



# SOMERHILL

## **SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY** **(Including allegations against staff and low level concerns)**

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**Governor Lead:** Mrs Eleanor Henery

**Nominated Lead Member of Staff:** Mrs Sian Lambert

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## A General Policy Statement

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014; and in line with government publications: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' (WTSC), 'What to do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused', 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023' (KCSIE) and FGM Guidelines, Prevent Duty Guidance, section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and is also in accordance locally with the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership (KSCMP) arrangements.

### Definitions:

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

**Child protection** is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

**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. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

**Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes** (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams.

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

The following three **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



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- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

Somerhill has a statutory and moral duty to ensure that the school functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children receiving education at the school.

We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff, volunteers, and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern.

All staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical, and moral development of the individual child.

When considering safeguarding issues, regard should also be given to related school policies: Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation; Health and Safety; First Aid; Staff Code of Practice; Anti- Bullying; Online-safety; School Trips; Personal Device (including mobile phones); Complaints; Equal Opportunities; Safer Recruitment; New Staff Induction; Behaviour and Discipline; Social Media and Networking; Whistleblowing. The Somerhill Personal Device (including mobile phones) Policy sets out restrictions for the use of mobile phones and cameras. **In particular, it states that the children's changing rooms and toilet areas are considered "sensitive areas" along with areas that are used by EYFS. On no account are mobile phones and/or cameras to be used in these areas when children are present in these facilities.**

**If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to children's social care/and or the police immediately. Where there are concerns about the child's safety** anyone can make a referral. Parental consent is not required for referrals to LADO.

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.

Staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action.

If you have a mental health concern that is not also a safeguarding concern, speak to a member of the DSL team to agree a course of action.

We recognise that some children are at greater risk of harm, both online and offline.

### **The governing body is committed to ensuring that the school:**

- Provides an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, feel confident, and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to
- Supports the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and



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independence.

- Identifies children and young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, or are at risk of being drawn into extremism and
- Takes appropriate action to see that such children and young people are kept safe, both at home and at the school.

In pursuit of these aims, the governing body will approve and annually review policies and procedures with the aim of:

- Ensuring that there is a Safeguarding and Child Protection policy together with a Staff Behaviour (Code of Conduct) policy (part of the Staff handbook).
- Ensuring that the school operates safer recruitment procedures with at least one person on every recruitment panel who has completed Safer Recruitment training.
- Raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people and the promotion of a safe environment for the children and young people learning within the school.
- Emphasising the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- Aiding the identification of children and young people at risk of significant harm and providing procedures for reporting concerns.
- Establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff.

The school follows the Government's recommendations for the safer recruitment and employment of staff who work with children and acts at all times in compliance with the Independent School Standards Regulations. (See Somerhill Safer Recruitment Policy.)

In line with the DfE's guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023' (KCSIE), the governing body prevents people who pose a risk of harm from working with pupils by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check all staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond the minimum required, and ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised.

As part of carrying out safe recruitment procedures under KCSIE, members of the teaching and non-teaching staff at the school including part-time staff, temporary and supply staff, and visiting staff, such as musicians and sports coaches are subject to the necessary statutory child protection checks before starting work. For most appointments, an enhanced DBS check with 'barred list' information will be appropriate. A DBS certificate will be obtained from the candidate before or as soon as practicable after appointment. Alternatively, if the applicant has subscribed to it and gives permission, the school may undertake an online update check through the DBS Update Service. Shortlisted candidates will be informed that the school may carry out online checks as part of the due diligence process.

Further to the DBS check, anyone appointed to carry out teaching work will require an additional check to ensure they are not prohibited from teaching by order of the Secretary of State.



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All governors, volunteers and contractors working regularly during term-time (such as contract catering staff) are also subject to the statutory DBS checks. Confirmation is obtained that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation and working with the school's pupils at school or on another site.

Should the school develop concerns about an existing staff member's suitability to work with children, it will carry out all relevant checks as if the individual were a new member of staff.

A central record is kept for audit ensuring that:

- all members of staff and volunteers are provided with child protection training and an induction (which includes school safeguarding guidance and KCSIE Part 1 and Annex B, guidance on on-line safety, the policy for pupil behaviour and discipline including rewards and sanctions, the staff code of conduct and the Staff ICT Acceptable Use Policy) before their first day of employment.
- all members of staff and governors receive regular updates (through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings) in line with Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership advice including updates on Prevent and on-line safety and at minimum annual awareness training to ensure their understanding of policy and practice.
- all members of staff are required to receive renewal training upon expiration of their existing child protection training certificate.
- child protection type concerns or allegations against adults working in the school are referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for advice, and that any member of staff found not suitable to work with children will be notified to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration for barring, following resignation, dismissal, or when we cease to use their service as a result of a substantiated allegation, in the case of a volunteer.
- all members of staff are trained in and receive regular updates in online-safety and reporting concerns.
- if an allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the school ceases to use the person's services, or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his or her services, the designated officer(s) should discuss with the case manager and their personnel adviser whether the school will make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required; and in the case of a member of teaching staff whether to refer the matter to the Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA) to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching. **There is a legal requirement for employers to make a referral to DBS where they think that an individual has engaged in conduct that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child; or if a person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child.**
- any weaknesses in Safeguarding/Child Protection are remedied immediately.

In developing the policies and procedures the governing body will consult with, and take account of, guidance issued by the government and other relevant bodies and groups.



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The procedures have been developed in cooperation with the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership and the Area Safeguarding Advisor (Child Protection).

The school provides for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) within Somerhill Pre-Prep. Within EYFS, the following are specific additional requirements:

- The school have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for EYFS and Pre-Prep.
- *When* the Pre-School operates as a registered setting, the school will inform Ofsted and ISI of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises whether or not the allegations take place on the premises or elsewhere, or any other abuse that is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of the actions taken in respect of these allegations. This information is to be passed as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days.
- Specific EYFS staffing ratios are observed.
- All staff are made aware of their obligations (See Staff Obligations).

## **STAFF OBLIGATIONS**

The school takes its responsibility to safeguard children very seriously and any staff member who is aware of anything that may affect his/her suitability to work with children must notify their Head immediately. This will include notification of any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings he/she may receive.

All staff will receive training adequate to familiarise them with child protection issues and responsibilities (including Prevent and on-line safety, which includes the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) and the school procedures and policies, with refresher training as required by statute. All new staff and volunteers are given an induction on Safeguarding including the identity of the DSL(s), the school's policy and procedure for missing pupils and pupils missing education, that child on child abuse may occur including sexual violence and sexual harassment, that they have a responsibility to speak up about safeguarding and welfare matters within the school (and to external agencies where necessary), and provided with the staff code of conduct and whistleblowing policies and a copy of KCSIE Part 1 and Annex B. Through discussion in training and occasional questions we ensure that staff and volunteers know and understand KCSIE Part 1 and Annex B.

The Deputy Head Pastoral will be the senior member of the school management team with special responsibility for child protection issues (the designated senior member of staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding - DSL). They shall be assisted by The Deputy DSLs with responsibility for child protection within YC, DL and SPP. All DSLs are trained to the same standard and training is current with refresher sessions as required in line with statutory guidance.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone



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events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

### **The governing body recognises the following as definitions of abuse:**

**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. 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 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 from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

**Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs,





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likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, 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 caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **Child on Child abuse**

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). 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 2.

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

This is most likely to include, but 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 (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- 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)



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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. More detail on procedures around online abuse and cyberbullying can be found in our Anti Bullying Policy.

If staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section C of this policy, as appropriate. 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.

### **Serious violence**

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Measures are in place to manage the associated risks and advice is provided in the Home Office's *Preventing youth violence and gang involvement* and its *Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines* guidance.

**A Child in Need** refers to a pupil whose circumstances may require them to have extra support in order for them to live a life which does not compromise their ability to fulfil their potential. Those who are not at risk of significant harm but are considered to be in need of additional support from one or more agencies, should be introduced to multi-agency assessment using the "Kent Family Support Framework" (KFSF) formerly "Common Assessment Framework (CAF)" and "Team around the Child" (TAC) approaches or the Channel guidance.

**A Child at Risk** is a pupil who is in immediate risk of harm and such cases will be referred to the Kent Education Safeguarding Service (Kent Integrated Front Door).

### **Early Help**

Any pupil may benefit from early help, but all staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a pupil who have been identified in The Equality Statement on Page 17.



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Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a pupil's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. In the first instance, staff who consider that a pupil may benefit from early help should discuss this with a member of the DSL team. The DSL will consider the appropriate action to take in accordance with the Kent Safeguarding referral support levels document. The DSL will support staff in liaising with external agencies and professionals in an inter-agency assessment, as appropriate. If early help is appropriate, the matter will be kept under review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care if the pupil's situation does not appear to be improving.

### **B Designated Staff with Responsibility for Child Protection**

#### **Senior Staff Member with Lead Responsibility (DSL)**

The nominated lead member of staff with responsibility for child protection issues (DSL) is Sian Lambert, Deputy Head Pastoral. This person is a senior member of the school management team. She has a key duty to take lead responsibility for raising awareness within the staff of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people, and the promotion of a safe environment for the children and young people learning within the school. She is the online-safety Officer for Somerhill and is responsible (with support from the IT Manager) for on-line safety throughout the school.

She has received training in child protection issues and multi-agency working, as required by the Children's Safeguard Unit and will receive refresher training at least **every two years**. She must keep up to date with developments in child protection issues.

The designated senior member of staff is responsible, together with designated senior staff in YC, DL and SPP, for:

- Overseeing the referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies (and the Police in cases where a crime may have been committed.)
- Providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to child protection.
- Maintaining a proper record of any child protection referral, complaint, or concern (even where that concern does not lead to a referral).
- Ensuring that parents of children and young people within the school are aware of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.
- Ensuring that children attending Somerhill are given opportunities to learn about safeguarding, for example, in school assemblies, PSHE lessons, SPP Circle Time.
- Liaising with the LEA, the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency partnership, and other appropriate agencies.
- Ensuring that staff receive basic training in child protection issues and are aware of the school child protection procedures. This training will be in accordance with government guidance and with reference to locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.



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- Ensuring that each member of staff has access to and understands the safeguarding policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff.
  - Ensuring that all staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) receive induction to include the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, incorporating the written Code of Conduct, the school's whistle-blowing policy and including the identity of the DSL(s).
  - Ensuring that all staff understand that they have a responsibility to speak up about safeguarding and welfare matters within the school (and to external agencies where necessary).
  - Maintaining up to date awareness of issues about safeguarding including online safety, FGM and risk of radicalisation.
  - Have a good understanding of the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at the school.
- Ensuring that visitors to the school have access to and understands the school's safeguarding guidance. Creating a culture where staff members feel comfortable discussing safeguarding matters, in and outside of work, including online. The designated senior member of staff will report to the governing body of the school setting out how the school has discharged its duties. She is responsible for reporting deficiencies in procedure or policy identified by the Safeguarding Board to the governing body at the earliest opportunity and to remedy these as soon as possible.

### **Designated Staff Members**

In addition to Sian Lambert, other designated members of staff with responsibility for child protection issues are Amanda McKnight, Head Somerhill Pre-Prep (including EYFS) and Jonathan Shute, Deputy Head Co-curricular.

(When Sian Lambert is absent, one of other designated members of staff acts as the nominated lead as appropriate.)

These designated staff members:

- Report to the senior member of staff with lead responsibility.
- Will know how to make an appropriate referral.
- Will be available to provide advice and support to other staff on issues relating to child protection.
- Have particular responsibility to be available to listen to children and young people in their school.
- Will deal with individual cases, including attending case conferences and review meetings as appropriate.
- Have received training in child protection issues and multi-agency working and will receive refresher training at least every 2 years.



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## The Governing Board and Designated Governor

The Governing board will appoint a senior board level lead to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board. This will always be a different person to the DSL and is currently Mrs Eleanor Henery.

The governing board will:

- Facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development.
- Evaluate and approve this policy at each review, ensuring it complies with the law, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.
- 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.
- Ensure all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, and that such training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the safeguarding partners.
- Ensure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and review their effectiveness. This includes:
  - Making sure that the leadership team and staff are aware of the provisions in place, and that they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training
  - Reviewing the [DfE's filtering and monitoring standards](#), and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting these standards
  - Make sure staff understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training.
- Make sure:
  - The DSL has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, including additional time, funding, training, resources, and support.
  - Online safety is a running and interrelated theme within the whole-school approach to safeguarding and related policies
  - The leadership team and relevant staff are aware of and understand the IT filters and monitoring systems in place, manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns
  - The school has procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how



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small) or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns) about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors). Appendix 3 of this policy covers this procedure.

- That this policy reflects those children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised.
- The chair of governors will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, where appropriate.
- All governors will read Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety.

### **Designated Governor**

The designated governor is responsible for liaising with the Deputy Head Pastoral over matters regarding child protection, including ensuring that:

- the school has procedures and policies which are consistent with the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership procedures.
- the governing body considers the school policy on safeguarding and child protection each year.
- each year the governing body is informed of how the school and its staff have complied with the policy, including but not limited to a report on the training that staff have undertaken.

The designated governor is responsible for overseeing the liaison between agencies such as the police, social services, and LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) in connection with any allegations against the Deputy Head Pastoral. This will not involve undertaking any form of investigation but will ensure good communication between the parties and provide information to assist enquiries. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) works within Children's Services and gives advice and guidance to employers, organisations and other individuals who have concerns about the behaviour of an adult who works with children and young people.

### **The Headmaster**

The Headmaster is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

> Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:

- Are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
- Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect

> Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the school and via the school website



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- > Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- > 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
- > Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable
- > Making sure each child in the Early Years Foundation Stage is assigned a key person
- > Overseeing the safe use of technology, mobile phones and cameras in the setting

### **C Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse and Procedure for Reporting Concerns**

If a member of staff or visitor/volunteer suspects any safeguarding issue or has concerns that a pupil is at risk of being drawn into extremism, they must inform one of the designated members of staff who will decide on the course of action. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance and must be maintained on a need-to-know basis.

Although the school has responsibilities under the Children Act to ensure the welfare of the pupils in its care, all staff have a statutory responsibility to take appropriate action. The Area Safeguarding Adviser and Social Services Department are available for consultation to help clarify if there is any need for concern without having to identify the child. If the consultation process concludes a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the Social Services Department will then probably request details of the child to make further enquiries to assess if any formal action should be taken. If there are concerns that a child is at risk of being drawn into terrorism the Channel Guidance should also be consulted:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance>

Any incident or behavioural change that gives cause for concern should be recorded and passed to the appropriate DSL.

Staff should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves but should report them immediately to the Designated Person.

The procedure will be determined primarily by the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership.

The school must inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be removed from the admission register as required by KCSIE Statutory Guidance.

The school has a statutory duty to report when it appears that an act of FGM has been carried out.





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### **Procedures for dealing with abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil:**

Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via **child on child abuse**.

This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying).
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- upskirting (which is now a criminal offence).
- Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

There is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as abusive and incidents that are more properly dealt with as bullying. This is a matter of professional judgement. If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse: bullying, fighting and harassment between children are not generally seen as child protection issues.

However, it may be appropriate to regard a pupil's behaviour as abusive if:

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

If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused.

Such cases will be treated as with any Safeguarding (Child Protection) allegation as set out in this policy and advice will be taken from Claire Ray (Kent Safeguarding Principal Officer) in the first instance.

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up".

We also recognise the gendered nature of child on child abuse (i.e., that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators). All child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school's behaviour policy, but this safeguarding and child protection policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:





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- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual violence, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

- Staff must 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
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAHMS), if appropriate

As a school we seek to minimise the risk of allegations by pupils against other pupils by:

- Providing a developmentally appropriate PSHE syllabus which develops pupils understanding of acceptable behaviour, tolerance and keeping themselves safe
- Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour
- Promoting awareness of how children can stay safe online in assemblies, IT lessons, PSHE lessons etc. thus developing the children's knowledge, understanding and skills, to ensure personal safety and self-protection when using the internet and social networking.

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation: technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm.

- Having robust monitoring and filtering systems (Smoothwall) in place to ensure pupils are safe and act appropriately when using information technology in school
- Having systems in place for any pupil to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, believed, and valued.

### 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



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- Are young carers
- 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
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after
- Are missing from education
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

### Online safety and the use of mobile technology

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 in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, 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 4 key categories of risk

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:

- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation and extremism
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes
- **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such



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as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g., consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and

- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

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

- Educate pupils about online safety as part of our curriculum. Forexample:
  - 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 pupils 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.
- 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 pupils are not present and emergencies only
- Explain that if a pupil is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones we will follow the procedures as outlined in our behaviour and discipline policy
- Make sure all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search pupils' 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
- 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

This section summarises our approach to online safety and mobile phone use. For comprehensive details about our school's policy on online safety and the use of mobile phones, please refer to our online safety policy and mobile phone policy, which you can find on our website.



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### **Mental health and well-being**

Somerhill is committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, and staff are 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. Although it is only appropriately trained professionals who can diagnose mental health problems, staff observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing mental health problems or be at risk of developing one.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken to notify one of the school's DSLs and follow the procedure outlined in Section C. The DSLs have access to a range of advice to help them identify children in need of extra mental health support, including working with external agencies. In addition, there are several mental health champion trained staff on site and a trained counsellor who works on a referral basis.

### **Strategies for referring suspected child abuse:**

Be aware that abuse is a difficult subject for children to discuss and they may find it hard to talk about what is or has been happening to them for many reasons.

The following factors may contribute to a child's difficulty:

- They cannot find the words to say what is happening because of age, learning, language, or hearing difficulties.
- They do not have adult permission to tell and actual, or implied, threats have been used.
- They have found that they cannot trust a parent or an adult whom they know very well.
- They assume they will not be believed.
- They believe silence will help to protect others in their family.
- They have been forced to take the blame for what is happening.
- They do not know what the alternatives are or have direct access to agencies which can offer protection and help.
- They are not ready to talk about their experience – they do not feel safe enough.

Whenever circumstances allow, staff should report any suspicions which they have to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. There may, however, be situations in which a child chooses to tell a member of staff that he/she has been abused. Where the child feels able to talk about abuse to an adult, it is usually a sign of a strong and trusting relationship. The conversation should be held in a quiet area where there are not likely to be any interruptions. Staff should be aware of the importance of adopting a supportive role and avoid subjecting the child to lengthy or multiple interviews as this could confuse the child and jeopardise the evidence.



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**If a child chooses to talk to you and discloses that he/she has been abused TAKE THE CHILD SERIOUSLY AND TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTION:**

- LISTEN - repeat the child's words
- STOP - do not ask more questions
- REASSURE - tell the child he/she is not to blame: 'It is not your fault.'
- BELIEVE - tell the child you believe what he/she told you
- AFFIRM - 'I am glad you told me. It was right to tell me. You have been brave to come and tell me'.
- CONFIDENTIALITY - **NEVER** tell children you will keep secret what they have told you. Tell the child you must talk to other people **who can help**.
- FOLLOW-UP - make arrangements with the child to speak to them later. They have chosen you as an adult whom they can trust.
- REPORT - immediately report what you have heard to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Report verbally and write, verbatim, what the child has said to you. Remember to date and sign what you have written. Give a copy to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. (Safeguard software available on staff intranet)
- EXAMINATION - **Do not** attempt a detailed examination or remove a child's clothes to look further at an injury. Under no circumstances should photographs be taken of a child's injury. The child should only be examined by an appropriate doctor. Where the child is in school, it may be possible to observe the child during the normal school routine – physical education, for example.

**The crucial action is to report your suspicions, or what has been said to you, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest possible opportunity.**

### **Pupils with a social worker:**

Pupils may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well



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as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The Somerhill DSL team and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

Where we are aware that a pupil has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the pupil's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:

- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- The provision of pastoral and/or academic support

### **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
- 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 pupils

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. Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including on online safety, as required but at least annually (for example, through Inset, emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings).

Checks will be made on all contractors and volunteers and appropriate training given if required.

### **Concerns involving members of staff, contractors or volunteers 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 and applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, contractor or volunteer, 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



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of harm to children, or

- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the school. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

We will deal with any allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation. Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

Any concerns that involve allegations against a member of staff (including a supply teacher, contractor or a volunteer) must be referred immediately to the Headmaster who may consult the Deputy Head Pastoral, and will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer within one working day to discuss and agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and the member of staff.

Any concerns that involve allegations against the Headmaster should be referred immediately to the Chair of Governors. Concerns involving the Deputy Head Pastoral should be referred to the Headmaster or the Governor with specific Child Protection responsibility – Mrs Eleanor Henery. The Deputy Head Pastoral (nominated lead member of staff with responsibility for child protection issues [DSL]) would not be informed of any allegations against them.

Although responsibility for appropriate action rests with the Headmaster, Deputy Head Pastoral and DSLs, staff can contact Social Services directly if they feel it was urgent or they felt that a child protection concern already reported by them to the DSL was not being addressed, according to the normal school whistle blowing policy. Referrals must be made within 24 hours.

If you receive an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using the school premises for running an activity for children, follow our school safeguarding policies and procedures, informing the LADO, as you would with any safeguarding allegation.

### **Concerns involving members of staff, contractors or volunteers that do not meet the harms threshold (low level concerns)**

This section is based on 'Section 2: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold set out in the previous section.

Any low-level concerns should be referred immediately to the Deputy Head Pastoral (Lead DSL)





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who will share these with The Headmaster (unless they relate to them). The Lead DSL will determine whether the LLC is more serious, if so, it will be shared immediately with the Headmaster, or if less serious it will be shared on a weekly basis. Please note Low level concerns may be taken directly to the Headmaster should an employee feel more comfortable doing so. The Headmaster is the ultimate decision maker in respect of all LLCs, although the Headmaster may consult with the DSL and a more collaborative approach may be taken on decision making by them. If an LLC is raised against the Deputy Head Pastoral this should be referred to the Headmaster. Any LLC raised against The Headmaster should be referred to The Deputy Head Pastoral who will inform the governor with specific Child Protection responsibility – Mrs Eleanor Henery.

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – 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 conduct outside of work, **and**
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority.

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

- Being overly friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Humiliating pupils

### **DBS Barring Referrals:**

The Headmaster is required by statute to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service within one month of their leaving the school, any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children. This referral must be made using the DBS Referral Form and posted to the DBS Barring Referrals address below. (Ceasing to use a person's services includes: dismissal; removal; resignation; non-renewal of a fixed-term contract; no longer engaging/refusing to engage a supply teacher provided by an employment agency; terminating the placement of a student teacher or other trainee; no longer using staff employed by contractors; no longer using volunteers; voluntary withdrawal from supply teaching; contract working; a course of initial teacher training, or volunteering.) Failure to make a report constitutes an offence.

The DBS Barring Referrals address is: PO Box 3963, Royal Wootton Bassett, SN4 4HH (tel: 03000 200 190 option 6) [dbsdspatch@dbi.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dbsdspatch@dbi.gsi.gov.uk)





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**All staff need to be aware that it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that may place a child at risk. When in doubt – consult.** (For specific guidance on how to respond to allegations against staff, please refer to “Keeping Children Safe in Education” document).

### **D Code of Practice:**

All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with relation to child protection. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults. Physical intervention should only be used when the child is endangering him/herself or others and such events should be recorded and signed by a witness. Staff should be aware of the school’s Behaviour Policy, and any physical interventions must be in line with agreed policy and procedure in which appropriate training should be provided.

All school staff should work towards providing an environment and atmosphere for children and young people to enable them to feel safe to talk. However, staff should never promise a child to keep certain information confidential. It must be explained that staff have certain duties to help keep that child safe, which may involve informing others. If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to children’s social care immediately. Anybody can make a referral. If the child’s situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

### **Supervision and support:**

Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns for children’s welfare or safety can seek support from the DSL team.

All newly qualified teachers and classroom assistants have a mentor with whom they can discuss concerns including the area of child protection.

The DSL can put staff and parents in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they so wish.

### **Training opportunities:**

The Lead DSL is responsible for ensuring staff, including themselves, receive training in the area of child protection. Whole staff training in the area of child protection including an overview of the Framework for Assessment took place in 2007, October 2009 and again in 2012. As of September 2014, all staff have had access to online CP training (including guidance re radicalisation) and will be required to complete this as part of their induction training. Training will then be updated and refreshed as required. (Online CP training for staff is renewed every two years).



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**Monitoring and review:**

All school personnel and governors will have a copy of this policy and will have the opportunity to consider and discuss its contents prior to the approval of the Governing Body being formally sought.

The policy forms part of our school development plan and will be reviewed annually. All staff should have access to this policy and sign to the effect that they have read and understood its content.



# SOMERHILL

## Key Contacts

Lead DSL - Somerhill Mrs Sian Lambert (Module 2 completed) Updated training received Nov 2021 [slambert@somerhill.org](mailto:slambert@somerhill.org)

Deputy DSL - YC Years 3-6: Mr Jonathan Shute (Module 2 completed) Training received October 2021 [jshute@somerhill.org](mailto:jshute@somerhill.org)

DSL – YC Years 7 & 8 and DL: Mrs Sian Lambert (Module 2 completed) Updated training received Nov 2021 [slambert@somerhill.org](mailto:slambert@somerhill.org)

Deputy DSL SPP and EYFS: Mrs Amanda McKnight (Module 2 completed) Updated training received October 2022 [amcknight@somerhill.org](mailto:amcknight@somerhill.org)

**CP Governor** Mrs Eleanor Henery - [Eleanor.Henery@somerhill.org](mailto:Eleanor.Henery@somerhill.org)

**Chair of Governors** Mr Mark Jiskoot – [mark.jiskoot@somerhill.org](mailto:mark.jiskoot@somerhill.org)

**If a child may be at risk of imminent harm you should call the Integrated Front Door on 03000 411111 or the Police on 999**

**LEA (Head of Service):** Claire Ray  
Office : 03301 651200 [claire.ray@kent.gov.uk](mailto:claire.ray@kent.gov.uk)

**Online Safety:** Rebecca Avery  
Office: 03301 651500 [ashley.assiter@kent.gov.uk](mailto:ashley.assiter@kent.gov.uk)

**Senior Safeguarding Advisor:** Robin Brivio  
**Office:** 03301 651200 [robin.brivio@kent.gov.uk](mailto:robin.brivio@kent.gov.uk)

**Designated Officer (LADO Team)** 03000 410888 [kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk)

**Tonbridge and Malling** 03301 651440

**Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership (KSCMP)**  
[kscmp@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kscmp@kent.gov.uk) 03000 421126

Ofsted Children's Services, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD; Tel. 0300 123 4666

ISI, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA; Tel 02076000100

DfE contacts re extremism: 020 7340 7264 [counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk)

NSPCC Whistle-Blowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285 [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Police: Kent 01622 690690 or 101



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## Appendix one

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### Signs of Abuse in Children:

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The following non-specific signs may indicate something is wrong:

- Significant change in behaviour
- Extreme anger or sadness
- Aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour
- Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
- Lack of self-esteem
- Self-injury
- Depression
- Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour

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### Risk Indicators

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The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:

- Must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm
- Justifies the need for careful assessment and discussion with designated / named / lead person, manager, (or in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague)
- May require consultation with and / or referral to Children's Services

The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse or neglect has not occurred. In an abusive relationship the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parent/s
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)

The parent or carer may:

- Persistently avoid child health promotion services and treatment of the child's episodic illnesses
- Have unrealistic expectations of the child
- Frequently complain about/to the child and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism/ low warmth environment)



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- Be absent or misusing substances
- Persistently refuse to allow access on home visits
- Be involved in domestic abuse

Staff should be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals, previously known or suspected to have abused children, move into the household.

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### Recognising Physical Abuse

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The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a “cry for help” and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury)
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries

### Bruising

Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as non-accidental unless there is evidence, or an adequate explanation provided:

- Any bruising to a pre-crawling or pre-walking baby
- Bruising in or around the mouth, particularly in small babies which may indicate force feeding
- Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally
- Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times
- The outline of an object used e.g., belt marks, hand prints or a hairbrush
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting
- Bruising around the face
- Grasp marks on small children
- Bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs may be an indicator of sexual abuse.



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### **Bite Marks**

Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3 cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child. A medical opinion should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

### **Burns and Scalds**

It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.:

- Circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine)
- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements
- Burns of uniform depth over a large area
- Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water is his/her own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks)
- Old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation

Scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath.

### **Fractures**

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint. Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures. There are grounds for concern if:

- The history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent with the fracture type
- There are associated old fractures
- Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement
- There is an unexplained fracture in the first year of life

### **Scars**

A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

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### **Recognising Emotional Abuse**

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Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse.

The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse.



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The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Developmental delay
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g., anxious, indiscriminate or not attachment
- Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach
- Aggressive behaviour towards others
- Scapegoated within the family
- Frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-school children
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Withdrawn or seen as a “loner” – difficulty relating to others

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### Recognising Signs of Sexual Abuse

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Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child/family.

Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural.

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexualized conduct
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g., for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain or itching of genital area
- Blood on underclothes
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing

### **Sexual Abuse by Young People**

The boundary between what is abusive and what is part of normal childhood or youthful experimentation can be blurred. The determination of whether behaviour is



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developmental, inappropriate or abusive will hinge around the related concepts of true consent, power imbalance and exploitation. This may include children and young people who exhibit a range of sexually problematic behaviour such as indecent exposure, obscene telephone calls, fetishism, bestiality and sexual abuse against adults, peers or children.

Developmental Sexual Activity encompasses those actions that are to be expected from children and young people as they move from infancy through to an adult understanding of their physical, emotional, and behavioural relationships with each other. Such sexual activity is essentially information gathering and experience testing. It is characterised by mutuality and of the seeking of consent.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour can be inappropriate socially, inappropriate to development, or both. In considering whether behaviour fits into this category, it is important to consider what negative effects it has on any of the parties involved and what concerns it raises about a child or young person. It should be recognised that some actions may be motivated by information seeking, but still cause significant upset, confusion, worry, physical damage, etc. It may also be that the behaviour is “acting out” which may derive from other sexual situations to which the child or young person has been exposed.

If an act appears to have been inappropriate, there may still be a need for some form of behaviour management or intervention. For some children, educative inputs may be enough to address the behaviour.

Abusive sexual activity includes any behaviour involving coercion, threats, aggression together with secrecy, or where one participant relies on an unequal powerbase.

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### Assessment

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In order to more fully determine the nature of the incident the following factors should be given consideration. The presence of exploitation in terms of:

- **Equality** – consider differentials of physical, cognitive, and emotional development, power and control and authority, passive and assertive tendencies
- **Consent** – agreement including all the following:
  - Understanding that is proposed based on age, maturity, development level, functioning and experience
  - Knowledge of society’s standards for what is being proposed
  - Awareness of potential consequences and alternatives
  - Assumption that agreements or disagreements will be respected equally
  - Voluntary decision
  - Mental competence





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- **Coercion** – the young perpetrator who abuses may use techniques like bribing, manipulation and emotional threats of secondary gains and losses that is loss of love, friendship, etc. Some may use physical force, brutality or the threat of these regardless of victim resistance.

In evaluating sexual behaviour of children and young people, the above information should be used only as a guide.

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### Recognising Neglect

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Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include:

- Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g., adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical care
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic, and irresponsive with no apparent medical cause
- Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
- Child thrives away from home environment
- Child frequently absent from school
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods

### Appendix Two

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#### Child sexual exploitation CSE:

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Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse that occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

This can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults, but does not always involve physical contact and can 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.

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.

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. 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.



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Indicators of sexual exploitation can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant
- Displaying inappropriate sexualized behaviour
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and/or alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time, or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or not taking part in education

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### Other signs

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- Patterns of absence and prolonged absence may be indicators of safeguarding issues.

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### Child Criminal Exploitation

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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 activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage 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.

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

- 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
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late



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- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL. 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.

### Appendix Three

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#### Children Absent From Education:

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A child absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may be absent from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveler families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of being absent in future. Supporting children absent in education, will help prevent the risk of them becoming missing in education in the future.

This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non- standard transition points.



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## Appendix Four

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### Honour-based Abuse

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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.

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### Forced Marriage (FM)

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This is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage. It is a human rights abuse and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence. Young men and women can be at risk in affected ethnic groups. Whistle-blowing may come from younger siblings. Other indicators may be detected by changes in adolescent behaviours. Never attempt to intervene directly as a school or through a third party.

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### Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

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It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM.

What is FGM?

It involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

#### **4 types of procedure:**

Type 1 Clitoridectomy – partial/total removal of clitoris

Type 2 Excision – partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora

Type 3 Infibulation entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia

Type 4 all other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising, and scraping the genital area.

#### **Why is it carried out?**

Belief that:

- FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage



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- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Part of being a woman/rite of passage
- Upholds family honour
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfils a religious requirement
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean/hygienic
- Is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

### Is FGM legal?

FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights of girls and women. It is **illegal** in most countries including the UK.

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities
- Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Repeated urinal tract infection
- Disclosure



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### The 'One Chance' rule

As with Forced Marriage there is the 'One Chance' rule. It is essential that settings /schools/colleges act **without delay**.

### Appendix Five

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#### Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children

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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.

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that staff make sure they are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting any form of abuse or neglect. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

When supporting victims, 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 SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:



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- 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 up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

If staff have any concerns about sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section C of this policy, as appropriate.

### Appendix Six

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#### Preventing radicalisation

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**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 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 cause.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The Senior Leadership Team at Somerhill will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place (Smoothwall) and equip our pupils to stay safe online at school and at home.

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

Staff will be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour.



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The government website [Educate Against Hate](#) and charity [NSPCC](#) say that signs that a pupil 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 be 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 staff are concerned about a pupil, they will discuss their concerns with their DSL.

Staff should **always** take action if they are worried.





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## Actions where there are concerns about a child

