Leigh Academy
BEXLEY

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

LEIGH
Academies Trust

April 2026

Review Date: September 2026

This is a core policy that forms part of the induction for all staff. It is a requirement that all members of staff have access to this policy and sign to say they have read and understood its contents.

Date written: July 2026 (with KCSIE 2026 guidance which will come into effect September 1, 2026).
Date of next review: July 2027 (or in response to any changes to local or national guidance or contextual Safeguarding themes/incidents).

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedure.

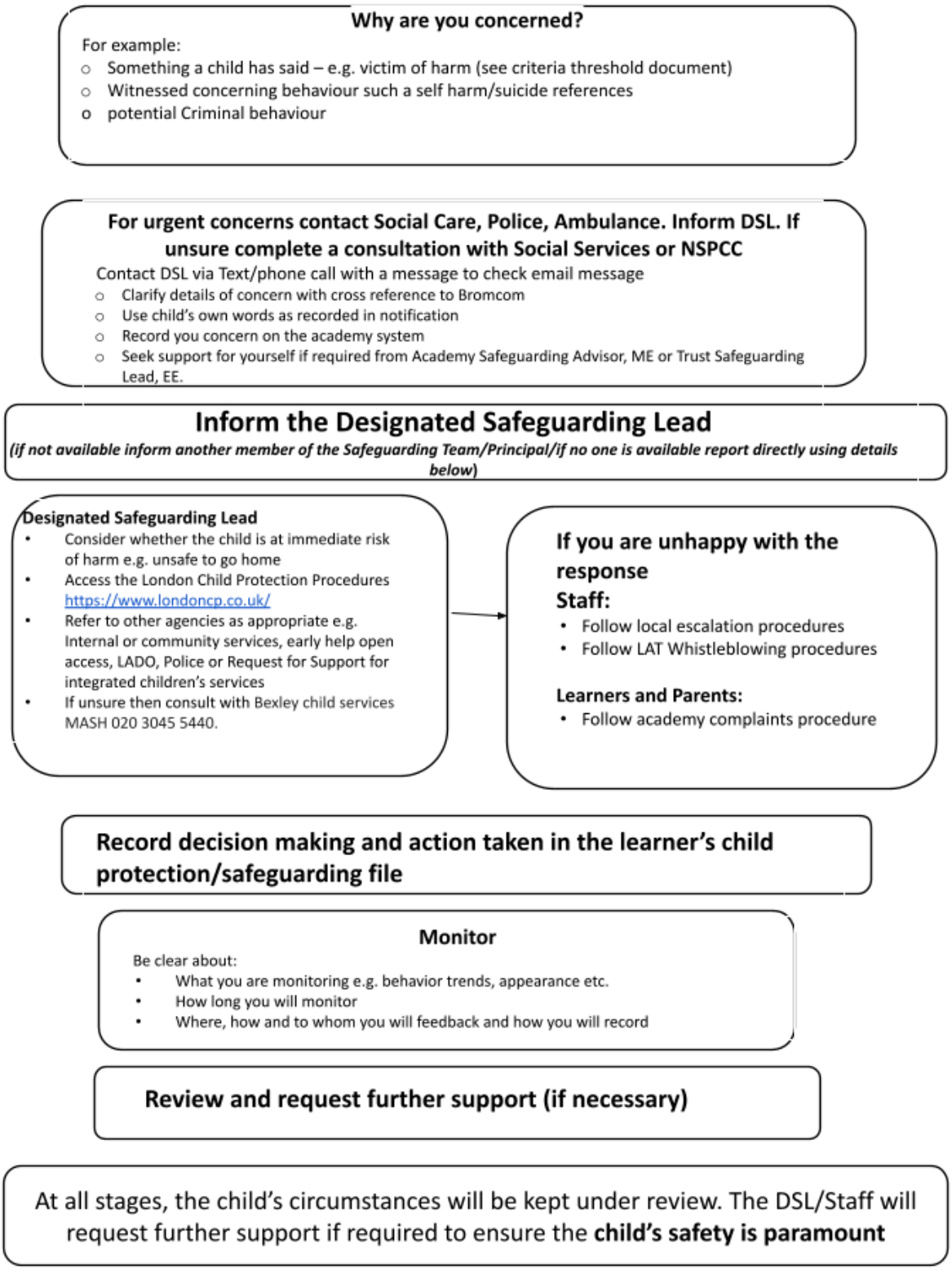
Key Contacts

	Name	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Victoria Baldock Debbie Pierroulli Jaya Shiyani Chris Dillon	victoria.baldock@bexley.latrust.org.uk debbie.pierroulli@bexley.latrust.org.uk jaya.shiyani@bexley.latrust.org.uk chris.dillon@bexley.latrust.org.uk
Looked After Children Coordinator	Sherene Hull	sherene.hull@bexley.latrust.org.uk
Mental Health Lead	Victoria Baldock	victoria.baldock@bexley.latrust.org.uk
Medical Needs Lead	Victoria Baldock	victoria.baldock@bexley.latrust.org.uk
Principal	John Dixon	john.dixon@bexley.latrust.org.uk
Safeguarding Link Governor	Robert McBeth	robert.mcbeth@latrust.org.uk
Chair of Community Board	Scott Wilkins	scott.wilkins@lagov.org.uk
Trust Safeguarding Lead	Emma Elwin	01634 412200
Trust Safeguarding Advisor	Marla England	01634 412200
Trust Director - Safeguarding	Theresa Davies	01634 412200
Chief Infrastructure Officer	Phil Whittal	01634 412200
Trust People Director	Lorraine Mottram	01634 412200

Contents

	Page no
1. What to do if you have a welfare concern flowchart	4
2. Child Focused Approach to Safeguarding	5
3. Policy Context	6
4. Definition of Safeguarding	7
5. Equality Statement	9
6. Related Safeguarding Policies	10
7. Policy Compliance, Monitoring and Review	10
8. Key Responsibilities	11
9. Child Protection Procedures	17
10. Record Keeping	22
11. Multi-Agency Working	23
12. Confidentiality and Information Sharing	23
13. Complaints	24
14. Specific Safeguarding Issues (Including Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse and Violence, Exploitation, Domestic Abuse, FGM, Honor Based Violence, Cybercrime and sharing nudes/semi nudes).	25
15. Supporting Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm	33
16. Online Safety	36
17. Staff Engagement and Expectations	43
18. Safer Recruitment and Allegations Against Members of Staff	46
19. Opportunities to Teach Safeguarding	49
20. Physical Safety	50
21. Local Support	51
Appendix 1: Categories of Abuse	53
Appendix 2: National Support Organisations	55

1. What to do if you have a welfare concern in Leigh Academy Bexley



2. Child Focused Approach to Safeguarding

2.1. Introduction

- At Leigh Academy Bexley we recognise our statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everybody's responsibility and everyone has a role to play. All members of our community (staff, volunteers, governors, leaders, parents/carers, wider family networks, and students) have an important role in safeguarding children and all have an essential role to play in making our community safe and secure.

- At Leigh Academy Bexley we believe that the best interests of children always come first. All children (defined in law and in this policy as those up to the age of 18) have a right to be heard and to have their wishes and feelings taken into account and all children regardless of age, sex (gender), ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity or orientation, have equal rights to protection. For the avoidance of doubt, while statutory child protection frameworks define a child as anyone up to the age of 18, Leigh Academy Blackheath extends the internal reporting mechanisms, pastoral support, and safeguarding duties outlined in this policy to all students aged 18 and over who remain in full-time education at the Academy. This policy applies to all children, including those living with birth parents or extended family, those in kinship care, adopted children, looked after children, previously looked after children and care leavers. Where there are safeguarding concerns relating to pregnancy, staff will also consider the help, support and protection needs of unborn children..

- Staff working with children at Leigh Academy Bexley will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff will always act in the best interests of the child and if any member of our community has a safeguarding concern about any child or adult, they should act and act immediately.

- This policy applies where there are any child protection concerns regarding children who attend Leigh Academy Bexley but may also apply to other children connected to Leigh Academy Bexley, for example, siblings, or younger members of staff (under 18s) or children on student/work placements.

- Leigh academy Bexley recognises the importance of providing an ethos and environment within our academy that will help children to be safe and to feel safe. In our academy children are respected and are encouraged to talk openly. We will ensure children's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what safeguarding action to take and what services to provide.

- We are committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive, anti-discriminatory safeguarding culture. Staff are expected to recognise and challenge racism, discrimination and prejudice, and to consider how these experiences may affect children's safety, welfare and access to support.

- In our Academy, children are respected and are encouraged to express themselves openly. We will ensure children's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what safeguarding action to take and what services to provide with an understanding that some children will require additional support or are not always ready to talk.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises the importance of adopting a trauma informed approach to safeguarding; we understand there is a need to consider the root cause of children's behaviour and consider any underlying trauma.

- Our core safeguarding principles are:

➔ Prevention: positive, supportive, safe culture, curriculum and pastoral opportunities for children, safer recruitment procedures.

➔ Protection: following the agreed procedures, ensuring all staff are trained and supported to recognise and respond appropriately and sensitively to safeguarding concerns.

➔ Support: adopt a child centred approach and provide support for all students, parents/carers and staff, and where appropriate, implement specific interventions for those who may be at risk of harm.

➔ Collaboration: with both parents and carers where possible, and other agencies to ensure timely, appropriate communications and actions are undertaken when safeguarding concerns arise.

- The school distinguishes between 'community-based early help' and 'Family Help' to ensure appropriate support pathways are allocated without delay.
- The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, including governors, temporary or third-party agency staff and volunteers, and are consistent with those outlined within 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025.

3. Policy context

- This policy is implemented in accordance with our compliance with the statutory guidance from the Department for Education, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025 which requires individual schools and colleges to have an effective child protection policy.
- All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from Family Help. Family Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life.

- This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, and related guidance. Risk assessments are fully integrated into all information sharing procedures. This includes but is not limited to:

    - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE)
    - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 (WTSC)
    - Ofsted: Education Inspection Framework'
    - Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2011
    - Bexley Safeguarding partnership
    - The Education Act 2002. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires school governing bodies, local education authorities and further education institutions to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children who are pupils at a school, or who are students under 18 years of age. Such arrangements will have to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
    - Education and Inspections Act 2006
    - The Human Rights Act 1998
    - The Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty)
    - Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, Serious Crime Act 2015, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18 and Statutory guidance on FGM.

- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- DfE: Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education statutory guidance-2025

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires school governing bodies, local education authorities and further education institutions to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children who are pupils at a school, or who are students under 18 years of age. Such arrangements will have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

- Leigh Academy Bexley will follow local or national guidance in response to any emergencies. We will amend this policy and our procedures as necessary but regardless of the action required, our safeguarding principles will always remain the same and the welfare of the child is paramount.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognise that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and other challenges experienced by pupils and their families since, some members of our community may have been exposed to a range of adversity and trauma including bereavement, anxiety and in some cases experienced increased welfare and/or safeguarding risks. We will work with local services, such as health and the local authority, to ensure necessary support is in place.

4. Definition of safeguarding

- In line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and KCSIE 2025, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:

  - Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
  - Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
  - Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
  - Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
  - Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the child(ren)
  - Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

- Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and is defined as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

- We recognise that children may experience multiple and overlapping harms at the same time, including online harms, extra-familial harm and exploitation, and that safeguarding responses should take account of the full context of a child's lived experience.

- 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. This also includes pseudo-images that are computer-generated images that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video.

- Children include everyone under the age of 18.

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

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

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

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

- Leigh Academy Bexley acknowledges that safeguarding includes a wide range of specific issues including (but not limited to):

Abuse and neglect	Hate
Bullying, including cyberbullying	Homelessness
Children with family members in prison	Human trafficking and modern slavery
Children Missing Education (CME) including children deliberately missing Education.	Mental Health
Child missing from home or care	Making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes
Child on child abuse	Online safety
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	Preventing radicalisation and extremism
Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)	Private fostering

Children and the Court System	Relationship Abuse
Children who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual or children who are perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not).	Serious Violence
Contextual safeguarding (risks outside the family home)	Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
County lines and gangs	Sexting
Domestic abuse-understanding the effects of what they see, here and experience.	So-Called honour-based abuse including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage
Drugs and alcohol misuse	Upskirting
Fabricated or induced illness	
Faith abuse	
Gender based abuse and violence against women and girls	

(Also see Part one and Annex B within 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025)

5. Equality statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, both online and offline, 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 and disabilities (SEND) or health conditions
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language (EAL)
- 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 female genital mutilation (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 (see section 12)
- Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or frequently
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated
- The school is alert to the needs of young carers, recognizing that caring responsibilities can impact attendance, attainment, and wellbeing. We ensure early identification so they receive support from appropriate services.

- A safeguarding referral will be made if an incident involving a medical condition highlights that a child is at increased risk of neglect or abuse, such as if essential medication is repeatedly not provided by parents/carers.

6. Related safeguarding policies

Trust Policies	Academy Policies
Complaints	Emergency Procedures such as evacuations and lockdowns
Confidentiality	Risk assessments, such as school trips, use of technology, school reopening
Staff Code of Conduct	Behaviour Policy
Searching, screening and confiscation	Acceptable Use Templates/Policy
Online Safety	Attendance Policy
Data protection and Information Sharing Policy	Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education Policy
Health and Safety Policy including Risk Assessment Policy and including plans for reopening	
Managing Allegations Against Staff, including Low Level Concerns	
Whistleblowing	
Safer Recruitment Policy	
First aid and accidents, including medication and managing illness, allergies, heath, and infection	
Mobile and smart devices/technology **as outlined in DfE 'Mobile Phones in Schools**	
Personal and intimate care	
Social media and Image Use	

Supporting Guidance (to be read and followed alongside this document)

- "Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People in Education Settings" - Safer Recruitment Consortium
- "What to do if you are worried a child is being abused" – DfE, March 2015

7. Policy compliance, monitoring and review

- The Academy will review this policy at least annually (as a minimum) and will update it as needed, so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt.

The policy will also be revised following any national or local updates, significant local or national safeguarding events and/or learning, and/or any changes to our own procedures.

- All staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) will be provided with a copy of this policy and Part One of KCSIE 2025 as appropriate. This can be found in the safeguarding folder on our shared drive.

- Parents/carers can obtain a copy of the Leigh Academy Bexley Child Protection Policy and other related policies on request. Additionally, our policies can be viewed via the Leigh Academy Bexley website: https://leighacademybexley.org.uk/about-us/policies/

- The policy forms part of our Academy development plan and will be reviewed annually by the Community Board who has responsibility for oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead and principal will ensure regular reporting on safeguarding activity and systems to the Community Board. The governing body will not receive details of individual student situations or identifying features of families as part of their oversight responsibility.

8. Key Responsibilities

Governance and leadership

- The Community Board, LAT Trust Executive and leadership team have a strategic responsibility for our safeguarding arrangements and will comply with their duties under legislation. The Community Board has regard to the KCSIE guidance and will ensure our policies, procedures and training is effective and complies with the law at all times.

- All Community Board members will read and work in accordance of the KCSIE 2025 and will attend the regular safeguarding training they are offered which will equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenges to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding.

- The Academy has a nominated governor responsible for safeguarding. The nominated governor will support the DSL and have oversight in ensuring that the academy has an effective policy which interlinks with other related policies; that locally agreed procedures are in place and being followed; and that the policies are reviewed at least annually and when required. The academy safeguarding governor will make regular visits to review procedures that are in place and provide reports to the Community Board. A copy of the Link Governor for Safeguarding roles and responsibilities can be found here.

- The Community Board and leadership team will promote an inclusive, anti-discriminatory safeguarding culture and will ensure systems, training and policy implementation support staff to identify, understand and challenge racism, discrimination and disproportionality in safeguarding practice.

- The Community Board, LAT Trust Executive and academy leadership team will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is supported in their role.

- The Community Board will facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding which involves everyone. They will ensure that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin

all relevant aspects of process and policy development, so that all systems, processes, and policies operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

- The Community Board are aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements set out by the Bexley Safeguarding partnership.

    - This includes but is not limited to safeguarding all members of the school community (for example, staff, pupils, parents/carers and other family members) identified with protected characteristics within the Equality Act; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
    - For further information about our approaches to equality, diversity, and inclusion, please access our academy policies/website.

- The Community Board and leadership team will ensure that there are policies and procedures in place to ensure appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

- The Principal will ensure that our child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the Community Board are understood, and followed by all staff.

- The Community Board will ensure an appropriate senior member of staff, from the Academy leadership team, is appointed to the role of designated safeguarding lead. The Governing Board and leadership team will ensure that the DSL is supported in their role and is provided with sufficient time so they can provide appropriate support to staff and children regarding any safeguarding and welfare concerns.

- The Academy has a nominated governor for safeguarding. The Board of Governors and the Safeguarding Governor will support the DSL and have oversight in ensuring that the Academy has an effective policy which interlinks with other related policies, that locally agreed procedures are in place and being followed, and that the policies are reviewed at least annually and when required.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- The Academy has appointed Phil Wilson, Head of Petworth College and a member of the senior leadership team, as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

- Leigh Academies Trust maintains records of all designated staff for reference and use at Trust level.

- The DSL has overall responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place) in school. Whilst the activities of the DSL may be delegated to the deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL and this responsibility will not be delegated.The details of this role are explicit in the DSL's job description.

- The Academy has also appointed Deputy DSLs who will have delegated responsibilities and act in the DSLs absence. Any deputies are trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead and the role is explicit in their job description.

    - Victoria Baldock (Senior Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)
    - Chris Dillon (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead - lead for Woburn College)

- Jaya Shiyani (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead - lead for Knole College)
- Debbie Pieroulli (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead - lead for Holkham College)

- The DSL (and any deputies) will be more likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and will be the most appropriate person to advise staff on the response to any safeguarding concerns.

- It is the role of the DSL to carry out their functions as identified in Annex C of KCSIE. This includes but is not limited to:

    - Acting as the central contact point for all staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
    - Maintaining a confidential recording system for safeguarding and child protection concerns.
    - Coordinating safeguarding action for individual children.
        - When supporting children with a social worker or looked after children, the DSL should have the details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child, with the DSL liaising closely with the designated teacher.
    - Liaising with other agencies and professionals in line with KCSIE and WTSC.
    - Ensuring that locally established procedures as put in place by the three safeguarding partners as part of the Bexley Safeguarding Partnership procedures, including referrals, are followed, as necessary.
    - Representing, or ensuring the Academy is appropriately represented at multi-agency safeguarding meetings (including child protection conferences).
    - Managing and monitoring the Academy role in any multi-agency plan for a child.
    - Being available during term time (during school hours) for staff in the Academy to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
    - Ensuring adequate and appropriate DSL cover arrangements in response to any closures and any out of hours and/or out of term activities. The school has implemented robust cover arrangements for periods when the DSL is unavailable. This includes a confidential shared mailbox dsl-cover@bexley.latrust.org.uk to ensure that safeguarding concerns are received and acted upon without delay.
    - Taking lead responsibility for online safety, including having oversight of the effectiveness of the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place. This is accomplished through regular checks which are logged and triangulated to inform further support to children.
    - Helping promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and Academy leadership staff.
    - Ensuring all staff access appropriate safeguarding training and relevant updates in line with the recommendations within KCSIE.
    - Liaising with the principal to inform them of any safeguarding issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This includes being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult (PACE Code C 2019).
    - Ensuring that school/college safeguarding responses are coordinated with wider multi-agency planning, including Early Help plans, child in need planning, child protection planning and care planning, where applicable.

- The DSL will undergo appropriate and specific training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. Deputy DSLs will be trained to the same standard as the DSL. The DSLs' training will be updated formally at least every two years, but their knowledge and skills will be updated through a variety of methods at regular intervals and at least annually.

- We recognise that in some settings there may be a different strategic lead for promoting the educational outcomes of children who have or have had a social worker. Where this is the case, the DSL works closely with the lead to provide strategic oversight for the outcomes of these children and young people.

- The Principal and DSL have responsibility for children accessing Alternate Provision in accordance with guidance outlined in the KCSIE 2025. The Principal and DSL will have due regard for the Safeguarding and wellbeing of the pupils that are accessing an alternative provision. This academy will obtain written assurance from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on staff. This includes confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that the school can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff. In addition, where the pupil is based during school hours is known by the DSL and Principal. This includes having records of the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend. The Academy takes responsibility for the consistent reviews of alternative provision placements, at least half termly, to ensure the child is regularly attending and the placement continues to be safe and suitable. Where there are safeguarding concerns the placement should be reviewed, and potentially terminated, unless the concerns are satisfactorily addressed.

The Principal

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

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:
    - Are informed of our systems that 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
- 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 (see appendix 3)
- Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL on this
- Overseeing the safe use of technology, and devices like mobile phones and cameras in the setting.

Members of staff

- Our staff play a particularly important role in safeguarding as they are in a position to observe any changes in a child's behaviour or appearance, identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.

  All members of staff have a responsibility to:

    - To provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
    - To be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect so that they can identify cases of children who may need help or protection.

- Be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help and understand the community-based and targeted Early Help process and their role in it.
- Know what to do if a child tells them that they are being abused, neglected, or exploited and understand the impact abuse and neglect can have upon a child.
- Know that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online.
- Know that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children.
- Know that a child and their family may be experiencing multiple needs at the same time.
- To be able to identify and act upon indicators that children are, or at risk of developing mental health issues.
- Be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help.
- To understand the early help process and their role in it.
- To understand the Academy safeguarding policies and systems.
- Undertake regular and appropriate training which is regularly updated.
- Be aware of the local process of making referrals to children's social care and statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.
- Know how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality and sharing information in accordance with the KCSIE, DPA/UKGDPR for the purposes of keeping children safe.
- Reassure children who report concerns that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Act in line with Teachers' Standards 2012 which state that teachers (including Principals) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

- Staff at Leigh Academy Bexley recognise that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as being abusive or harmful. This should not prevent staff from having professional curiosity and speaking to a DSL if they have any concerns about a child.

- Staff at Leigh Academy Bexley will determine how best to build trusted relationships with children, young people and parents/carers which facilitate appropriate professional communication in line with existing and relevant policies, for example, our staff Code of Conduct and pupil/student behaviour policies.

Children and young people

- Children and young people have a right to:

  - Feel safe, be listened to, and have their wishes and feelings taken into account.
  - Confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.
  - Contribute to the development of Academy Safeguarding policies.
  - Receive help from a trusted adult.
  - Learn how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Parents and carers

- Parents/carers have a responsibility to:

- Understand and adhere to the relevant Leigh Academy Bexley policies and procedures.
- Talk to their children about safeguarding issues and support the Academy in their safeguarding approaches.
- Identify behaviours which could indicate that their child is at risk of harm, including online.
- Seek help and support from the Academy or other agencies.

Training

All staff

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistleblowing procedures and online safety, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse, exploitation or neglect. This training is available to all staff via our training platform called Thrive. Thrive provides a dashboard for the DSL to confirm who has completed training in all safeguarding areas. Thrive also holds attendance for events such as DSL training and Safer Recruitment training.

Staff Safeguarding training will be regularly updated and will:

- Be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole-school safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning
- Be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners
- Include online safety, including an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff around filtering and monitoring
- Have regard to the Teachers' Standards to support the expectation that all teachers:

    - Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe environment
    - Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils

All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of becoming involved with or supporting terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas. This training is also provided through our Thrive system.

Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including on online safety, as required but at least annually (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings). There are small bite sized training sessions for staff briefings called Pupil Protect and these are also available through Thrive.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

The DSL and Deputies

DSLs will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments).

Governors

All governors receive training about safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) at induction, which is regularly updated. This is to make sure that they:

Have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, such as providing strategic challenge

Can be assured that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the school to deliver a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding

As the chair of governors may be required to act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Principal , they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose.

9. Child Protection Procedures

Recognising indicators of abuse and neglect

- Staff will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff will always act in the best interests of the child.

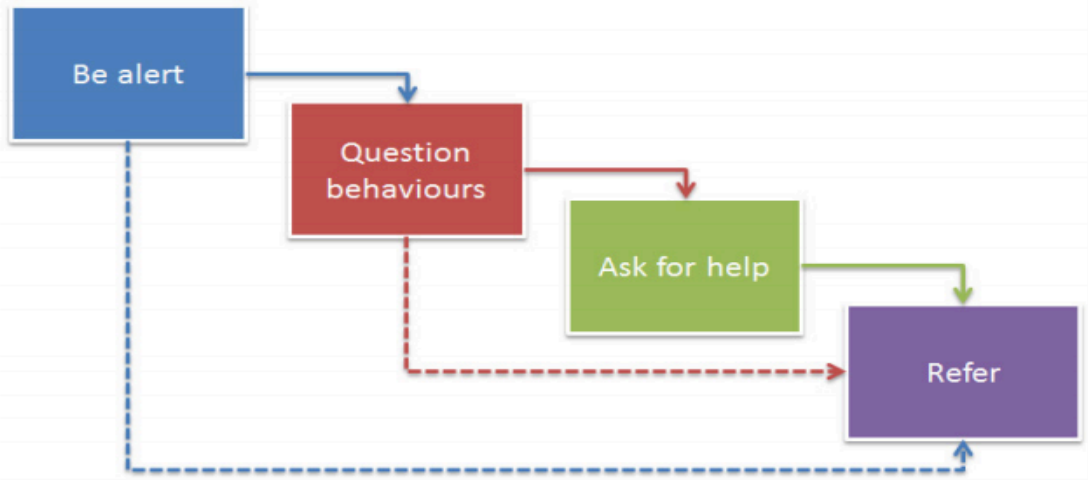
- Leigh Academy Bexley recognise that when assessing whether a child may be suffering actual or potential harm there are four categories of abuse (for more in-depth information, see appendix 1):

    - Physical abuse
    - Sexual abuse
    - Emotional abuse
    - Neglect

- By understanding the indicators of abuse and neglect, we can respond to problems as early as possible and provide the right support and services for the child and their family.

- All members of staff are expected to be aware of and follow the below approach if they are concerned about a child:

All members of staff are expected to be aware of and follow this approach if they are concerned about a child:



'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' 2015

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that concerns may arise in many different contexts and can vary greatly in terms of their nature and seriousness. The indicators of child abuse and neglect can vary from child to child. Children develop and mature at different rates, so what appears to be worrying behaviour for a younger child might be normal for an older child. It is important to recognise that

indicators of abuse and neglect do not automatically mean a child is being abused, however all concerns should be taken seriously and will be explored by the DSL on a case-by-case basis.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot always be covered by one definition or one label alone. In many cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another, therefore staff will always be vigilant and always raise concerns with a DSL.

- Parental behaviors can indicate child abuse or neglect, so staff will be alert to parent-child interactions or concerning parental behaviours; this could include parents who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if there is a sudden change in their mental health.

- Children may report abuse happening to themselves, their peers, or their family members. All reports made by children to staff will be taken seriously and will be responded to in line with this policy.

- Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors and risks outside the Academy. Children can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families; extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence and county lines.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that technology can be a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues; children are at risk of abuse online from people they know (including other children) and from people they do not know; in many cases, abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that some children have additional or complex needs and may require access to intensive or specialist services to support them.

- Following a concern about a child's safety or welfare, the searching and screening of children and confiscation of any items, including any electronic devices, will be managed in line with the Academy behaviour policy and 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation' policy which is informed by the DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' guidance.

    - The DSL (or deputy) will be informed of any searching incidents where there were reasonable grounds to suspect a student was in possession of a prohibited item as listed in our behaviour policy. The DSL (or deputy) will then consider the circumstances of the student who has been searched to assess the incident against any potential wider safeguarding concerns.
    - Staff will involve the DSL (or deputy) without delay if they believe that a search has revealed a safeguarding risk.

Responding to child protection concerns

- Where safeguarding concerns are identified, the child's lived experience, voice and views will remain central to our decision-making, assessment and planning.

- If staff are made aware of a child protection concern, they are expected to:

    - Listen carefully to the child, reflecting back the concern.
    - Use the child's language.

- Be non-judgmental.
- Avoid leading questions; only prompting the child where necessary with open questions to clarify information where necessary. For example, who, what, where, when or Tell, Explain, Describe (TED).
- Do not promise confidentiality as concerns will have to be shared further, for example, with the DSL and potentially Integrated Children's Services.
- To be clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed.
- Record the concern using the facts as the child presents them, in line with Academy record keeping requirements.
- Inform the DSL (or deputy), as soon as practically possible.

- If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they are expected to act on them immediately. If staff are unsure if something is a safeguarding issue, they will speak to the DSL (or deputy).

- The DSL or a deputy should always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, a DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken by staff. Staff should speak to a member of the senior leadership team, take advice from the Education Safeguarding Service or a consultation with a social worker from the MASH Team. In these circumstances, any action taken will be shared with a DSL as soon as possible.
- 'Community-based early help' is defined in 'Working together to safeguard children' as support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse. It is not an individual service, but a system of support delivered by local authorities and their partners, including education providers, working together and taking collective responsibility to provide the right provision in their area. It is distinct from targeted Early Help delivered through more formal arrangements coordinated by local authorities, where a plan is in place and a lead practitioner appointed.
- If community based early help support is appropriate, the DSL (or a deputy) will lead on exploring internal resources available and liaising with other universal or additional services available via local agencies.
- All staff are made aware that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this is when problems first emerge, or where a child is already known to other agencies. Staff will not assume a colleague, or another professional will act and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

- Leigh Academy Bexley will respond to safeguarding concerns in line with the London Child Protection Procedures and London Safeguarding Children Threshold Document (which is found online at https://www.londoncp.co.uk)

- Where it is identified a child may benefit from Early Help support, the DSL (or deputy) will generally lead as appropriate and make a request for support via the MASH.

    - The DSL will keep all Early Help cases under constant review and consideration will be given to escalating concerns to the MASH or seeking advice via the Education Safeguarding Service if the situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.
    - Where relevant, setting action, assessments and planning will link to any existing Early Help plan and/or wider multi-agency planning.

- All staff are made aware of the process for making referrals to Integrated Children's Services and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

- Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger (for example, under section 17 or 47 of the Children Act), a 'request for support' will be made immediately to Bexley Safeguarding Partnership MASH Consultation Line and/or the police in line with LCP.

    - Leigh Academy Bexley recognise that in situations where there are immediate child protection concerns for a child as identified in line with Support Level Guidance, it is NOT to investigate as a single agency, but to act in line with Local Children's Partnership guidance which may involve multi-agency decision making**.**
    - The DSL may seek advice or guidance from the Trust Safeguarding Advisor, Education Safeguarding (Bexley, Greenwich, Medway) or Lessas in Kent before deciding next steps.
    - They may also seek advice or guidance from a social worker at the Front Door service who are the first point of contact for Integrated Children's Services (ICS).

- In the event of a request for support to the MASH being necessary, parents/carers will be informed and consent to this will be sought by the DSL in line with guidance provided by Bexley Safeguarding Partnership and ICS. Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents or carers. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents or carers about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL. If we believe that notifying the parents or carers would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children's social care team before doing so. In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents or carers of all the children involved. We will think carefully about what information we provide about the other child involved, and when. We will work with the police and/or local authority children's social care to make sure our approach to information sharing is consistent.

The DSL will, along with any relevant agencies (this will be decided on a case-by-case basis):

- Meet with the victim's parents or carers, with the victim, to discuss what's being put in place to safeguard them, and understand their wishes in terms of what support they may need and how the report will be progressed.

- Meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss support for them, and what's being put in place that will impact them, e.g. moving them out of classes with the victim, and the reason(s) behind any decision(s).

- If, after a request for support or any other planned external intervention, a child's situation does not appear to be improving, or concerns regarding receiving a decision or the decisions made, staff or the DSL will re-refer (if appropriate) and/or DSLs will follow the Local Children' Partnership Escalation Policy to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.

- DSLs and staff will be mindful of the need for the Academy to ensure any activity or support implemented to support children and/or families is recorded. Support provided by the Academy where families are struggling will be overseen and reviewed by the DSL on a regular basis to ensure activity does not obscure potential safeguarding concerns from the wider professional network. Where the Academy is unsure, advice will be sought from the Trust Safeguarding Advisor, Trust Safeguarding Lead or their local Education Safeguarding Service (Greenwich, Bexley and Medway). In Kent, advice can be sought from Lessas. Consultations can also be completed with local Social Work Teams.

9.1. Child Protection Procedures

- All staff are made aware of the definitions and indicators of abuse and neglect as identified by 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'-2023 and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education-2025'.

- If staff are made aware of a child protection concern, they are expected to:

    - Listen carefully to the concern and be non-judgmental;
    - Only use open questions to clarify information where necessary, e.g. who, what, where, when or Tell, Explain, Describe (TED);
    - Not promise confidentiality as concerns will have to be shared further, for example, with the DSL and potentially Integrated Children's Services;
    - Be clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed;
    - Record the concern in line with the academy record keeping requirements (see section 9);
    - Inform the DSL (or deputy), immediately via Bromcom, speaking to the DSO or any DDSL. If a member of staff chooses to speak to a member of the safeguarding team in the first instance, they must go back and record their interaction with the student on Bromcom.

Leigh Academy Bexley adheres to the

- London Child Protection Procedures and London Safeguarding Children Threshold Document (which is found online at https://www.londoncp.co.uk)

- Leigh Academy Bexley is an Operation Encompass School. This means we work in partnership with Metropolitan Police to provide support to children experiencing domestic abuse.

- The academy recognises that in situations where there are immediate child protection concerns identified in line with Support Level Guidance, it is NOT to investigate as a single agency but to act in line with the Bexley Safeguarding Partnership guidance which may involve multi-agency decision making**.** The DSL may seek advice or guidance from their Area Education Safeguarding Advisor from the Education Safeguarding Service before deciding next steps. They may also seek advice or guidance from a social worker at the MASH service who are the first point of contact.

- If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a request for support will be made immediately to MASH and/or the police in line with Bexley Safeguarding Partnership Procedures.

- All staff are aware of the process for making requests for support referrals for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

- In most cases, a request for support will be made by the DSL or a deputy. However if the DSL or a deputy is not immediately available to discuss an urgent concern, staff will seek advice from another member of the academy leadership team including the Principal's PA. If anyone other than the DSL makes a referral to external services, they will inform the DSL as soon as possible.

- In the event of a request for support to the Bexley Safeguarding Partnership being necessary, parents/carers will be informed and consent to this will be sought by the DSL in line with guidance provided by the Bexley Safeguarding Partnership Parents/carers will be informed unless there is a valid reason not to do so, for example, if to do so would put a child at risk of harm or would undermine a criminal investigation.

- The DSL will keep all early help cases under constant review and consideration will be given to a request for support to the Bexley Safeguarding Partnership's MASH consultation line if the situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

- If, after a request for support or any other planned external intervention, a child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL will consider following Resolving Professional Differences – Multi-agency Escalation policy to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves. DSLs may request support with this via the Education Safeguarding Service.

10. Record Keeping

- All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions, and reasons for those decisions, will be recorded in writing via the BromCom and brought without delay to the attention of the DSL.

- Records will be completed as soon as possible after the incident/event, using the child's words and will be signed and dated by the member of staff. Child protection records will record facts and not personal opinions. A body map will be completed if visible injuries to a child have been observed.

- If there is an immediate safeguarding concern the member of staff will consult with a DSL before completing the form as reporting urgent concerns takes priority.

- If members of staff are in any doubt about recording requirements, they will discuss their concerns with the DSL.

- Child protection records will include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the concern was followed up and resolved and details regarding any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

- Child protection records will accurately reflect the voice of the child at every available stage. The views of the parents/carers will be consistently sought and will be recorded as part of safeguarding processes supporting the child.

- Child protection records are kept confidential and stored securely. Child protection records will be kept for individual children and will be maintained separately from all other records relating to the child in the Academy. Child protection records are kept in accordance with data protection legislation and are retained centrally and securely by the DSL.

- All child protection records will be transferred in accordance with data protection legislation to the child's subsequent Academy, under confidential and separate cover as soon as possible; within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. Child protection files will be transferred securely to the new DSL, separately to the child's main file, and a confirmation of receipt will be obtained.
- When child protection files are transferred, the school will include a clear, structured summary identifying current safeguarding concerns, relevant context, and ongoing support needs, distinguishing these clearly from historic information.

- In addition to the child protection file, the DSL will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the DSL at the new school or college in advance of a child leaving, for example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue to provide support.

- Where the Academy receives child protection files from another setting, the DSL will ensure key staff such as the Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinators (SENCOs) will be made aware of relevant information as required.

- Where a student joins the school and no child protection files are received, the DSL will proactively seek to confirm from the previous setting whether any child protections exist for the student, and if so, if the files have been sent.

11. Multi-agency working

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises the pivotal role we have to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and is committed to its responsibility to work within the Local arrangements as identified within 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

- The Academy leadership team, Community Board and DSL will work to establish strong and co-operative local relationships with professionals in other agencies, including the safeguarding partners in line with local and national guidance.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises the importance of multi-agency working and is committed to working alongside partner agencies to provide a coordinated response to promote children's welfare and protect them from harm. This includes contributing to LCP processes as required, such as, participation in relevant safeguarding multi-agency plans and meetings, including Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups, Strategy Meetings, Child in Need meetings or other early help multi-agency meetings.

- The Academy will allow access for Bexley Safeguarding Partnership and, where appropriate, from a placing local authority, to conduct, or to consider whether to conduct, a section 17 or a section 47 assessment.

- Where a child is supported through Early Help/Family, child in need, child protection or care planning processes, the School/College will work with partner agencies to promote joined-up planning and avoid duplication, ensuring the child's educational needs, safety and lived experience are reflected.

- The Principal and DSL are aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult (PACE Code C 2019) where there is a need for detention, treatment and questioning by police officers and will respond to concerns in line with our Academy's 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation' policy and behaviour policy, which is informed by the DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' guidance.

12. Confidentiality and information sharing

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises our duty and powers to hold, use and share relevant information with appropriate agencies in matters relating to child protection at the earliest opportunity as per statutory guidance outlined within KCSIE.

- Where reasonably possible, the school/college will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil/student. There is an expectation that contact information will be held for both parents, unless doing so would put a child at risk of harm.

- Leigh Academy Bexley has an appropriately trained Data Protection Officer (DPO) as required by the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) to ensure that our Academy is compliant with all matters relating to confidentiality and information sharing requirements. The DPO at Leigh Academy Bexley is Chris Dillon, Deputy Principal.

- Staff will have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share and withhold personal information. The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

    - KCSIE 2025 the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and the DfE ''Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners'' guidance provides further details regarding information sharing principles and expectations. This is available to staff in a 'key documents' folder in Google Drive.

- The Principal and DSL will disclose relevant safeguarding information about a student with staff on a 'need to know' basis. Staff will be provided with enough information to keep a child safe which may include complex safeguarding systems around the child for their wellbeing. Staff will be provided with appropriate updates to promote a culture of vigilance and professional challenge.

- All members of staff must be aware that whilst they have duties to keep information confidential, in line with our Data Protection/GDPR policy. Staff also have a professional responsibility to be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children; this may include sharing information with the DSL and with other agencies as appropriate.

- In regard to confidentiality and information sharing, staff will only involve those who need to be involved, such as the DSL (or a deputy) and outside agencies such as Police and Children's Social Care. Information sharing decisions must have due regard to the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 and be supported by appropriate risk assessments. All staff are aware they cannot promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may not be in the best interests of the child.

13. Complaints

- All members of the Academy community should feel able to raise or report any concerns about children's safety or potential failures in the Academy safeguarding regime. The Academy has a complaints procedure available to parents, students and members of staff and visitors who wish to report concerns or complaints. This can be found on the Academy website.

- Whilst we encourage members of our community to report concerns and complaints directly to us, we recognise this may not always be possible. Children, young people, and adults who have experienced abuse in education can contact the NSPCC 'Report Abuse in Education' helpline on 0800 136 663 or via email: help@nspcc.org.uk

- Staff can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally.

    - Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

- The leadership team at Leigh Academy Bexley will take all concerns reported to the Academy seriously and all complaints will be considered and responded to in line with the relevant and appropriate process.

- Anything that constitutes an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with in line with section 8 of this policy.

14. Specific Safeguarding Issues

- Leigh Academy Bexley is aware of the range of specific safeguarding issues and situations that can put children at greater risk of harm. In addition to Part one, DSLs, Academy leaders and staff who work directly with children will read Annex B of KCSIE which contains important additional information about the following specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues.

- Where staff are unsure how to respond to specific safeguarding issues, they should follow the processes as identified in part 3 of this policy and speak with the DSL or a deputy.

Child-on-child abuse

- All members of staff at Leigh Academy Bexley recognise that children can abuse other children (referred to as child-on-child abuse, previously known as 'peer-on-peer' abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of Academy and online. The school recognizes that child-on-child abuse is preventable. Timely, evidence-based support is key to preventing children from going on to commit further abuse or violence.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to:

    - Racism, faith-based prejudice, and other forms of discrimination or prejudice-based harm
    - Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
    - Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children
    - Physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
    - Sexual violence and sexual harassment
    - Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes
    - 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
    - Upskirting (which is a criminal offence), 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

- Any allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with in line with this child protection policy and KCSIE (in particular, part two and five).

- Leigh Academy Bexley adopts a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse. We believe that abuse is abuse and it will never be tolerated or dismissed as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”; this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and can create an unsafe environment for children and a culture that normalises abuse, which can prevent children from coming forward to report it.

- All staff have a role to play in challenging inappropriate behaviours between children. Staff recognise that some child-on-child abuse issues may be affected by gender, age, ability and culture of those involved. For example, for gender-based abuse, girls are more likely to be victims and boys more likely to be perpetrators.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse is still likely to be taking place and it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such, it is important that staff speak to the DSL (or deputy) about any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse.

- In order to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, Leigh Academy Bexley will:

    - Use the PSHE and RSE curriculum to ensure that all students are taught how to be respectful to one another.
    - Aspects of the ICT and PSHE curriculum will be used to ensure students remain safe and respectful online.
    - Students have the opportunity to report concerns, either with names or anonymously through both our student voice boxes and The SHARP system which students can access from the Academy’s homepage.
    - Follow our robust behaviour policy to ensure that child-on-child abuse is dealt with quickly.

- Leigh Academy Bexley wants children to feel able to confidently report abuse and know their concerns will be treated seriously. All allegations of child-on-child abuse will be reported to the DSL and will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with in line with associated Academy policies, including child protection, anti-bullying, and behaviour. Students who experience abuse will be offered appropriate support, regardless of where the abuse takes place.

- Concerns about students’ behaviour, including child-on-child abuse taking place offsite will be responded to as part of a partnership approach with students’ and parents/carers. Offsite behaviour concerns will be recorded and responded to in line with existing appropriate policies, for example anti-bullying, acceptable use, behaviour and child protection policies.

- Alleged victims, alleged perpetrators and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported by:

    - Reviewing all reports taken thoroughly, listening to all parties.
    - Dealing with incidents in-line with our robust behaviour policy’s attitudes to learning ladder.
    - Keep families fully informed of incidents and decisions made from those incidents.
    - Ensure that no matter what the involvement of a student within an incident that they are kept safe from harm.
    - Where necessary involve outside agencies such as the Bexley Safeguarding Partnership and/or the police.

Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

- When responding to concerns relating to child-on-child sexual violence or harassment, staff at Leigh Academy Bexley will follow the guidance outlined in Part five of KCSIE.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that sexual violence and sexual abuse can happen anywhere, and all staff will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here.' Leigh Academy Bexley recognises sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children and can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally). Sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable.

- **All** victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment, or ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

- Abuse that occurs online or outside of the Academy will not be dismissed or downplayed and will be treated equally seriously and in line with relevant policies/procedures.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this will be explained in such a way to students that avoids alarming or distressing them.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory, so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse. All staff will be aware certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone, for example because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation.

- The DSL (or deputy) is likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and will be the most appropriate person to advise on the initial response.

    - The DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment which will be considered on a case-by-case basis which explores how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator, and any other children involved/impacted, in line with part five of KCSIE and relevant local/national guidance and support.
    - The risk and needs assessment will be recorded and kept under review and will consider the victim (especially their protection and support), the alleged perpetrator, and all other children, and staff and any actions that are required to protect them.
    - Any concerns involving an online element will take place in accordance with relevant local/national guidance and advice.

- Reports will initially be managed internally by the Academy and where necessary will be referred to MASH and/or the police. Important considerations which may influence this decision include:

    - The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed.
    - The nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether Harmful Sexual Behavior has been displayed.
    - The ages of the children involved.

- The developmental stages of the children involved.
- Any power imbalance between the children.
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse - sexual abuse can be accompanied by other forms of abuse and a sustained pattern may not just be of a sexual nature.
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between children.
- Understanding intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents.
- Whether there are any ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students, or Academy staff.
- Any other related issues and wider context, including any links to child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation.

- The Academy will in most instances engage with both the victim's and alleged perpetrator's parents/carers when there has been a report of sexual violence; this might not be necessary or proportionate in the case of sexual harassment and will depend on a case-by-case basis. The exception to this is if there is a reason to believe informing a parent/carer will put a child at additional risk. Any information shared with parents/carers will be in line with information sharing expectations, our confidentiality policy, and any data protection requirements, and where they are involved, will be subject to discussion with other agencies (for example Children's Social Work Service and/or the police) to ensure a consistent approach is taken.

- If at any stage the DSL is unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from the Education Safeguarding Service.

Making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes by children

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognizes that consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes can be a safeguarding issue; all concerns will be reported to and dealt with by the DSL (or deputy).

- When made aware of concerns involving consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes by children, staff are advised:

    - To report any concerns to the DSL immediately.
    - Never to view, copy, print, share, forward, store or save the imagery, or ask a child to share or download it – this may be illegal. If staff have already inadvertently viewed imagery, this will be immediately reported to the DSL.
    - Do not delete the imagery or ask the child to delete it.
    - To avoid saying or doing anything to blame or shame any children involved.
    - To reassure the child(ren) involved and explain that the DSL will be informed so they can receive appropriate support and help. Do not promise confidentiality, as other agencies may need to be informed and be involved.
    - Not to investigate or ask the child(ren) involved to disclose information regarding the imagery
    - To not share information about the incident with other members of staff, children/young people, or parents/carers, including the families and child(ren) involved in the incident; this is the responsibility of the DSL.

- DSLs will respond to concerns in line with the non-statutory UKCIS guidance: 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' and the local

KSCMP guidance. When made aware of a concern involving consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes:

- The DSL will hold an initial review meeting to explore the context and ensure appropriate and proportionate safeguarding action is taken in the best interests of any child involved. This may mean speaking with relevant staff and the children involved as appropriate.
- Parents/carers will be informed at an early stage and be involved in the process to best support children, unless there is good reason to believe that involving them would put a child at risk of harm.
- All decisions and action taken will be recorded in line with our child protection procedures.
- A referral will be made to ICS and/or the police immediately if:

    - The incident involves an adult (over 18).
    - There is reason to believe that a child has been coerced, blackmailed, or groomed, or there are concerns about their capacity to consent, for example, age of the child or they have special educational needs.
    - The image/videos involve sexual acts and a child under the age of thirteen, depict sexual acts which are unusual for the child's developmental stage, or are violent.
    - A child is at immediate risk of harm owing to the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes.

- The DSL may choose to involve other agencies at any time if further information/concerns are disclosed at a later date.
- If DSLs are unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from the Education Safeguarding Service.

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

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. Children may also experience exploitation alongside other forms of harm or abuse.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that children can become trapped in CCE as perpetrators can threaten victims and their families with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. Children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves which can mean their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised (particularly older children) and they are not treated as victims, despite the harm they have experienced. The experience of girls who are criminally exploited can also be very different to that of boys. We also recognise that boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE).

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge, for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities and includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited, for example they may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

- If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of CSE or CCE, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or a deputy.

Serious violence

- All staff are aware of the indicators which may signal children are at risk from or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include unexplained gifts or new possessions, 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 and may be at risk of CCE.

- Any concerns regarding serious violence will be reported and responded to in line with other child protection concerns by speaking with a DSL or deputy. The initial response to child victims is important and staff will take any allegations seriously and work in ways that support children and keep them safe.

Modern Slavery

- Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in the Statutory Guidance: Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims.

- If there are concerns that any member of the community is a victim or involved with modern slavery, concerns should be shared with a DSL or deputy and will be responded to in line with this policy.

So-called Honour Based Abuse (HBA)

- So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA), including abuse linked to faith or belief, encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

- All forms of HBA are abuse, regardless of the motivation, and concerns will be responded to in line with section 3 of this policy. Staff will report any concerns about HBA to the DSL (or a deputy). If there is an immediate threat, the police will be contacted.

- All staff will speak to the DSL (or deputy) if they have any concerns about forced marriage. Staff can also contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: 020 7008 0151 or fmu@fcdo.gov.uk

- Whilst all staff will speak to the DSL (or deputy) if they have any concerns about FGM, there is a specific legal reporting duty on teachers.

- Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers in England and Wales, **to personally report to the police where they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl.**

- It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining students, however teachers who do not personally report such concerns may face disciplinary sanctions. Further information on when and how to make a report can be found at: Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information and FGM Mandatory reporting Duty Fact Sheet.

- Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they are expected to also discuss any FGM concerns with the DSL (or a deputy), and Bexley Safeguarding Partnership should be informed as appropriate.

Preventing radicalisation

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Leigh Academy Bexley is aware of our duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism", also known as the Prevent duty and the specific obligations placed upon us as an education provider regarding risk assessments, working in partnership, staff training, and IT policies.

- Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

- All staff have received appropriate training to enable them to be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may need help or protection from radicalisation.

- Staff will report any concerns to the DSL (or a deputy), who is aware of the local procedures to follow for making a Prevent referral. If there is an immediate threat, the police will be contacted via 999.

Cybercrime

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that children with particular skills and interests in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen offline but are enabled at scale and at speed online) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer/internet enabled device) cybercrime.

- If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of becoming involved in cyber-dependent cybercrime, the DSL or a deputy will be informed, and consideration will be given to accessing local support and/or referring into the Cyber Choices programme, which aims to intervene when young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

- Where there are concerns about 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs online, child sexual abuse and exploitation, or other areas of concern such as online bullying or general online safety, they will be responded to in line with the child protection policy and other appropriate policies.

Domestic abuse

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that:

    - Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents.
    - Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to, psychological (including coercive control), physical, sexual, economic, or emotional abuse.
    - Children can be victims of domestic abuse if they see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse).
    - Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background, and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.
    - Domestic abuse can take place within different types of relationships, including ex-partners and family members.
    - There is always a potential for domestic abuse to take place when parents/families separate, or for existing domestic abuse to persist or escalate post separation.
    - Domestic abuse can have a detrimental and long-term impact on children's health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.
    - Domestic abuse concerns will not be looked at in isolation and our response will be considered as part of a holistic approach which takes into account children's lived experiences.
    - It is important not to use victim blaming language and to adopt a trauma informed approach when responding to concerns relating to domestic abuse.

- If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of seeing, hearing, or experiencing the effects of any form of domestic abuse, or in their own intimate relationships, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or a deputy.

- Leigh Academy Bexley is an Operation Encompass School. This means we work in partnership with Metropolitan Police to provide support to children experiencing the effects of domestic abuse. An Operation Encompass notification is sent to the school when the police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and there are children in the household; the police are expected to inform schools before the child(ren) arrive the following day.

    - Operation Encompass notifications help ensure that we have up to date and relevant information about children's circumstances and enables us to put immediate support in place according to the child's needs.
    - Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures and where appropriate, a referral to the front door will be made if there are any concerns about a child's welfare.
    - Where the school is unsure of how to respond to a notification, advice will be sought from the Education Safeguarding Service or the Operation Encompass helpline which is available 8AM to 1PM, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990.

Mental health

- All staff recognise 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.

- Staff are aware that children's experiences, for example where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

- Staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

- All staff should be alert to the fact that mental health issues can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Where a child's mental health presents a safeguarding concern, this must be raised immediately with the DSL or a deputy.

15. Supporting Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm

- Whilst all children should be protected, Leigh Academy Bexley acknowledges that some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm. This can include the following groups:

Safeguarding children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)

- Leigh Academy Bexley acknowledges that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and barriers for recognising abuse and neglect.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that children with SEND may face additional communication barriers and experience difficulties in managing or reporting abuse or challenges. Children with SEND will be supported to communicate and ensure that their voice is heard and acted upon.

- All members of staff are encouraged to appropriately explore potential indicators of abuse such as behaviour, mood changes or injuries and not to assume that they are related to the child's disability. Staff will be mindful that children with SEND, or certain medical conditions may be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.

- Members of staff are encouraged to be aware that children with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by safeguarding concerns, such as exploitation, peer group isolation or bullying including prejudice-based bullying.

- To address these additional challenges, our Academy will always consider implementing extra pastoral support and attention for children with SEND. The DSL will work closely with the SENCO (Victoria Baldock) to plan support as required.

Children requiring mental health support

- Leigh Academy Bexley has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students. 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.

- Where there are concerns regarding possible mental health problems for students, staff should:

    - Staff should report concerns on to Bromcom and report the concern to either the DSL, DSO or the students college team.

- Make a referral for onsite counselling through the mental health lead.

- Age/ability appropriate education will be provided to our students to help promote positive health, wellbeing, and resilience. This will take place in PSHE lessons, for time and assemblies.

Children who are absent from education

- Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines.

- A robust response to children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions will support the identification of such abuse and may help prevent the risk of children going missing in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging and also where children are already known to Kent Integrated Children's Services and/or have a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

- Where possible, the Academy will hold more than one emergency contact number for each student, so we have additional options to make contact with a responsible adult if a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern (see section 3.5).

- Where the school/college have concerns that a child is missing from education, we will respond in line with our statutory duties (DfE: Children missing education) and local policies. Local support is available via the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS).

Elective Home Education (EHE)

- Where a parent/carer expresses their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, we will respond in line with national Elective Home Education guidance.

- We will work together with parents/carers and other key professionals and organisations to ensure decisions are made in the best interest of the child.

Children who may benefit from Early Help

Any child may benefit from early help. In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children, this may include support delivered through community-based approaches or via a joined-up multi-agency response.

- All staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

    - is unborn
    - is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific medical/additional needs
    - has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
    - is suffering from mental ill health
    - is a young carer
    - is bereaved
    - is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines

- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child.
- is missing education, or persistently absent, or not in receipt of full-time education

Where it is identified a child may need early help, staff and DSLs will respond in line with section 3 of this policy.

Referrals to Family Help

- Family Help provides targeted multi-agency support when a family faces challenges that require coordinated intervention. Referrals to Family Help are distinct from community-based early help and are managed by the DSL in accordance with local authority arrangements.

Children who need a social worker (child in need and child protection plans)

- The DSL will hold details of social workers working with children in the Academy so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes.

- Where children have a social worker, this will inform Academy decisions about their safety and promoting their welfare, for example, responding to unauthorised absence and provision of pastoral and/or academic support.

Looked after children, previously looked after children and care leavers

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises the common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect and a previously looked after child also potentially remains vulnerable.

- Where safeguarding concerns arise for children who are looked after, previously looked after, in kinship care or leaving care, the school will ensure safeguarding action is considered alongside existing care planning and support arrangements.

- The school has appointed a 'designated teacher' (Sherene Hull, Deputy Head of Petworth College) who works with local authorities, including the relevant virtual school (including the virtual school head), based on the residence of the student, to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after or who have been previously looked after.

- The designated teacher will work with the DSL to ensure appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after them.

- Where a child is looked after, the DSL will hold details of the social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.

- Where the Academy believe a child is being cared for as part of a private fostering arrangement (occurs when a child under 16 or 18 if the child is disabled is cared for and lives with an adult who is not a relative for 28 days or more) there is a duty to recognise these arrangements and inform the Local Authority via the MASH consultation line.

- Where a child is leaving care, the DSL will hold details of the local authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support them and will liaise with them as necessary regarding any issues of concern.

Children who are privately fostered

- Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 for children with a disability) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer. Such arrangements may come to the attention of our staff through the normal course of their interaction, and promotion of learning activities, with children.

- When private fostering arrangements come to the attention of the Academy, we must notify Bexley Children's Services in line with the Bexley Safeguarding Partnership in order to allow the local authority to check if the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.

Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi, or Trans (LGBT) and/or Gender Questioning

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that children who are LGBTQ+, Gender questioning or are perceived by other children to be LGBTQ+ (whether they are or not) can be targeted by other children or others within the wider community.

Leigh Academy Bexley recognises risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. LGBT is included within our Relationships Education/ Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum, and our staff will endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for children to speak out or share any concerns.

When supporting a gender questioning pupil, we will take a cautious approach as there are still unknowns around the impact of social transition, and a pupil may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases, autism and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

We will also consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with their parents/carers (other than in rare circumstances where involving parents/carers would constitute a significant risk of harm to the pupil). We will also include any clinical advice that is available and consider how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying.

Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. We therefore aim to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where pupils can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

16. Online Safety

This section should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Online Safety Policy.

- It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate material or behaviours online. Leigh Academy Bexley will adopt a whole Academy approach to online safety which will empower, protect, and educate our students and staff in their use of technology, and establish mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

- Leigh Academy Bexley will ensure online safety is considered as a running and interrelated theme when devising and implementing our policies and procedures, and when planning our curriculum, staff training, the role and responsibilities of the DSL and parental engagement.

- Leigh Academy Bexley identifies that the breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

    - Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content. For example, pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
    - Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users. For example, peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
    - Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm. For example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (including consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
    - Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

- The Principal will be informed of any online safety concerns by the DSL, as appropriate. The named governor for safeguarding will report on online safety practice and incidents, including outcomes, on a regular basis to the wider governing body.

- Our Academy has processes to support our students and the risks around the potential exposure to pornography and misogynistic influencers – including the 'manosphere' and 'incel culture' – and a range of other related risks including the use of artificial intelligence and 'deepfakes'.

Artificial intelligence (AI)

Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that when used safely, effectively and with the right infrastructure in place, generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools have many uses which could benefit our entire academy community.

However, it is important to recognise that AI tools can also pose safeguarding risks, as well as moral, ethical and legal concerns. These include, but are not limited to:

- exposure to inappropriate or harmful content, including bullying, harassment, abuse and exploitation
- privacy and data protection breaches/risks
- intellectual property infringements
- academic integrity challenges such as plagiarism and cheating
- exposure to inaccurate, misleading, or biased content.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini.

Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning, and in helping to protect and safeguard pupils. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose pupils to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

Leigh Academy Bexley will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully pupils in line with this policy and our [anti-bullying/behaviour/artificial intelligence] policy.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools while they are still being developed and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the school. Our academy's requirements for filtering and monitoring also apply to the use of AI, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education. Add any additional procedures you may have in place for dealing with safeguarding concerns related to AI – for example where making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes have been shared that are AI-generated.

Leigh Academy Bexley only permits the use of generative AI tools which have been approved and provided by the school for work and/or educational purposes, following the senior leadership team undertaking risk assessments and/or data protection impact assessments prior to use.

Staff and students will be made aware of the benefits and risks of using generative AI tools and the school expectations by:

- PSHE
- Computing
- CPD

Leigh Academy Bexley will respond to any misuse of AI in line with relevant policies, including but not limited to, anti-bullying, behaviour, data protection, complaints, allegations against staff and child protection.

Mobile and Smart Devices/Technology

Leigh Academy Bexley recognises the specific risks that can be posed by mobile and smart devices/ technology. This applies to any device with functionality or the ability to send or receive messages or notifications, connect to mobile networks, or record images, audio and/or video. This may include, but is not limited to, devices with built-in mobile connectivity, smart phones, smart watches, smart glasses, fitness trackers and other wearable technology.

In accordance with KCSIE Leigh Academy Bexley has appropriate mobile and smart device/technology and image use policies in place, which are shared and understood by all members of the community. These policies can be found within the Leigh Academies Trust bring your own device policies here**.**

In line with statutory guidance, this school is a mobile phone-free environment by default. Pupils do not have access to their mobile phones throughout the school day, including lessons, breaktimes, and lunchtimes. Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that while restrictions on mobile phone use, including operating mobile-free environments, can help to manage safeguarding risks, such measures are most effective when embedded within a wider safeguarding and behaviour framework.

Policies and procedures

- The DSL has overall responsibility for online safety within the Academy but will liaise with other members of staff, for example the Trust's Director of Infrastructure , IT technicians and curriculum leads as necessary.

- The DSL will respond to online safety concerns in line with our child protection and other associated policies, including our Anti-bullying policy, Behaviour policy, Online Safety Policy and Staff Code of Conduct and behaviour policies.

    - Internal sanctions and/or support will be implemented as appropriate.
    - Where necessary, concerns will be escalated and reported to relevant partner agencies in line with local policies and procedures.

- Leigh Academy Bexley uses a wide range of technology. This includes: computers, laptops, tablets and other digital devices, the internet, our learning platform, and email systems.

    - All Academy owned devices and systems will be used in accordance with our acceptable use policies and with appropriate safety and security measures in place.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises the specific risks that can be posed by mobile and smart technology, including mobile/smart phones, cameras, wearable technology and any other electronic devices with imaging and/or sharing capabilities. In accordance with KCSIE:

    - Leigh Academy Bexley has appropriate Online Safety, BYOD (staff and students) Acceptable Use Templates (AUPs) which are shared and understood by all members of the community. These policies can be found on the Academy website.

- Whilst filtering and monitoring is an important part of our online safety responsibilities, it is only one part of our approach to online safety and we recognise that we cannot rely on filtering and monitoring alone to safeguard our students; effective safeguarding practice, robust policies, appropriate classroom/behaviour management and regular education/training about safe and responsible use is essential and expected.

    - Students will use appropriate search tools, apps and online resources as identified by staff, following an informed risk assessment. Amend to include any specific expectations for example, using a child friendly search engine, using child friendly tools.
    - Internet use will be supervised by staff as appropriate to students age, ability and potential risk of harm:

Responsibilities

- The Trust Board alongside the Trust Director of Infrastructure has overall strategic responsibility for our filtering and monitoring approaches, including ensuring that our filtering and monitoring systems are regularly reviewed. The work in close conjunction with the Trust Safeguarding leads and Academy DSLs to ensure the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the appropriate filtering and monitoring provisions in place, manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.

- At Leigh Academy Bexley, a member of the senior leadership team is responsible for ensuring that our academy has met the DfE Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges.

- Our senior leadership team are responsible for:

    - Procuring filtering and monitoring systems.
    - Documenting decisions on what is blocked or allowed and why.
    - Reviewing the effectiveness of our provision.
    - Overseeing reports.
    - Ensuring that all staff understand their role, are appropriately trained, follow policies, processes and procedures and act on reports and concerns.
    - Ensuring the DSL and IT service providers have sufficient time and support to manage their filtering and monitoring responsibilities. A review of the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems is carried out at least once every academic year. Reviews are conducted by the SLT member responsible for filtering and monitoring, with the support of the DSL and IT staff. A record of these checks is maintained.

- The DSL has lead responsibility for overseeing and acting on:

    - Any filtering and monitoring reports.
    - Any child protection or safeguarding concerns identified.
    - Check the filtering and monitoring system.

- The IT service providers have technical responsibility for:

    - Maintaining filtering and monitoring systems.
    - Providing filtering and monitoring reports.
    - Completing technical actions identified following any concerns or checks to systems.
    - Working with the senior leadership team and DSL to procure systems, identify risks, carry out reviews and carry out checks.

- All members of staff are provided with an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring as part of our induction process, and in our child protection staff training.

- All staff, students and parents/carers have a responsibility to follow this policy to report and record any filtering or monitoring concerns.

Decision making and reviewing our filtering and monitoring provision

- When procuring and/or making decisions about our filtering and monitoring provision, our senior leadership team works closely with the DSL and the IT service providers. Decisions have been recorded (IT helpdesk and web filter audit log) and informed by an approach which ensures our systems meet our Academy Specific needs and circumstances, including but not limited to our student risk profile and specific technology use.

- Any changes to the filtering and monitoring approaches will be assessed by staff with safeguarding, educational and technical experience and, where appropriate, with consent from the leadership team; all changes to the filtering policy are logged and recorded (IT helpdesk and web filter audit log).

- Our Academy undertakes an at least annual review, in conjunction with relevant Trust leaders of our filtering and monitoring systems to ensure we understand the changing needs and potential risks posed to our community.

- In addition, on behalf of the Academy the Trust IT team alongside DSLs undertake regular checks on our filtering and monitoring systems, which are logged and recorded, to ensure our approaches are effective and can provide assurance to the Community Board that we are meeting our safeguarding obligations.

    - These checks are achieved by the DSL and DSO doing a spot check during each module and recorded on a Google sheet that is kept in the safeguarding 'key documents' folder. Filtering and monitoring standards

Appropriate filtering

- Leigh Academy Bexley's education broadband connectivity is provided through the UR central services team and Leigh Academy Bexley uses Smoothwall and Sophos as a filtering and monitoring system.

    - Our Internet provider is a member of Internet Watch Foundation (IWF).
    - Smoothwall has signed up to Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit list (CTIRU).
    - Smoothwall filter is blocking access to illegal content including child sexual abuse material (CSAM).
    - Smoothwall filter blocks access to sites which could promote or include harmful and/or inappropriate behaviour or material. This includes content which promotes discrimination or extremism, drugs/substance misuse, malware/hacking, gambling, piracy and copyright theft, pro-self-harm, eating disorder and/or suicide content, pornographic content and violent material.

- We filter internet use on all Academy owned, or provided, internet enabled devices and networks. This is achieved by:

    - Smoothwall and Sophos filtering and monitoring which is installed on all devices.
    - Our filtering systems should allow us to identify device names or IDs, IP addresses, and where possible, individual users, the time and date of attempted access and the search term or content being blocked.

- Our filtering system is operational, up to date and is applied to all users, including guest accounts, all Academy owned devices and networks, and all devices using the Academy broadband connection.

- We work with our IT service providers to ensure that our filtering policy is continually reviewed to reflect our needs and requirements.

- If there is failure in the software or abuse of the system, for example if students or staff accidentally or deliberately access, witness or suspect unsuitable material has been accessed, they are required to:

    - Turn off monitor/screen, report the concern immediately to a member of staff, and report the URL of the site to technical staff/services (using helpdesk ticket system).

- Filtering breaches will be reported to the DSL and technical staff and will be recorded and escalated as appropriate and in line with relevant policies, including our child protection, acceptable use, allegations against staff and behaviour policies.

- Parents/carers will be informed of filtering breaches involving their child.

- Any access to material believed to indicate a risk of significant harm, or that could be illegal, will be reported as soon as it is identified to the appropriate agencies, including but not limited to the Internet Watch Foundation (where there are concerns about child sexual abuse material), Metropolitan Police, NCA-CEOP or Bexley Safeguarding Partnership.

- If staff are teaching topics which could create unusual activity on the filtering and monitoring logs, or if staff perceive there to be unreasonable restrictions affecting teaching, learning or administration, they will report this to the DSL and/or leadership team who will liaise with IT services.

Appropriate monitoring

- We will appropriately monitor internet use on all Academy provided devices and networks. This is achieved by our Smoothwall and Sophos filtering and monitoring systems (insert if you also use Impero Classroom).

- All users will be informed that use of our devices and networks can/will be monitored and that all monitoring is in line with data protection, human rights and privacy legislation.

- If a concern is identified via our monitoring approaches:

    - Where the concern relates to students, it will be reported to the DSL and will be recorded and responded to in line with relevant policies, such as child protection, acceptable use, and behaviour policies.
    - Where the concern relates to staff, it will be reported to the Principal (Academy Director if the concern relates to the Principal), in line with our staff handbook

- Where our monitoring approaches detect any immediate risk of harm or illegal activity, this will be reported as soon as possible to the appropriate agencies; including but not limited to, the emergency services via 999, Metropolitan Police via 101, NCA-CEOP, LADO or Bexley Safeguarding Partnership.

Information security and access management

- Leigh Academy Bexley is responsible for ensuring an appropriate level of security protection procedures are in place, in order to safeguard our systems as well as staff and students. Further information can be found in our Staff Handbook and Acceptable Use Policy.

- Leigh Academy Bexley will review the effectiveness of our procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies and maintain a running record of checks.

  Phil Wilson, a member of the senior leadership team is responsible for ensuring that our Academy has met the DfE cyber security standards for schools and colleges.

Remote/Online learning

- Leigh Academy Bexley will ensure any remote sharing of information, communication and use of online learning tools and systems will be in line with privacy and data protection requirements and any local/national guidance.

- All communication with students and parents/carers will take place using Academy provided or approved communication channels; for example, Academy provided email accounts and phone numbers and/or agreed systems: Google Classroom and Microsoft 365.

    - Any pre-existing relationships or situations which mean this cannot be complied with will be discussed with the DSL.

- Staff and students will engage with remote teaching and learning in line with existing behaviour principles as set out in our Academy behaviour policy and Acceptable Use Policies.

- Staff and students will be encouraged to report issues experienced at home and concerns will be responded to in line with our child protection and other relevant policies.

- When delivering remote learning, staff will follow our Remote Learning Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

Online Safety Training for Staff

- Leigh Academy Bexley will ensure that all staff receive online safety training, which, amongst other things, will include providing them with an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and their responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, as part of induction.

- Ongoing online safety training and updates for all staff will be integrated, aligned and considered as part of our overarching safeguarding approach. See section 7 for more information.

Educating students

- Leigh Academy Bexley will ensure a comprehensive whole Academy curriculum response is in place to enable all students to learn about and manage online risks effectively as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. See section 9 for more information.

Working with parents/carers

- Leigh Academy Bexley will build a partnership approach to online safety and will support parents/carers to become aware and alert of the potential benefits and risks and to reinforce the importance of children being safe online.

- Leigh Academy Bexley will ensure parents and carers understand what systems are used to filter and monitor their children's online use at Academy, what their children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and who from the Academy (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

- Where the Academy is made aware of any potentially harmful risks, challenges and/or hoaxes circulating online, national or locally, we will respond in line with the DfE 'Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes' guidance to ensure we adopt a proportional and helpful response.

17. Staff Engagement and Expectations

Staff awareness, induction and training

- References to the withdrawn Annex A have been removed; all staff are expected to read Part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education in full. All members of staff have been provided with a copy of Part one of the current version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025/2026 which covers safeguarding information for staff.

    - Academy leaders, including the DSL and governors/trustees will read KCSIE 2025 in its entirety.
    - Leaders and all Academy members of staff who work directly with children will read annex B of KCSIE 2025.
    - All members of staff have signed to confirm that they have read and understood the national guidance shared with them. This information is kept centrally by LAT through Thrive and also via Bromcom.

- It is a requirement that all members of staff have access to this policy and sign to say they have read and understood its contents. All staff are expected to re-read this policy at least annually (and following any updates) to ensure they understand our expectations and requirements.

- All new staff and volunteers (including agency and third-party staff) receive safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety, which, amongst other things, will include ensuring an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) to ensure they are aware of the Academy Internal safeguarding processes, as part of their induction. This training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the local safeguarding partners and explores the Bexley processes to follow.

- All staff members (including agency and third-party staff) will receive appropriate child protection training (including online safety) that is updated at least annually, to ensure they are aware of a range of safeguarding issues and how to report concerns. This will be completed through safeguarding training that will run each module and support online training that must be completed through Thrive, the LAT's online learning platform.

- Online safety training for staff will be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole Academy safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning. This will be completed through safeguarding training that will run each module and support online training that must be completed through Thrive, the LAT's online learning platform.

- In addition to specific child protection training, all staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. This will be completed through safeguarding training that will run each module and support online training that must be completed through Thrive, the LAT's online learning platform.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and from managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis, and staff are encouraged to contribute to and shape Academy safeguarding arrangements and child protection policies.

- All governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) training at induction. This training equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to be assured that our safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. This training is regularly updated and delivered by the DSL during Community Board Meetings.

- The DSL and Principal will provide an annual report to the Community Board detailing safeguarding training undertaken by all staff and will maintain an up-to-date record of who has been trained.

Safer working practice

- Our Academy takes steps as outlined in this and other relevant policies to ensure processes are in place for staff that promote continuous vigilance, maintain an environment that deters and prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behaviour.

- All members of staff are required to work within our clear guidelines on safer working practice as outlined in the Academy code of conduct.

- The DSL will ensure that all staff (including contractors) and volunteers are aware of the Academy expectations regarding safe and professional practice via the staff code of conduct and Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

- Staff will be made aware of the Academy behaviour management and physical intervention policies. Staff will manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe educational environment and will have a clear understanding of the needs of all children. Any physical interventions and/or use of reasonable force will be in line with our agreed policy and procedures, and national guidance.

- All staff will be made aware of the professional risks associated with the use of social media and electronic communication (such as email, mobile phones, texting, social networking). Staff will adhere to relevant Academy policies including staff behaviour policy, mobile and smart technology, Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs), and social media.

Supervision and support

- The induction process will include familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if members of staff have any concerns about a child's safety or welfare.
- The Academy will ensure that members of staff who are working as part of the Safeguarding team are provided with appropriate supervision in accordance with the statutory requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.
- Members of staff who have engaged in a Safeguarding issue have the opportunity to receive additional support by the DSL, Principal or access Wellbeing services provided by the Trust.
- The Academy will provide appropriate supervision and support for all members of staff to ensure that:

    - All staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
    - All staff are supported by the DSL in their safeguarding role.
    - All members of staff have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time.

- Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns for children's welfare or safety can seek support from the DSL.
- The DSL will also put staff in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they so wish. Staff can also approach organisations such as their Union, the Education Support Partnership or other similar organisations directly.

18. Safer Recruitment and Allegations Against Staff

Safer recruitment and safeguarding checks

- Leigh Academy Bexley is committed to ensure that we develop a safe culture and that all steps are taken to recruit staff and volunteers who are safe to work with our students and staff. Any person volunteering in a role that involves teaching, training, instructing, or supervising children frequently (more than 3 days in a 30-day period) or overnight is in regulated activity. An enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information must be obtained. The former 'supervision exemption' no longer applies. Furthermore, volunteers cannot work in EYFS until a DBS certificate including barred list information is received.

    - Leigh Academy Bexley will follow Part three, 'Safer recruitment' of Keeping Children Safe in Education and relevant guidance from The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
    - The Community Board, Trust Executive Leadership and Academy Leadership team are responsible for ensuring that the Academy follows safe recruitment processes as outlined within guidance.
    - The Community Board, Trust Executive Leadership and Academy Leadership team will ensure that at least one of the persons who conducts an interview has completed safer recruitment training.

- The Academy maintains an accurate Single Central Record (SCR) in line with statutory guidance.

- Leigh Academy Bexley are committed to supporting the statutory guidance from the Department for Education on the application of the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 and related obligations under the Childcare Act 2006 in schools.

- We advise all staff to disclose any reason that may affect their suitability to work with children including convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands, and warnings.

- Where the Academy places a student with an alternative provision provider, we continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that student and will need to satisfy ourselves that the provider can meet the needs of the student.

    - Leigh Academy Bexley will obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e., those checks that our school/college would otherwise perform in respect of our own staff.

- Where the Academy organises work experience placements, we will follow the advice and guidance as identified in Part three of KCSIE.

Allegations/concerns raised in relation to staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors

- Any concerns or allegations about staff will be recorded and dealt with appropriately in line with Part four of KCSIE and the LCB arrangements. In depth information can be found within our 'Managing Allegations against Staff' and/or staff handbook policy.

- Any concerns or allegations about staff will be recorded and dealt with appropriately in line with Part four of KCSIE and local guidance. Ensuring concerns are dealt with effectively will protect those working in or on behalf of the Academy from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

- Where Principals are unsure how to respond, for example if the Academy is unsure if a concern meets the harm 'thresholds', advice will be sought via the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Enquiry Line and/or the Education Safeguarding Service.

- In all cases where allegations are made against staff or low-level concerns are reported, once proceedings have been concluded, the Principal (and if they have been involved the LADO) will consider the facts and determine whether any lessons can be learned and if any improvements can be made.

- In the situation that the Academy receives an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using our premises for the purposes of running activities for children (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities), we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

Concerns that meet the 'harm threshold'

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises that it is possible for any member of staff, including trainee teachers, volunteers, contractors, agency and third-party staff (including supply teachers) and visitors to behave in a way that indicates a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in a school or college. This includes when someone has:

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

- Allegations against staff which meet this threshold will be responded to and managed in line with Part four of KCSIE. Allegations that meet the harm threshold will be referred immediately to the principal who will contact the LADO to agree further action to be taken in respect of the child and staff member. In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Principal, staff are advised that allegations should be reported to the Academies Director who will contact the LADO.

Concerns that do not meet the 'harm threshold'

- Leigh Academy Bexley may also need to take action in response to 'low-level' concerns about staff. Additional information regarding low-level concerns is contained with our staff code of conduct/low-levels concerns policy – this includes what a low-level concern is, the importance of sharing them and the confidential procedure to follow when sharing them.

    - Leigh Academy Bexley has an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the Academy are dealt with promptly and appropriately; this enables us to identify inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour early, minimise the risk of abuse and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the Academy are clear about

and act within appropriate professional boundaries, and in accordance with our ethos and values.
    - A 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant; a low-level concern is any concern that an adult working in or on behalf of the Academy may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with our code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and does not meet the 'harm threshold' or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.
    - Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example, suspicion, complaints, or allegations made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation, or as a result of vetting checks.

- It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly, recorded and dealt with appropriately to protect staff from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings.

- Low-level concerns should be shared confidentially in line with our Code of Conduct to the Principal.

    - Where low-level concerns are reported to the Academy, the principal will be informed of all low-level concerns and is the ultimate decision maker in respect of the response to all low-level concerns.
    - The principal will share concerns and liaise with the LADO.
    - Low-level concerns shared about supply staff and contractors will be shared with their employers so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.
    - If the Academy is in any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about a member of staff as a low-level concern in fact meets the harm threshold, we will consult with the LADO.

- Low-level concerns will be recorded in writing and reviewed so potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

    - Records will be kept confidential and will be held securely and retained and in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and other relevant policies and procedures (for example data retention policies).
    - Where a pattern is identified, the Academy will implement appropriate action, for example consulting with the LADO and/or LAT Safeguarding Lead and following our disciplinary procedures.

Safe Culture

- As part of our approach to safeguarding, the Academy has created and embedded a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour as set out in our code of conduct are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) and where all concerns are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

- Staff are encouraged and should feel confident to self-refer, if they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards. This includes where concerns may be felt to be deliberately invented or malicious; such allegations are extremely rare and as such all concerns should be reported and recorded.

- All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise any concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the Academy safeguarding regime. The leadership team at Leigh Academy Bexley will take all concerns or allegations received seriously.

- All members of staff are made aware of the Academy Whistleblowing procedure. It is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk.

- Staff can access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

- Leigh Academy Bexley has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person.

    - If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our Academy, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO.

19. Opportunities to Teach Safeguarding

- Leigh Academy Bexley will ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This will include covering relevant issues through Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education.

- We recognise that the Academy plays an essential role in helping children to understand and identify the parameters of what is appropriate child and adult behaviour, what is 'safe,' to recognise when they and others close to them are not safe, and how to seek advice and support when they are concerned. Our curriculum provides opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, social and emotional understanding, assertiveness and decision making so that students have a range of age-appropriate contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and that of others.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognises the crucial role we have to play in preventative education. Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole school approach which prepares students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny, misandry, racism, derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence and conflict, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment.

- Leigh Academy Bexley has a clear set of values and standards, upheld, and demonstrated throughout all aspects of academy life which are underpinned by our behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence based RSHE delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. Our programme is fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate.

- Leigh Academy Bexley recognise that a one size fits all approach will not be appropriate for all children, and a more personalised or contextualised approach, tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children might be needed, for example children who are victims of abuse and children with SEND.

- Our Academy systems support children to talk to a range of staff. All children will be listened to and heard, and their concerns will always be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate.

- RSHE is used to support the prevention of violence against women and girls as per the updated RSHE guidance July 2025. Our curriculum will include content on teaching about suicide prevention, making the Academy's plan for addressing this safely with secondary school pupils, including ensuring staff have the knowledge and skills to do this appropriately.

- Our Academy provides LGBT content to include same sex parents when talking about different types of families. Our academy is careful not to endorse any particular view or teach one sided views as fact. We avoid language and activities which repeat or enforce gender stereotypes.

- Our RSHE provision includes religion and belief, the rights of parents, including their access to RSHE Curriculum content and policies and our processes for managing difficult questions.

20. Physical Safety

Restrictive Interventions, including the Use of 'Reasonable Force'

- There may be circumstances when it is necessary for school staff to use restrictive interventions to safeguard children and others from harm.

- 'Restrictive interventions' is an umbrella term that refers to any action, planned or reactive, that limits a pupil's movement, liberty or freedom. This includes, but is not limited to:

    - the use of reasonable force.
    - physical restraint.
    - non force restrictive practices.
    - seclusion, where a pupil is prevented from leaving a space for safety reasons.

- The school is committed to minimising the need for restrictive interventions through positive behaviour support, early intervention and de-escalation strategies. Restrictive interventions will only be used when necessary, never as a punishment, and only where there is a real risk of harm.

- Any use of reasonable force will be lawful, necessary and proportionate, the minimum required to manage the situation and used for the shortest possible time.

- Particular care will be taken when supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) or other vulnerabilities, recognising that these pupils may be disproportionately affected. Reasonable adjustments and preventative approaches will be considered where appropriate.

- This approach is informed by the Department for Education guidance Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force in schools, which is effective from April 2026.

- In line with statutory guidance, all significant incidents involving restrictive interventions (including the use of reasonable force, restraint or seclusion) will be recorded in writing as soon as practicable and reported to parents/carers as soon as practicable, unless doing so would place a child at risk of harm or compromise a safeguarding or criminal investigation.

- Records will be reviewed by school leaders and governors to support safeguarding oversight, identify patterns and inform staff training.

- Further detail regarding behaviour management, de-escalation strategies, staff training and physical intervention can be found in the Behaviour Policy, SEND Policy / SEND Information Report and Staff Behaviour/Code of Conduct.
- The school may separate children according to their biological sex for sports or games of a competitive nature where the physical strength, stamina, or physique of the average girl would put her at a disadvantage in competition with the average boy.
- The school does not allow children into toilets designated for the opposite biological sex. Furthermore, the school does not allow any child aged 11 or older to undress in front of a child of the opposite biological sex in changing rooms or showers.

The use of Academy premises by other organisations

- Where our Academy facilities or premises are rented/hired out to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities) we will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe.

    - Where those services or activities are provided under the direct supervision or management of our Academy staff, our existing arrangements for child protection, including this policy, will apply.
    - Where services or activities are provided separately by another body using the Academy facilities/premises, the principal and Community Board will seek assurance that the provider concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed); and ensure that there are arrangements in place for the provider to liaise with the Academy on these matters where appropriate. If this assurance is not achieved, an application to use premises will be refused.

- Safeguarding requirements will be included in any transfer of control agreement (such as a lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises. Failure to comply with this will lead to termination of the agreement.

Site security

- All members of staff have a responsibility for maintaining awareness of buildings and grounds security and for reporting concerns that may come to light.

- Appropriate checks will be undertaken in respect of visitors and volunteers coming into the Academy as outlined within national guidance. Visitors will be expected to sign in and out via the office visitors log and to display a visitor's badge whilst on site.

- Adults can be identified by their lanyards. Academy staff wear black, LAT staff wear grey. Visitors are identified by either a green lanyard (DBS checked) or Red (no record of DBS and cannot be unsupervised.

- Any individual who is not known or identifiable on site should be challenged for clarification and reassurance. The Academy expects children to report concerns to staff immediately.

- The Academy will not accept the behaviour of any individual (parent or other) that threatens Academy security or leads others (child or adult) to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse access for that individual to the Academy site.

21. Local Support

- All members of staff in Leigh Academy Bexley are made aware of local support available.

Children's Specialist Services/Early Help

- **Bexley:**
    - Children's Services at the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 020 3045 5440 and ask for a consultation with a social worker. The opening hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/health-and-social-care/social-care-for-children/reporting-concerns-about-child/worried-about-child
    - Email: children's triage team@bexley.cjsm.net

- **Kent:**
    - 03000 41 11 11 (Out of Hours- 03000 41 91 91
    - Form/Portal: https://kccchildrens.kent.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/home

- **Greenwich:**
    - To contact the child referral team, please call 020 8921 3172.
    - For out of hours emergencies, please call 020 8854 8888.
    - https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200160/contact_us/1996/contact_childrens_services
    - Police 999 (urgent) 101 (non-urgent)
    - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

  Bexley: 0203 045 3436 (LADO Team)
  Email: LADO@bexley.gov.uk

  Greenwich: Telephone: 020 8921 3930
  Email: childrens-Lado@royalgreenwich.gov.uk
  childrens-Lado@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.cjsm.net

- https://bexleysafeguardingpartnership.co.uk (Bexley)
- https://www.greenwichsafeguardingchildren.org.uk (Greenwich)

Appendix 1: Categories of Abuse

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another. Broad categories include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, modern slavery, financial exploitation, stalking, and child-to-parent/caregiver 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. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. It should be noted that abuse can be carried out both on and offline and be perpetrated by men, women, and children.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing, coercing, or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, regardless of whether the child is aware of what is happening or appears to consent. The activities may involve physical contact, non-contact acts, online sexual exploitation, or grooming.

Signs that MAY INDICATE Sexual Abuse

- Sudden changes in behaviour and performance
- Displays of affection which are sexual and age inappropriate
- Self-harm, self-mutilation or attempts at suicide
- Alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal
- Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance
- Regression to younger behaviour for example thumb sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby
- Distrust of familiar adults, for example, anxiety of being left with relatives, a childminder or lodger
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Depression and withdrawal
- Fear of undressing for PE
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Fire setting

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.

Signs that MAY INDICATE physical abuse

- Bruises and abrasions around the face
- Damage or injury around the mouth
- Bi-lateral injuries such as two bruised eyes
- Bruising to soft area of the face such as the cheeks
- Fingertip bruising to the front or back of torso
- Bite marks
- Burns or scalds (unusual patterns and spread of injuries)
- Deep contact burns such as cigarette burns
- Injuries suggesting beatings (strap marks, welts)
- Covering arms and legs even when hot
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts.
- Injuries need to be accounted for. Inadequate, inconsistent, or excessively plausible explanations or a delay in seeking treatment should signal concern.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional or verbal maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Verbal abuse includes severe shouting, belittling, or constant criticism.

Signs that MAY INDICATE emotional abuse

- Over reaction to mistakes
- Lack of self-confidence/esteem
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self-harming
- Eating Disorders
- Extremes of passivity and/or aggression
- Compulsive stealing
- Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Unwillingness or inability to play
- Excessive need for approval, attention, and affection

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs that MAY INDICATE neglect.

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Inadequate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems
- Poor relationship with peers
- Compulsive stealing and scavenging
- Rocking, hair twisting and thumb sucking
- Running away
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Low self esteem

Appendix 2: Support Organisations

NSPCC 'Report Abuse in Education' Helpline

- 0800 136 663 or help@nspcc.org.uk

National Organisations

- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- Barnardo's: www.barnardos.org.uk
- Action for Children: www.actionforchildren.org.uk
- Children's Society: www.childrenssociety.org.uk

- Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse: www.csacentre.org.uk

Support for Staff

- Education Support Partnership: www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk
- Professional Online Safety Helpline: www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service: https://swgfl.org.uk/harmful-sexual-behaviour-support-service

Support for pupils/students

- ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk
- Papyrus: www.papyrus-uk.org
- The Mix: www.themix.org.uk
- Shout: www.giveusashout.org
- Fearless: www.fearless.org
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Support for Adults

- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Crime Stoppers: www.crimestoppers-uk.org
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- The Samaritans: www.samaritans.org
- NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood): www.napac.org.uk
- Action Fraud: www.actionfraud.police.uk
- Shout: www.giveusashout.org
- Advice now: www.advicenow.org.uk

Support for Learning Disabilities

- Respond: www.respond.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- Council for Disabled Children: https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

Contextual Safeguarding Network

- https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/

Kent Resilience Hub

- https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk/

Children with Family Members in Prison

- National information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO): www.nicco.org.uk/

Substance Misuse

- We are with you (formerly Addaction): www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/
- Talk to Frank: www.talktofrank.com

Domestic Abuse

- Domestic abuse services: www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk

- Refuge: www.refuge.org.uk
- Women's Aid: www.womensaid.org.uk
- Men's Advice Line: www.mensadviceline.org.uk
- Mankind: www.mankindcounselling.org.uk
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- Respect Phoneline: https://respectphoneline.org.uk

Criminal and Sexual Exploitation

- National Crime Agency: www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are
- It's not okay: www.itsnotokay.co.uk
- NWG Network: www.nwgnetwork.org
- County Lines Toolkit for Professionals: www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/county-lines-toolkit
- Multi-agency practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm: https://tce.researchinpractice.org.uk/

Honour Based Abuse

- Karma Nirvana: https://karmanirvana.org.uk
- Forced Marriage Unit: www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage
- FGM Factsheet: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496415/6_1639_HO_SP_FGM_mandatory_reporting_Fact_sheet_Web.pdf
- Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information: www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information
- The right to choose - government guidance on forced marriage: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-right-to-choose-government-guidance-on-forced-marriage

Child-on-Child abuse, including bullying, sexual violence and harassment

- Rape Crisis: https://rapecrisis.org.uk
- Brook: www.brook.org.uk
- Disrespect Nobody: www.disrespectnobody.co.uk
- Upskirting – know your rights: www.gov.uk/government/news/upskirting-know-your-rights
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation: www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk
- Stop it Now! www.stopitnow.org.uk
- Parents Protect: www.parentsprotect.co.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Diana Award: www.antibullyingpro.com
- Bullying UK: www.bullying.co.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- Centre of expertise on Child Sexual Abuse: www.csacentre.org.uk

Online Safety

- NCA-CEOP: www.ceop.police.uk and www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF): www.iwf.org.uk
- Childnet: www.childnet.com
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- Report Harmful Content: https://reportharmfulcontent.com

- Marie Collins Foundation: www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk
- Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety
- Get Safe Online: www.getsafeonline.org
- Parents Protect: www.parentsprotect.co.uk
- Cyber Choices: https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/cyber-crime/cyberchoices
- National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC): www.ncsc.gov.uk

Mental Health

- Mind: www.mind.org.uk
- Moodspark:https://moodspark.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- We are with you: www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/
- Anna Freud: www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/

Radicalisation and hate

- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
- Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit: www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
- True Vision: www.report-it.org.uk