on in this document.

Child refers to all children and young people who have not yet reached the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role including: step-parents, foster parents, carers and adoptive parents.

CONTENTS

This policy has been divided into four key areas:

- 1. Prevention**
- 2. Procedures and Record Keeping**
- 3. Support**
- 4. Safer Recruitment**

Additional materials are referenced or provided in the Appendices.

1. PREVENTION

We will establish and maintain an ethos where:

Children feel safe and secure in an environment which allows them to learn and develop on an educational journey to achieving their full potential.

Children understand that there are adults in the school they can talk to if worried, scared or facing difficulty. We are a restorative staff team who actively listen and respond.

Staff development and awareness in respect of safeguarding is given the highest priority across the school to ensure we all fully understand and implement the national and local agenda.

We deliver a broad, balanced and age appropriate PSHE and RSE Education Programme across all classes, where children and young people acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives and their relationships, now and in the future. It will support them to manage and assess risk effectively and develop the skills to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships (both online and in the real world) and where to find sources of support if required.

Children are supported in recognising risks in various forms, including on the internet. They understand what kind of physical contact is acceptable and are able to recognise inappropriate pressure from others, including that which threatens their personal safety and well-being. Children are encouraged to discuss issues and raise questions in a safe and comfortable environment and are provided with strategies to help them.

Staff feel empowered to share safeguarding concerns in a swift and timely way bringing them to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Head Teacher) and/or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Senior Teacher).

All staff accept, as a result of regular training and updating that safeguarding is the responsibility of all in our community. Staff feel able to ask safeguarding questions and receive appropriate feedback, following up on concerns as part of this shared responsibility to children.

At the beginning of each staff meeting there is a regular safeguarding session where training and updating can take place and questions be addressed and answered. Role play situations are often carried out.

Emerging issues and themes, if they arise, are proactively addressed and fed back to the Local Authority (LA) and Stockport Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB), via the Senior Advisor for Safeguarding in Education (SASE) to ensure a multi-agency awareness and that strategies are developed.

There is a clear approach to substance misuse (drugs and alcohol). Any issues of drugs and substance misuse will be reported and recorded if the need arises and there are strategies to educate children appropriately delivered throughout the school and the Curriculum.

We use the mechanisms and services available to understand the range of issues which may make a child vulnerable and ensure children and young people receive the most appropriate support or referral and access to other provision; actively supporting multi agency planning for those children and, in doing so, providing information about the 'voice of the child' and the child's personal experiences and perspectives as evidenced by observations or information provided.

Our school's arrangements for consulting with, listening and responding to pupils are during daily class time, dedicated lessons and children being aware that the staff are always available to listen and speak to them, even during breaktimes and at lunchtime.

Our school's arrangements for consulting with, listening and responding to parents are making parents aware of our "Open Door Policy" whereby staff are always on hand to speak to parents. We also use our school communication books and termly parent meetings to give parents the opportunity to engage with staff. The DSL, (Headteacher), Deputy DSL and the Senior Management Team are always available to speak to parents if they need help, guidance or advice on any matters.

There is a commitment to the continuous development of staff with regard to safeguarding training:

- All staff access in-house training annually, led by the DSL and/or the Deputy DSL, with updates at our regular staff meetings. They also access certified training, led by Stockport LA or an alternative provider on a biennial basis.
- All new staff, as part of their induction, will access safeguarding training prior to or during the first day of their employment/placement, led by the DSL/Deputy and a session linked to the electronic Safeguarding Policy File, which all staff and volunteers have. They will be briefed on the safeguarding protocols within our organisation as well as going through school policies to ensure that everything is clear and understood.
- Staff who have a certificate to demonstrate a training qualification which is still current from their previous employment will need to produce this as evidence that recent safeguarding training has taken place.
- All staff from our team of extra-curricular provision and clubs have undergone their own in-house safeguarding training and certificates have been provided by their employers. They are also updated on our school policies prior to taking up their contract with the school and will have access to the electronic Policy File.
- The DSL and/or Deputy attend the Designated Safeguarding Lead Network Meetings where possible, thereby enabling them to keep up to date with safeguarding practices and be aware of any concerns/themes emerging locally.
- The DSL, and /or Deputy regularly meet to discuss safeguarding matters and develop their knowledge independently in this area to maintain high levels of understanding and knowledge locally and nationally. This information is passed on at Trustee meetings and staff meetings so that all Trustees and staff are aware of current issues and other safeguarding related information.
- The DSL and the Safeguarding Trustee meet on a regular basis to discuss safeguarding.
- The Safeguarding Trustee reviews and checks the SCR on a termly basis with the Headteacher (DSL) signs that the check has been carried out.

DEFINITIONS:

Staff are trained and supported to understand and recognise indicators of the types of abuse that some children experience and work to the following definitions.

All school staff are aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues may overlap with each other.

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. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, poisoning, 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 emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

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

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence. The child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including serious sexual assault or other forms of inappropriate touching. They may also include non-contact activities, e.g. involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways/ 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.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): is a form of child sexual abuse, it involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts or money) as part of a grooming process. Ultimately, this results in them engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms, ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups.

All staff are alert to possible indicators and will raise concerns as appropriate. They are aware of the Greater Manchester CSE policy and procedures and of the school screening tool (SERAT) including where to find it, how to complete it and what happens next. All staff have information in their Safeguarding files in relation to this aspect of child abuse.

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can occur through the use of technology.

(Child Sexual Exploitation, DfE, Feb 2017)

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.
- Neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Children and young people who harm others (also referred to as child-on

child abuse): Peer-on-peer abuse is now referred to as child-on-child abuse and it can

take various forms, including: serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), relationship abuse, domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, youth and serious youth violence, harmful sexual behaviour, and/or gender based violence.

This also relates to what is termed “intimate teenage relationships” and there is now more emphasis on the understanding of harm and domestic violence, relating to the fact that children who witness domestic violence are also victims and what they have witnessed can have a lasting impact on their future lives and relationships.

There is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as child on child abuse and incidents that would be considered as bullying, sexual experimentation, etc. Assessments must be made on a case by case basis. (Firmin, C. 2017. *Abuse Between Young People*)

Contextual Safeguarding:

Staff recognise that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside our school and/or can occur between children outside of the school. All staff, but especially the DSL and/or Deputy DSL should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child’s life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children’s social care assessments should consider such factors so it is important that our school provides as much information as possible as part of any referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

TAS (Team Around the School)

In situations where we feel that families would benefit from Early Help the school will organise a TAS to access the available services which may be of help to the family.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Stella Maris School will ensure that every member of staff and person working on behalf of the School:

- Knows the name and of the DSL and Deputy, understands his/her role and responsibilities, and how to contact them
- Understands they have an individual responsibility to refer safeguarding and child protection concerns
- Will receive training at the point of induction so that they know:

- Their personal responsibility / Staff Code of Conduct /teaching standards
- SSCB child protection procedures and how to access them
- The need to be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse at the earliest opportunity
- How to support and respond to a child who discloses abuse/ significant harm
- Their duty concerning unsafe practices of a colleague
- The DSL will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff **only** on a need-to-know basis
- The school will undertake appropriate discussion with parents prior to involvement with other agencies wherever this is appropriate
- The school will ensure that parents have an understanding of their obligations re: Child Protection by intervention as and when appropriate
- To develop effective links with relevant agencies in relation to safeguarding (child protection)
- To ensure that, where there are unmet needs, an assessment of early help is initiated.
- To send appropriate representatives to case conferences, core groups and child protection review meetings when required

Where a member of staff is concerned that a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm they should report this to the DSL and/or Deputy, without delay. A written record will be made of these concerns immediately following the disclosure/concern being raised.

Where staff have conversations with a child who discloses abuse, they follow the basic principles:

- Listen and remain calm
- Never ask a child if they are being abused
- Make a record of discussion to include time, place, persons present and what was said (child language – do not substitute words)
- Advise you will have to pass the information on
- Never take photographs of any injury
- Never record a child
- Never undress a child to physically examine them
- Allow time and provide a quiet space for support
- At no time promise confidentiality to a child or adult

We will notify any Lead Social Worker if:

- A pupil subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) is excluded (fixed term or permanent)
- There is an unexplained absence of a pupil on a CPP of more than 2 days or 1 day following a weekend, or as agreed as part of a CPP
- If a child is missing and there is a need to follow Stockport's Policy and any statutory guidance on Children Missing in Education (CME)
- Additional concerns arise

We understand that parents often hold key information about incidents, allegations or concerns therefore, **in the majority of situations; the DSL and/or Deputy will speak to the parents and gain their consent** to discuss any matters with other relevant agencies.

There may be occasions where, to speak to the parents, could further endanger the child. In these situations they would still consult/refer, but would have clearly recorded reasons as to why they had not gained parental consent.

The use of 'Reasonable Force'

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools to use reasonable force to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain a child. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. All staff have been trained in the response to situations like this.

(Please refer to the Staff Code of Conduct and our Discipline and Behaviour, including Anti-Bullying Policy for more information.)

Children who harm others (child-on-child abuse)

We believe that all children have the right to be taught in a safe and caring environment to enable them to optimise their learning and achievement. We expect all pupils to have respect for themselves and others and work to ensure everyone in our community feels safe, valued and supported. Stella Maris School promotes the values of honesty, acceptance, inclusion and fairness within a caring, restorative and nurturing environment.

Children at our school come from a variety of backgrounds and some have individual needs so we aim to always provide a high level of pastoral care and support for all children and we encourage appropriate and cooperative behaviour. Underpinned by this support pupils are expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour with appropriate strategies offered to enable this. All sections of the school community are aware of our Discipline and Behaviour, including Anti-Bullying Policy and the children are taught about acceptable and non-acceptable standards of behaviour.

We understand that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This may include the following:

- Bullying (including cyber bullying).
- Gender based violence/sexual assaults.
- Sexting (out of school – as phones are not allowed in school).
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.

Staff are clear on our procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse and such matters are always taken seriously. Our Discipline and Behaviour, including Anti-Bullying Policy clearly sets out the steps and procedures which we will take if any occasions of bullying or other child-on-child abuse takes place.

Children are regularly taught about how to look after themselves and what to do if a situation occurs. Excellent relationships exist between staff and children and our pupils know that there are always members of staff on duty around the school who they can turn to if they need advice or if something had gone wrong and they need to make a disclosure. Our children are educated in the power to speak out and not to remain silent. This forms part of our Circle Time activities and PSHE/RSE lessons. The children are also aware of the school Discipline and Behaviour, including Anti-Bullying Policy.

Where sexual violence or sexual harassment between children is alleged then the school follows the guidance issued by the [DfE in 2018 Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children guidance](#).

Our staff have access to additional information and will be supported by the DSL and/or Deputy DSL.

SAFER USE OF THE INTERNET AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Stella Maris School recognises that in a modern learning environment, use of the Internet, multimedia devices and digital imaging facilities are part of everyday requirements and are necessary for the broad and balanced Curriculum, which we teach in school. However, the safety of our children when using technology in school will always be our priority.

Filtering and monitoring systems are used to keep pupils safe when using our school's IT system. In line with the recommendations in the KCSIE 2023 we have updated and enhanced our filtering and monitoring procedures and systems in school. The school now uses the Fortinet system for the purpose of filtering and monitoring. The DSL and Deputy DSL have responsibility for the monitoring of internet activity in school by pupils and staff.

Filtering systems: block access to harmful sites and content.

Monitoring systems: Our daily monitoring checks will alert us to any concerns so that we can intervene and respond should an attempt to access inappropriate content be made.

However, we are aware that no filtering and monitoring system is 100% effective, so we use this system alongside our existing safeguarding systems and procedures.

All staff are aware that any devices that have capability for use of the Internet or the creation of digital images used by children during lessons must be done so under appropriate supervision and in accordance with the schools E-Safety Policy and acceptable use conditions. If any such device that belongs to a member of staff is brought onto the school site, it is the responsibility of that staff member to ensure that these devices contain nothing of an inappropriate nature and will not be used during lessons and are virus free, to ensure that they do not pose any threat to the safety of our school technology. School ipads and chromebooks are the only acceptable devices used by children.

All children from Pre-Prep to Year 6 sign an age-appropriate acceptable user agreement. The children discuss the content of this in their class lessons, so they understand what they are signing and why.

If there is suspicion that any multimedia device or computer contains any images or content of an inappropriate nature it will be locked, secured and the DSL and/or Deputy will be informed immediately.

Use of mobile phones

Children are not allowed to bring any device or mobile phone into school or on a school trip. In exceptional circumstances a phone can only be used for communication with a parent or grandparent with the consent of the Headteacher and written or verbal permission has been sought by the parent/carer of the child. If this situation occurs the phone will be stored in the Headteacher's office and the child will only use it under supervision for the purpose intended.

Staff are responsible for their own mobile phones, which must be switched off during lesson times and only used at breaktimes and when the children are not in the classroom.

Personal mobile phones

To protect our children we will ensure that personal mobiles:

- Are stored securely by the staff, out of view and will always be switched off whilst staff are in a teaching capacity or in the presence of the children
- Are never used to take photographs, videos or audio recordings of the children, even as part of a lesson or for educational purposes, as only school devices can be used for this purpose
- Are not used to contact parents or children
- Are only used appropriately
- Do not detract from the quality of and the teaching of children in their care

We will ensure that staff:

- Are vigilant and alert to any potential warning signs of the misuse of mobile phones
- Are responsible for their own behaviour regarding the use of mobile phones and understand how to avoid putting themselves into compromising situations, which could be misinterpreted and lead to potential allegations
- Only use mobile phones on outings and this is included as part of the risk assessment
- Adhere to the school policy on the recording of images and the use of equipment which can be found in our Acceptable Use Policy and E-Safety Policy

More information can be found in our Staff Code of Conduct and in our Acceptable Use Policy. Staff understand these safeguarding rules, which are also set out in the Employment Handbook.

Work mobile phones

To protect children we will ensure that the work mobile phone:

- Is only used by allocated people
- Is protected with a password/ PIN and clearly labelled
- Is stored securely when not in use
- Is not used in areas such as toilets or when the children are changing for PE lessons
- If used for taking photographs, the images are deleted regularly and are taken in line with prior written parent/carer permission

Visitors are not permitted to use mobile phones or other camera/ internet enabled devices without the express permission of the Headteacher. Information signs are positioned near the access doors and in strategic places around the school where parents congregate or wait for children. In line with KCSIE 2023, we have a clear policy on the use of mobile technology at Stella Maris School.

Cameras: Photography and Images

We ensure that we have safeguards in place to protect children from any type of abuse created through the misuse of cameras or other photographic devices.

To protect children we will:

- Obtain parents' and carers' consent for photographs to be taken, used for or published (for example, on our website or displays)
- Ensure the school's designated camera is only used in the school and any images taken will not be emailed, as it may not be secure
- Ensure that children are appropriately dressed, and only use the child's first name with an image

- Ensure that personal cameras or personal mobile phone cameras are not used to take photographs, video or audio recordings in our school without prior explicit consent from the Headteacher
- Before any communal event, concert or assembly the Headteacher always reminds parents and other audience members that photographs must not be taken
- A DBS checked photographer, known to the school community, is used for this purpose and the official photographs are then uploaded onto the secure parents' school Facebook page for the parents to view
- Ensure that all images are stored securely and password protected
- Where images are stored, the setting will register with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO), in accordance with data protection laws
- Ensure where professional photographers are used DBSs, references and parental consent will be obtained prior to photographs being taken
- Ensure 'acceptable use' rules regarding the use of cameras and camera enabled devices by children are embedded in practice
- Ensure the use of cameras is closely monitored and open to scrutiny

YOUTH PRODUCED SEXUAL IMAGERY

Sexting' describes the use of technology to share sexual and sexually implied content. This content includes texts, photos of partial nudity and sexual images or video. This could be shared between partners, peers and strangers. Individuals may use a range of technology to share the content.

The sharing of these kind of pictures is not a new thing but the speed with which you can share & the potential audience size has dramatically changed as a result of the online world.

Whilst professionals refer to the issue as 'sexting' there is no clear definition of 'sexting'. Many professionals consider sexting to be 'sending or posting sexually suggestive images, including inappropriate photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet. Yet when young people are asked 'What does sexting mean to you?' they are more likely to interpret sexting as 'writing and sharing explicit messages with people they know'. Similarly, many parents think of sexting as flirty or sexual text messages rather than images.

This advice only covers the sharing of sexual imagery by young people. Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal and therefore causes the greatest complexity for schools and other agencies when responding. It also presents a range of risks which need careful management. On this basis this advice introduces the phrase 'youth produced sexual imagery' and uses this instead of 'sexting.' This is to ensure clarity about the issues this advice addresses.

'Youth produced sexual imagery' best describes the practice because:

'Youth produced' includes young people sharing images that they, or another young person, have created of themselves.

'Sexual' is clearer than 'indecent.' A judgement of whether something is 'decent' is both a value judgement and dependent on context.

'Imagery' covers both still photos and moving videos (and this is what is meant by reference to imagery throughout the document).

*Sexting in schools & colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people
(DfE, Nov 2016)*

While we recognise that children's personal mobile phones are not allowed in school, we still want to educate our children and make them aware of the dangers they may encounter outside of school.

Stella Maris School takes a pro-active approach in its ICT and Enrichment programmes to help students to understand, assess, manage and avoid the risks associated with 'online activity' which may occur outside of school. The school recognises its duty of care to its young people who may find themselves involved in such activity, as well as its responsibility to report such behaviours where legal or safeguarding boundaries are crossed.

There are many different types of sexting and it is likely that no two cases will be the same. However, it is important that Stella Maris School applies a consistent approach when dealing with any incident to help protect young people and the school. For this reason, the DSL and/or Deputy DSL needs to be informed of any 'sexting' incidents which may occur outside of school, as this could be placing a child in a vulnerable position or in a dangerous relationship. The range of contributory factors in each case also needs to be considered in order to determine an appropriate and proportionate response. All colleagues are expected to be aware of this policy.

CYBER-BULLYING

Cyber bullying is defined and covered in our Discipline and Behaviour, including Anti-Bullying Policy.

ONLINE & GAMING SAFETY

The internet and internet gaming are enjoyed by many people and are often activities families can enjoy together. However, use of the internet and online games carries risk.

As part of our approach to online safety we will support pupils and their families in understanding the potential risks of online activity and how best to avoid it. We will work with parents and carers to support them in the following:

- Understanding the appropriateness of games and apps
- Location and access to information and resources for adults and pupils
- Teaching E-Safety in the Curriculum
- Offering parental information and advice sessions
- Raising awareness of online grooming
- Teaching our children how to report abuse or concerns

Regular updates will be sent out to parents if information becomes known to the school about unsafe sites or other dangers which children may be exposed to out of school.

In school we ensure that we have suitable filtering and monitoring systems in place in line with the requirements of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023*. More information on these systems can be found in our E-Safety Policy.

2. PROCEDURES AND RECORD-KEEPING

Stella Maris School follows [Greater Manchester/Stockport Safeguarding Procedures](#) in detail and adheres to any local guidance and policies from SSCB as required.

Any updates or notifications from the Police, as part of Operation Encompass, will be securely held in the Child Protection Files and passed on to the DSLs at senior schools when a child moves on.

Safeguarding Records will be held as hard copies of records and all notes of concern or reports relating to Safeguarding and Child Protection are kept in a separate, confidential file, securely stored away from the main pupil file in the Headteacher's office. Authorisation to access these records is controlled by the DSL.

The school ensures that safeguarding information, including Child Protection information, is stored and handled in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ensuring that information is:

- Used fairly and lawfully
- For limited, specifically stated purposes
- Used in a way that is adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Is accurate
- Kept for no longer than necessary
- Handled according to people's data protection rights
- Kept safe and secure

Any concerns about a child will be recorded in writing as soon as possible and in any circumstance within 24 hours. **The inability to record a concern should not delay the sharing of urgent information to the DSL/Deputy DSL (police or social care if required) verbally. Written records will then be made as soon as possible.**

All records will provide a factual, evidence-based account using the child's words. Timely, accurate recording of every episode/incident/concern/activity/actions will be made **including telephone calls to other professionals**. Records will be signed, dated and where appropriate, witnessed. Support and advice will be sought from Children's Social Care (via the MASSH), Senior Advisor for Safeguarding in Education (SASE) or the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO), whenever necessary.

The DSL or in her absence the Deputy DSL have the necessary seniority and skills to deal with safeguarding situations and have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training. They are both available to carry out this important role.

This Safeguarding Policy is updated annually or in line with any new DfE guidance (as required).

In the case of a child protection referral the DSL and/or Deputy will contact MASSH immediately (alongside any other emergency or support services that may be required).

In the case of poorly explained serious injuries / injuries causing concern or where behaviour or concerns arouse suspicion or if in any doubt, the DSL and/or Deputy should contact the MASSH for advice.

The DSL and/or Deputy will keep written (electronically or by hand), signed, timed and dated records detailing any disclosures and action taken as near to the time of disclosure as possible, even when no investigation is undertaken; should the MASSH agree to initiate a referral verbally a Child Protection Referral Form will still be required within 24 hours.

Allegations are always shared directly with the Headteacher, (who is also the DSL). Where an allegation of abuse is made against any member of staff/ volunteer or the Deputy the Headteacher will speak with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at the Safeguarding Children Unit to discuss the next steps.

If the allegation is against the DSL/Headteacher, the Chair of Trustees should be contacted immediately, and will seek advice from the LADO. If the allegation is against both the Headteacher (DSL) and Chair, then the LADO should be contacted directly. No member of staff will conduct their own investigation or pass on information to the alleged perpetrator. Professionals can contact the LADO directly if they feel it is more appropriate to do so.

Stella Maris School has a Whistleblowing Policy and this can be accessed in our Complaints Policy. It is important to note that it is part of a professional's duty to report safeguarding issues, without the expectation of anonymity. Safeguarding and whistleblowing should not be confused. "Safeguarding" refers to reporting concerns designed to protect children from harm and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

In contrast "whistleblowing" describes the disclosure of concerns regarding a danger or illegality that has a public interest, usually because it threatens others or impacts on public funds.

Stella Maris School has a very robust approach to dealing with any allegations from parents and this can be found in our Complaints Policy, which can be accessed on the school website or alternatively a paper copy can be requested from the school office.

Children who are absent from Education

At Stella Maris School we follow our school Attendance Policy and Stockport's procedures for dealing with children who may go missing from school. All staff are aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, are potentially vulnerable to harm including abuse and neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of FGM or of forced marriage.

In outlining the signs that children may be at risk of harm, the KCSIE 2024 guidance updates 'deliberately missing education' to read 'unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education.'

We also ensure that we are rigorous in our attendance procedures; these are outlined in our Attendance Policy. Where a child's destination is unknown when they have left our school, we ensure we carry out all necessary checks and refer them to the local authority as a child missing from education.

3. SUPPORT

Stella Maris School will endeavour to support vulnerable pupils through:

- Its ethos and culture which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment; giving pupils a sense of being valued
- Its Discipline and Behaviour, including Anti-Bullying Policy - aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in school
- We have a consistent approach, working to support children in developing positive behaviour
- Liaison with other appropriate agencies which support the pupil
- Developing supportive relationships
- Recognition that children living in difficult home environments are vulnerable and need support and protection
- Monitoring pupil welfare, keeping accurate records and notifying appropriate agencies when necessary
- Ensuring the DSL and/or Deputy can attend face to face SSCB training and network updates. (For example, child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, drugs / alcohol substance misuse, FGM, etc.)
- Ensuring information is transferred safely and securely when a pupil with a child protection record moves to another school
- Notifying Key Workers or Social Workers where a child leaves the school (as appropriate)

Children with Special Needs and Disabilities

At Stella Maris School we ensure that staff have knowledge and understanding of the additional barriers which can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in children with special needs/disabilities.

These barriers **can** include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration

- Children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

We regularly review our training and practice to enable staff to respond to these specific needs.

EARLY IDENTIFICATION:

RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING NEEDS

Stella Maris School acknowledges the findings of Serious Case Reviews, local learning reviews and audits. Findings are shared with all staff at staff meetings as part of a culture of improvement and learning. The DSL and/or Deputy DSL ensure they have information from SSCB in relation to learning reviews and ensures this information is passed on to staff to promote improvement in respect of safeguarding. As part of our ongoing culture of vigilance and development we will share learning and responses from any other relevant issues to ensure we are offering the safest environment for our pupils and staff.

All staff have seen and understand the Stockport [Levels of Need](#) document and know how to pass on any concerns no matter how 'small or low level' they seem. In accordance with local and national guidance all staff receive regular training and updates to help them identify when a child may be vulnerable.

We ensure that the most appropriate referrals are made in a timely manner. We seek to work in a transparent way with our families and where appropriate will share our concerns directly with parents and indicate possible routes of support. We actively support multi-agency approaches when supporting children and families. We do this based on an awareness that early help and intervention can prevent future escalation of any presenting issues. We aim to provide information from the child's point of view in the context of their lived experience as evidenced by observations or information provided. Where staff have concerns, they will always alert the DSL or the Deputy DSL.

In school we have staff that are trained and can support colleagues to identify and respond to:

- Neglect
- Drug/substance/alcohol misuse (both pupil and parent)
- Child sexual exploitation / trafficked children
- Children missing education
- Domestic abuse
- Peer relationship abuse

- Child-on-child abuse
- Children at risk of radicalisation
- Emotional wellbeing & mental health
- Obesity/malnutrition
- Online grooming
- Inappropriate behaviour of staff towards children
- Bullying, including homophobic, racist, gender and disability and breaches of the Equality Act 2010.
- Self-Harm
- FGM
- Forced Marriage
- Young carers
- The potential additional needs of some learners such as - Looked After Children (LAC), children who have been previously LAC, those who have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) and children whose families are seeking asylum.
- How an Education Health Care (EHC) plan links with other safeguarding processes.

The DSL and the Deputy DSL are members of the school senior leadership team. In line with local and national guidance they receive regular training and updates to equip them with the skills and knowledge to deliver in this role. The DSL is always available to offer advice and support to school staff when school is open including before and after school activity or for trips and visits.

School staff contribute to assessments and actively support multi- agency planning for children. Staff understand the Stockport Early Help Assessment (EHA) and Intervention model and make decisions based on a child's development needs, parenting capacity and family & environmental factors to support referrals.

We use the Stockport [Levels of Need](#) document to inform our decision making and have a hard copy in the Safeguarding File for quick referral purposes.

In contributing to meetings, in addition to information about the child's academic functioning, the school provides information about the 'voice of the child' and the child's experiences of life as evidenced by observations or information provided through the multi-agency forum.

EXTREMISM AND RADICALISATION

Stella Maris School seeks to protect children and young people from the influences of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to;

- Extremist Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology
- Islamic extremist ideology
- Other extremist ideologies

The current threat from terrorism and extremist groups in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people. Groups may seek to influence vulnerable children and

involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. Children are taught to question and speak out about any issues or situations which are making them feel uncomfortable. We empower children by giving them a voice and making them feel listened to. Stella Maris School is clear that where there is concern in respect of exploitation of this kind it will be treated as a safeguarding concern.

Prevention work and reduction of risks will include the SMSC, PSHE Curriculum or SEND Policy, Assembly and Guest Speakers Programme, integration of pupils by gender and SEN, the application of the Discipline and Behaviour, including Anti-Bullying Policy and a commitment to building and maintaining an inclusive and fair school environment and community. We apply an appropriate school letting procedure. By this we mean that in the rare occasion of the school facilities being used by another organisation it will be subject to use only at weekends and after the end of the After School Club when all of our children have left the premises. Any organisations which use the school for community needs are thoroughly checked before any permission is granted.

Whilst the education of children is the prime purpose of our school it is recognised that the school operates in the wider community. Its facilities are therefore only available to local groups when this does not conflict with either the interests of its pupils or the wellbeing and workload of its staff.

OTHER SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Domestic abuse/violence:

At Stella Maris School we believe that all our pupils have the right to be safe at school and in their own homes. We are aware that some children may be living in situations where they are directly or indirectly affected by incidents of domestic abuse or violence. Where we are concerned that domestic abuse or violence is present in the home, we will follow our safeguarding and domestic abuse processes. An excellent relationship exists between parents, families and school. The school offers support and guidance to any parents who may ask for help. The DSL and the Deputy DSL are on hand to offer advice or signpost for multi-agency support if it is needed and Stella Maris School is recognised as an OPERATION ENCOMPASS school.

Honour Based Violence (HBV) including Forced Marriage (FM):

Our staff have been trained to understand honour-based violence and forced marriage through their safeguarding training and they are alert to possible indicators. These are set out in our Safeguarding Policy and are regularly discussed in our safeguarding sessions which take place at the beginning of each staff meeting. The staff are aware that forced marriage is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage; that it is abuse of human rights and that it falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence. They are also aware that HBV and FM can affect both young men and women. At Stella Maris School we

would never attempt to intervene directly; where this is suspected, nor would we speak to parents before sharing our concerns with the appropriate agencies.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)/Breast Ironing: All Members of our school community are alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM or are subject to the act of abuse known as breast ironing. They have been made aware of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of these acts of abuse and will act accordingly on any concerns or disclosures. We will also follow national guidance on mandatory reporting requirements. Where such abuse is suspected or disclosed the staff will follow safeguarding and child protection systems.

The criminal exploitation of children

All staff at Stella Maris School are aware that the criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks/gang grooming and exploitation of children to carry drugs and money from urban areas to rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying involvement in county lines are missing episodes from school when the victim may be transporting drugs.

Human trafficking

This is defined by the United Nations, in respect of children, as *"the recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person by such means as threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud or deception for the purpose of exploitation."*

Any child transported for exploitative reasons is a trafficking victim. At Stella Maris School we are alert to the possible indicators both for our children and for their families.

Any concerns will be reported immediately using our safeguarding and child protection processes. In addition to Greater Manchester guidance we also refer to [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines.](#)

4. SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SAFER WORKING PRACTICE

Stella Maris School pays full regard to the DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025 with reference to the safe recruitment of all school staff. The school operates its own Safer Recruitment Policy which reflects the guidance in KCSIE 2025. We ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the school who is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult.

We do this by:

- Operating safer recruitment practices including appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- Obtaining and checking professional references
- Verifying identity of all staff who work in school
- Checking academic and vocational qualifications, where appropriate
- Checking previous employment history and ensuring the person has the right to work in the UK
- Our practices also include undertaking rigorous interviews with a panel which will always include at least one member who has accessed training in Safer Recruitment
- Checking if individuals are barred or prohibited from working with children in accordance with DBS and Department for Education (DfE) guidance

In line with the updated recommendations last year we incorporated the new requirements into our processes and procedures. These are:

- Schools should now inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done as part of due diligence checks
- Copies of documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications should be kept in their personnel file

There are no further updates in the KSCIE 2024.

In line with statutory guidance we maintain a Single Central Register and record all information to evidence checks completed for staff and volunteers working in the school community. This document is reviewed termly by the Headteacher and the Safeguarding Trustee.

Every volunteer and member of staff (including supply staff and those contracted to deliver sports or other activities) has a 'safeguarding induction' with the DSL and we ensure that staff and volunteers adhere to our Staff Code of Conduct and other relevant professional standards at all times. This extends to before and after school activities and any other providers who undertake work in school with our children.

Staff and visitors are aware of the requirements in respect of phone usage, camera enabled devices, social media and on-line conduct.

Other professionals and visitors to our school are made aware of the requirements and expectations we have in respect of safeguarding our children, including the use of mobile and camera enabled devices.

We ensure that:

- Any disciplinary proceedings against staff related to Child Protection matters are concluded in full in accordance with Government guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024" and SSCB, LADO and HR Policy, procedures and guidance

- All staff and other adults on site are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationship with pupils and parents, following the Staff Code of Conduct
- Adequate risk assessments are in place including for extended school/ wrap around provision, volunteers, work placements and holiday activities (directly related to school)
- Staff are clear about how to raise a concern, where to find the Whistleblowing Policy and are confident to report concerns of misconduct
- All staff are required to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at Stella Maris School)

THE DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board fully recognises its responsibilities regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in accordance with Government guidance and pays particular regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023).

The Board have agreed processes which allow them to monitor and ensure that the school:

- Operates robust safeguarding procedures and an appointed Safeguarding Trustee
- Operates Safer Recruitment procedures and ensures that appropriate checks are carried out on newly appointed staff and other adults working in the school or on the school site
- Have procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against any member of staff or adult on site
- Has appointed a member of the Leadership Team who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with safeguarding and child protection issues
- Carries out an annual review of the Safeguarding Policy and procedures and will take steps to remedy any weaknesses regarding safeguarding arrangements
- Is supported by the whole Board of Trustees, nominating a member responsible for liaising with the LA and/or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse against the Headteacher; this is the Chair
- Carries out an annual Safeguarding Audit in consultation with the Board of Trustees, sharing this with the Stockport Safeguarding Children Board on request

OTHER RELATED POLICIES

The school takes safeguarding very seriously and understands this policy is over- arching. All our policies link into the Safeguarding Policy and these can be found on our school website or paper copies can be provided, on request, from the school office. The school maintains linked policies in line with the legislative requirements; together these make up the suite of policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in this school.

Keeping Children Safe in Education: updates from September 2019

The practice known as 'upskirting' has now been identified as a form of abuse and is included in our staff safeguarding training.

Serious violent crime has also been included in our safeguarding training for all staff.

The order to carry out section 128 checks on school governors/trustees. (However, this procedure has always been in operation at Stella Maris School.

The new local arrangements set by our safeguarding partners in Stockport LA will be in place by 29 September 2019 and all staff will be made aware of these in our weekly safeguarding updates during staff meetings.

The DfE's new online safety guidance will be incorporated into our ICT and online safety policies.

Keeping Children Safe in Education: updates from September 2020

5 key things for you to know

The most important things to know are:

- There's additional guidance for all staff on mental health, child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation
- There's also new guidance for Headteachers, DSLs and Trustees on supporting children with social workers and those who require mental health support
- You should follow your procedure for managing allegations against staff where someone may have been involved in an incident outside of school which didn't involve children, but could have an impact on their suitability to work with them (e.g. domestic violence)
- You should also use this procedure when allegations are made against supply staff, even if they're employed by an agency

The DfE has withdrawn the COVID-19 safeguarding guidance and instead, we will need to follow the statutory requirements in KCSIE 2020.

Keeping Children Safe in Education: updates from September 2021

Latest changes to the guidance, which came into force on 1st September 2021, includes:

- Further information on child criminal and sexual exploitation
- Guidance on responding to peer-on-peer abuse, including sexual harassment
- Additional guidance on online safety, including remote education

A new section on responding to low-level concerns and allegations.

The DfE has also published updated guidance for schools and colleges in England on sexual violence and sexual harassment between children.

[Changes to the Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges guidance.](#)

The 2021 version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) came into force on 1 September.

Part 1 – information for all staff

All staff working in schools are expected to read **at least part 1 of KCSIE**. The changes to this part are:

- New information on mental health (paragraphs 4 and 34-38)
- Mental health is explicitly included in the definition of safeguarding, which now includes "preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development"

New paragraphs have been added to say:

- All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation
- Only trained professionals should make a diagnosis of a mental health problem, but staff are well placed to observe children and identify those whose behaviour suggests they may be experiencing a mental health problem, or be at risk of developing one
- Abuse, neglect and other traumatic adverse childhood experiences can have a lasting impact, and it is key that staff are aware of how these experiences can affect children's mental health, behaviour and education
- Staff should take action on any mental health concerns that are also safeguarding concerns, following your school's Safeguarding Policy and speaking to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

(There is DfE guidance available on preventing and tackling bullying and mental health and behaviour, as well as Public Health England guidance on promoting children's emotional health and wellbeing.)

- New information on child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE) (paragraph 28)
- A new paragraph on CCE and CSE explains that:

These are defined as forms of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. The imbalance can be due to age, as well as other factors like gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (e.g. increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator.

It can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or be a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and can involve violence or threats of violence

Victims can be exploited even when activity appears to be consensual.
It can happen online as well as in person.

Other minor changes

Information about contextual safeguarding has been moved (it is now paragraph 21) and rewritten to make it clear that:

- All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside school and/or can occur between children outside of this environment
- All staff should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families (e.g. sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence)
- It has been clarified that staff should refer concerns or allegations about supply staff to the headteacher (paragraph 56)

Keeping Children Safe in Education: updates from September 2022

The 2022 version of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE) came into force on 1st September.

Please note, this information only summarises the changes between KCSIE 2021 and 2022. For a summary of the whole 2022 document, look at the full document.

There are no major changes, but the following changes will take place.

More detail on the terms ‘victim’, ‘alleged perpetrator’ and ‘perpetrator’

In the ‘summary’ section at the beginning of the guidance (page 4), KCSIE specifies that:

- ‘Victim’ is a widely understood and recognised term, but not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in that way. You should be prepared to use any term the child feels most comfortable with when managing an incident
- ‘Alleged perpetrator(s)’ and ‘perpetrator(s)’ are widely used and recognised terms, but you should think carefully about what terminology you use (especially in front of children), as in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too.

You should decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis and in an age-appropriate way

Part 1: Safeguarding information for all staff

All staff working directly with children are expected to read at least part 1 of KCSIE (those who don't work directly with children can read the condensed version of part 1, in Annex A). The changes to part 1 are:

New information on domestic abuse:

- A new paragraph on domestic abuse (paragraph 43), explaining:
 - Children who witness domestic abuse are also victims
 - Witnessing domestic abuse can have a lasting impact on children
 - Children can be victims, and perpetrators, in their own relationships too
 - The abuse can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological, or emotional
- Added that extra-familial harms can include sexual harassment and domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationships) (paragraph 23)
- Added to the definition of abuse that harm can 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 (paragraph 26)

More detail on child-on-child abuse:

- Child-on-child abuse is the new name for peer-on-peer abuse. This section has also been moved ahead of the section on child criminal exploitation (paragraph 32)
- Added that abuse in intimate relationships between children is sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse' (paragraph 35)

New paragraphs on:

- Explaining that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and/or they might not recognise their experiences as harmful. Children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or threatened due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers. None of this should stop staff from having a 'professional curiosity' and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) (paragraph 19)
- If staff have a safeguarding concern/allegation about another staff member (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors) that doesn't meet the harm

threshold, then they should share it in accordance with your low-level concerns policy (paragraph 73)

Keeping Children Safe in Education: updates from September 2023

Increased expectations and responsibilities around the schools filtering and monitoring IT systems

- The DSL and Deputy DSL should take lead responsibility for the above.
- Staff Safeguarding and Child Protection training should include an understanding of the above.
- Reiteration that schools should follow the recently published DfE publication of Filtering and monitoring standards and guidance.
- Governing bodies/proprietors strategic training should include an understanding of the above and should review the above standards with IT staff and service providers.
- Schools should consider meeting the Cyber security standards.
- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy should reflect the individual schools' approach to the above on school devices and networks.

Children who are absent from education

- Where a child has an EHCP the local authority will need to review the plan whilst working closely with parents.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

- 'Children missing from education' replaced with 'Children who are absent from education'.
- Updated guidance on school attendance, and children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions see Working together to improve school attendance.
- Updated information on how schools should work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.

Safer Recruitment

- Schools should inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done as part of due diligence checks.
- Copies of documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications should be kept on their personnel file.

Use of school premises for non-school activities

- Clarity around safeguarding arrangements that schools should expect providers [hirers] to have in place see [Keeping children safe in out of school settings](#).
- Schools may receive an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their school premises for the purposes of running activities for children (for example community groups, sports associations or service providers that run extra-curricular activities). As with any safeguarding allegation, schools should follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

Equality Act

Confirmation that provisions within the Equality Act allow schools to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils or students with certain protected characteristics to meet their specific need. A school could, for example, consider taking positive action to support girls if there was evidence they were being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or sexual harassment. There is also a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people.

Changes in terminology

- Updated throughout to include pupils or students.
- Reference to teachers can 'discipline' have been replaced with teachers can 'sanction'.
- Replaced children may be 'vulnerable' with children may be 'susceptible'.
- Forced marriage changed to child marriage, highlighting the changes in law February 2023.

Keeping Children Safe in Education: updates from September 2024

Definition of "safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children" has been updated to reflect the changes made in Working together to safeguard children (DfE 2023a). The definition now includes the additional points of:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, both inside or outside the home, including online

Children who are lesbian/gay/bisexual or gender questioning - this is an expected update following the publication of the Cass Review Report. The changes are in paragraphs 205 - 209. The main substance of these new paragraphs is recommending that schools exercise caution because of the many unknowns about the impact of social transitioning and schools should consider the broad range of needs a child might have.

There is a reminder that this should be done in partnership with parents other than in exceptionally rare circumstances where the involvement of parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child.

These amendments are under review pending the outcome of the ***Gendering Questions Children's Guidance Consultation***.

Abuse and Neglect - this is not so much a major change but one surrounding terminology which we need to be aware of. It is now termed as Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation and this language is used throughout the document. The definition of abuse has also been changed to clarify that harm can include children witnessing the ill-treatment of others and that this is particularly relevant when children see, hear or experience domestic abuse and its effects.

Alternative Provision - a new paragraph (171) has been added to make it clear that where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil.

Children absent from Education - The guidance updates 'deliberately missing education' to read 'unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education'.

Data Protection - school staff are reminded that in order to ensure compliance with data protection law they need to read their policies and the guidance to ensure that they know what staff and pupil data to keep, preventing personal data breaches. The updated guidance also focuses on the holding and sharing of information and highlights that as well as keeping records of concerns, discussions and decisions the DSL should keep a record of the rationale for any decisions made.

Children and the Court System - there is now directed guidance for schools in showing how to support children who are in the court system. One is for the 5 - 11 year age group and the second is for the 12 - 17 year age group.

Keeping Children Safe in Education: updates from September 2025

Last updated: 1 September 2025. This policy reflects the KCSIE 2025 statutory guidance, which came into force on 1 September 2025, replacing all earlier versions.

Key Updates to this Policy / Practice:

Online Safety / Digital Content Risks

a. The scope of “content” risks now explicitly includes misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories. All staff must be alert to these as potential safeguarding harms.

b. Guidance also refers to Generative AI tools and updated DfE expectations for filtering, monitoring and technology deployment. The school will ensure its IT and digital safety policies reflect these standards.

Attendance-Where a pupil’s absence or pattern of absence raises safeguarding concerns, the school must work in partnership with children’s services.

Alternative Provision (AP) -The school will obtain written confirmation of safer recruitment checks from AP providers, monitor the placements regularly (at least half-termly reviews), and maintain clear records of pupils’ location, progress and welfare in AP.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) & Gender-Questioning Children-This policy aligns with the expectation of revised RSHE guidance, which will be mandatory from 1 September 2026. Guidance concerning gender-questioning children is anticipated; school practice will be updated as the revised guidance is published.

SEND / Neurodiversity Terminology-Language used in this policy reflects the latest SEND Code of Practice. Terms such as “autism spectrum disorder” in policy texts have been replaced with “autism”, and other references to “spectrum” or “disorder” have been removed to ensure respectful and current terminology.

Safer Recruitment & Checks-The school uses the DfE “Check a Teacher’s Record” service for verifying teacher prohibitions and sanctions, replacing previous services referenced in earlier guidance. Data protection in recruitment follows the updated Employment Practices Code.

Virtual School Heads & Pupils in Kinship / Local Authority Care-Where pupils are in care (including kinship care), the school will liaise with the Virtual School Head (VSH) to support educational progress and ensure oversight.

Future Developments- This policy recognises that further legislative / guidance changes are expected, including under the Children's Well-being and Schools Bill, specialist guidance on group-based sexual exploitation, and updated strategies on violence against women and girls. The school will review and amend this policy proactively when new guidance is published.

APPENDICES

USEFUL LINKS, FURTHER ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Local Guidance

[Greater Manchester Safeguarding Procedures](#)

[Young People and Self-harm- Stockport Schools' Version](#)

[Stockport Female Genital Mutilation Pathway](#)

[Stockport procedures for responding to child sexual exploitation](#)

[Stockport Suicide Prevention](#)

[Greater Manchester Project Phoenix \(action against child sexual exploitation\)](#)

[Stockport Early Help Assessment](#)

[Private Fostering in Stockport](#)

[Information Sharing and Team Around the School](#)

[Information Governance](#)

[Levels of Need](#)

[Stockport Safeguarding Children Board](#)

National Guidance & Resources

[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023/2024/2025](#)

[Early-years-foundation-stage-framework](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children- 2019](#)

[What-to-do-if-you're-worried-a-child-is-being-abused](#)

[Brook sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool](#)

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges.pdf](#)

[Teachers-standards](#)

[Responding to sexting incidents](#)

[Sexting_In_Schools_Jan17.pdf](#)

[Prevent-duty-guidance](#)

[Educate Against Hate](#)

[Safeguarding-children-who-may-have-been-trafficked-practice-guidance](#)

[Multi-agency statutory guidance on FGM](#)

What to do if you are concerned that a child/young person is being abused (flowchart for Education)

INFORMATION YOU MAY BE ASKED TO PROVIDE

When you make a referral to Social Care (Children's Services) or to the police, you should provide as much of the following information as possible:

- **Child's name, date of birth, address, telephone number and ethnic origin;**
- **Family details** - who lives in the home - and any other significant adults;
- What is causing concern and the **evidence** that you have gathered to support your concerns;
- Any **additional needs** the child and/or family may have including language, disability and communication;
- Clarification of discussion with any family members if a discussion has been appropriate;
- Clarification of any ongoing assistance that you are giving to the family;
- Your name, workplace and contact telephone number.

All Child Protection referral phone calls made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding & Support Hub (MASSH) to secure a response from Social Care must be supported with written documentation. In Stockport this is through the online Child Protection Referral form.

Remember- Anyone in school can make a child protection referral

INFORMATION & TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR CONSULTATION AND REFERRAL

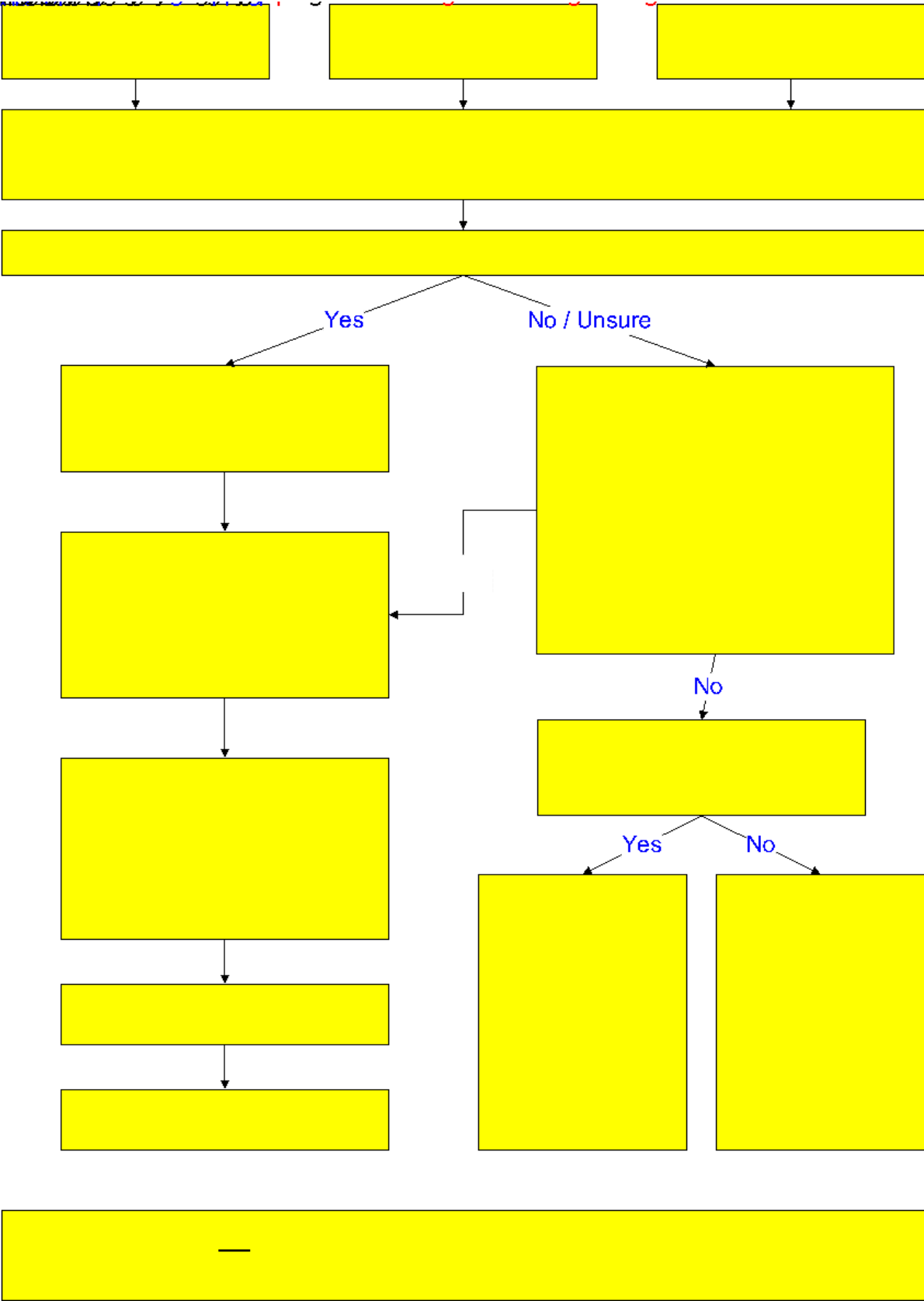
Children's Services- child protection referral

- Online (to the MASSH)- <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/contacting-the-massh>
- The Multi –agency Safeguarding and Support Hub (MASSH)
Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.00pm,
- Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm.
tel. (0161) 217-6028 or 6024.
Out of hours referrals and advice tel: (0161) 718-2118
- Greater Manchester Police tel:101 (non- emergency) 999 emergency

Advice is available from:

- Child's Social Worker (if already involved)
- School Age Plus worker
- Team Around the School meeting
- Safeguarding Children Unit tel. (0161) 474-5657
- The Multi –agency Safeguarding and Support Hub (MASSH)
tel. (0161) 217-6028 or 6024
- Senior Adviser for Safeguarding in Education tel. (0161) 474-5657

What to do if you are concerned that a child/young person is being abused
(flowchart for Education)



Possible indicators of abuse

Indicators are provided as a guide, concerns and context should be discussed with the DSL

Sexual

- Genital discomfort, pain, itching, bruising, injuries
- Public /compulsive touching in private areas
- Eating disorders
- Sexually explicit behaviour or language not age
- Sexually explicit drawings

Physical

- Bruises, black eyes and broken bones
- Unexplained or untreated injuries
- Injuries to unusual body parts e.g. thighs, back, abdomen
- Bruising that resembles hand/finger marks
- Burns/scalds
- Human bites/cigarette burns
- Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly
- Injuries in babies and mobile children

Behaviour

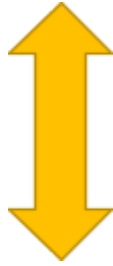
- Change in general behaviour
 - Low self-esteem
- Extremely passive/aggressive
 - Sleeping difficulties
 - Eating disorder
 - Lethargy/tiredness
- Fear of certain adults
- Poor social relationships
- Bullying/anti-social behaviours
- School attendance difficulties
 - Disclosure
- Self-harm

Neglect

- Inappropriately dressed
- Undernourished/always hungry
- Untreated medical problems e.g. dental decay, head lice etc.
- Lethargy, tiredness or aggressive tendencies
- Lack of basic needs being met- food, shelter warmth etc.

Emotional

- Physical, mental & emotional development lags
- Talks of excessive punishment
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Sudden speech disorders
- Running away
- Self-deprecation, low self esteem



Contextual Safeguarding



The LADO

[Greater Manchester procedures online- Allegation management](#)

The process of managing allegations starts where information comes to the attention of a manager which suggests that an adult working with children may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he/she may pose a risk of harm to children.

Concerns or allegations about the behaviour of an adult may be brought to the attention of a manager in a variety of ways. For example:

- An allegation made directly by a child or parent;
- An allegation made by a colleague or member of staff;
- Information from police or local authority social care team;
- Information from a third party or the general public;
- Information disclosed anonymously or online; or
- Concerns generated through an employment relationship.

The procedures allow for consideration of the adult's behaviour at the earliest opportunity when a concern or allegation arises and is brought to the manager/employer's attention.

When to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) It is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are seen to be followed up, and that they are examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation concerned.

Discussion should always take place between the employer and the LADO when the concern or allegation meets the criteria.

Some examples of this may be where an individual has:

- Contravened or has continued to contravene any safe practice guidance given by his/her organisation or regulatory body;
- Exploited or abused a position of power;
- Acted in an irresponsible manner which any reasonable person would find alarming or questionable given the nature of work undertaken;
- Demonstrated a failure to understand or appreciate how his or her own actions or those of others could adversely impact upon the safety and well-being of a child;
- Demonstrated an inability to make sound professional judgements which safeguard the welfare of children;

- Failed to follow adequately policy or procedures relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- Failed to understand or recognise the need for clear personal and professional boundaries in his or her work;
- Behaved in a way in her or her personal life which could put children at risk of harm;
- Become the subject of criminal proceedings not relating to a child;
- Become subject to enquiries under local child protection procedures and/or child subject to [Child Protection Plan](#);
- Behaved in a way which seriously undermines the trust and confidence placed in him or her by the employer.

Colleagues with concerns can contact the LADO on 0161 474 5657.