

# NORTHFIELD SCHOOL & SPORTS COLLEGE

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

(incorporating Peer on Peer Abuse Policy & KCSIE 3 September 2018)

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## **Purpose and Aim**

Northfield School & Sports College whole-school Safeguarding Policy aims to provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with child welfare concerns. The policy also aims to make explicit the school's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures to keep children safe in our school.

This policy recognises that abuse can occur in all communities and contexts and that all staff have a responsibility and the opportunity to make children feel safe by supporting children, in sharing concerns and worries in school. The whole school culture of vigilance creates a safe space where children are supported, listened to and valued in what they choose to share. ALL staff act immediately with the necessary level of intervention to create the most effective outcome for every individual child.

The purpose of the policy is, therefore, to ensure that our children's welfare is of paramount importance, early and additional help is offered to prevent escalation and where child protection concerns are identified, referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of the child's well-being.

Governors and staff are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in our care through all our policies, procedures and practices. We expect all of our students, parents and visitors to share this commitment and understanding.

## **Introduction**

Northfield School & Sports College fully recognises the contribution it can make to keeping children safe and supporting the students in its care. There are four main elements to Northfield School & Sports College's Safeguarding Policy:

### **1. Prevention:**

creating a positive school atmosphere; careful and vigilant teaching; excellent pastoral care; support to students; providing good adult role models; identifying early and additional support/services to children and families and recognising and reducing risks to children including: harassment, bullying, victimisation, sexual violence and sexual harassment, exploitation, radicalisation and issues such as Honour Based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage.

### **2. Protection:**

following agreed procedures, ensuring all staff respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns and that every member of staff has regular training and updates at least annually and are supported to refer to their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Children's Hub (01429 284284) directly IF NECESSARY. In certain specific cases such as female genital mutilation, (mandatory reporting of FGM from October 2015), radicalisation or forced marriage, there are Single Point of Contacts (SPOCS)/named teams and individuals within the police who can be contacted.

### **3. Reconsideration:**

following and challenging the progress of new referrals and existing cases to ensure that individual cases are reconsidered if there remains no improvement to a child's circumstances.

#### 4. Support:

to students and school staff and to children who may be vulnerable due to their individual circumstances.

All staff have the added responsibility of recognising that there may be children with additional vulnerability who remain at higher risk of harm or abuse because of their existing vulnerability. All school staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is in family circumstances presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is a privately fostered child

(KCSIE 2018)

All staff have a responsibility for recognising child abuse, neglect and peer on peer abuse in its many forms. Additional guidance on how Northfield school supports the following areas of additional need or harm are provided in the Peer on Peer section of this Safeguarding Policy. This includes the full list in “Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018” pages 87 and 88. Where the school has created an additional school policy because of any specific area of need this is to be read in conjunction with this Safeguarding Policy.

Broadly the areas taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2018 Annex A, include:

- Children in the court system
- Children missing from education
- Children with family members in prison
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Criminal Exploitation - County Lines
- Domestic Abuse
- Homelessness
- So called ‘Honour Based Violence’ inclusive of Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage and practises such as Breast Ironing.
- Preventing Radicalisation
- Peer on Peer Abuse
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
- Additional advice and support

In the event of any of the above issues being recognised, information will be shared directly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, which may result in the situation being monitored and supported in school, or the student/s being referred to specific services.

**This policy applies to Northfield's whole workforce. Note: where the policy refers to 'staff' or 'workforce', Governors and Volunteers who have an official role at the school are included.**

### **Framework and Legislation**

No school operates in isolation. Keeping children safe from significant harm is the responsibility of all adults especially those working with children. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board (to be replaced by the Safeguarding Partner arrangements), which is the partnership of agencies who work with children and families across the Borough.

Northfield school is committed to keeping children safe and safeguarding all children in accordance with Child Protection: Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures <http://www.teescpp.org.uk> (to be replaced by the Safeguarding Partner arrangements) and partner agencies in all cases where there is a concern about significant harm.

Significant Harm is defined in The Children Act 1989 as the ill-treatment (including sexual abuse and physical abuse) or the impairment of health (physical or mental) or development (physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural) as compared to a similar child. Harm also includes the impairment of a child's health or development as a result of witnessing the ill treatment of another person. (*Adoption and Children Act 2002*)

Local Authorities have a duty to investigate (under S47 of the Children Act 1989). Where a Local Authority is informed that there is a child who is living, or is found, in their area and they have reasonable cause to suspect that child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, they must make such enquiries as necessary to promote or safeguard the child's welfare. The Children's Hub undertakes this responsibility on behalf of the Local Authority once a referral has been made.

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2018 contains information on what schools and colleges **should** do and sets out the legal duties with which schools and colleges **must** comply. It should be read alongside Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 which applies to all the schools, including maintained nursery schools. The Children Act 1989 sets out the Legal Framework.

### **Roles and Responsibilities for ALL staff**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as: protecting ALL children from maltreatment and abuse; (including, in addition to the four categories of harm, issues such as sexual violence and sexual harassment, child criminal exploitation child sexual exploitation (CSE), Honour based violence (HBV) inclusive of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage, preventing radicalisation and extremism, harassment, bullying and victimization, preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. This includes everyone under the age of 18.

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. Due to the regular contact with children all staff at Northfield have, we hold a particularly important role in safeguarding as we are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children and to prevent concerns from escalating. Children can make disclosures or show signs of abuse at any time and to any individual and safeguarding incidents can occur within schools. By

having a thorough induction process and sharing this policy with all staff, students and volunteers, ALL staff will:

- Ensure that they listen to and reflect on the voice of the child at ALL times and take seriously any concerns raised to them by a child.
- Ensure that they report ANY concerns of harm to any child to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy or Headteacher immediately. (However, ALL staff can refer their concerns directly to The Children's Hub if necessary and to the police in the case of stated incidents above). They should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy or Headteacher as soon as possible if they have reported concerns directly.
- Ensure that they record any information shared directly with them by a child or observed/witnessed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. This could include sharing information on behalf of the Designated Safeguarding Lead with other agencies. All discussions decisions and reasons for them should be recorded in writing adhering to the school's recording and information sharing policy/ procedure.
- Ensure that they maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'** and report any concerns regarding the behaviour of a child/an adult/staff member in school directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Headteacher.
- Ensure that they feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practices of staff and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime through whistleblowing procedures and the staff behaviour/code of conduct policy.
- Ensure that they attend regular formal training/updates at least annually to support them in recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse, particularly in support of early identification of needs of children to prevent an escalation of need or risk to the child.
- Ensure under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act, April 2015, that the school has 'Due regard' to Prevent' and assess risk of children and young people being radicalised or drawn into extremism based upon potential risks in local area; also that clear protocols (see the school's External Speakers and Lettings Policies) are in place for all visitors so that views expressed are appropriate and not an opportunity to influence others.
- Ensure that there is mandatory reporting to the police in all cases where teachers suspect that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out.
- Ensure that staff understand through online safety training the additional risks for students online and continue to promote the School's E-Safety (Online) Policy in the protection of all students. This includes the management of 3G and 4G internet access via students own mobile phones or electronic devices that can allow them unlimited access to the internet without restrictions using their own data allowance. The expectations of students regarding their own devices whilst on school premises, and the consequences of any evidence of inappropriate internet use, are detailed in the school's E-safety and Positive Behaviour policies.
- Ensure that they remain vigilant whilst visitors are on site and continue to promote the school's commitment to keeping children safe through reminding visitors and parents of the school's appropriate use of personal mobile phones and devices whilst they are on the school's premises. This includes staff understanding and adhering to the Staff Code of

Conduct and Acceptable Use of ICT policies, with regards to mobile phone and electronic devices use.

Northfield will work with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

The School has appointed from our SLT Mr P Richardson to be the Designated Safeguarding Lead. He has the overall responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection and has the appropriate authority and training to undertake such a role and is able to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters. He is able to take part in strategy discussions and inter agency meetings and to support other trained staff to do so as well as contribute to the assessment of children. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns (KCSIE 2018).

### **Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

At Northfield we have appointed Mr A Bimson as Deputy Designated Lead. Mr C Walker is the point of contact in the event that Mr P Richardson and Mr A Bimson cannot be contacted. These individuals are trained to the same standard as the DSL. Whilst the activities of the DSL can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies the ultimate LEAD RESPONSIBILITY for child protection will not be delegated and remains with the DSL. Any deputies will be trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead and the role will be explicit in their job description.

The DSL has a very detailed role as detailed below.

However, if there is an IMMEDIATE safeguarding concern and the DSL, Deputy or Headteacher are unavailable, immediate support should be sought via The Children's Hub (01429 284284)

The broad areas of responsibility of the DSL are as follows:

#### **Manage referrals:**

- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the Children's Hub.
- Support staff who make referrals to the Children's Hub.
- Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required.
- Support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme.
- Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required.
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required (including Sexual Exploitation (VEMT lead) or Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage).

#### **Work with others :**

- Act as a point of contact with the three safeguarding partners.
- Liaise with the Headteacher to inform them of issues, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- As required, liaise with the case manager (Headteacher, or where the Headteacher is the subject of the allegations, the Chair of Governors), and the Designated Officer (DO) at the Local Authority for child protection concerns - all cases which concern a staff member.
- Liaise with staff (especially pastoral support staff, school nurses, ICT Technicians, and SENCOs) on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.

Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.

## Undertake Training:

The DSL and deputy receive appropriate training updated every two years. They undertake Prevent awareness raising and in addition to the formal training, their knowledge and skills will be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other Designated Safeguarding Leads, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, so they:

- Understand and keep up with any developments to their role.
- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments (Single Assessment Continuum of Need).
- Understand the **Local Assessment Protocol** which sits alongside the **Continuum of Need and Services**.
- Have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference so as to be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff.
- Are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers.
- Understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation.
- Understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and with the three safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners.
- Are able to keep detailed, accurate, secure, written records of concerns and referrals.
- Understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent Duty and be able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.
- Are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school or college.
- Can recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support SEND children to stay safe online.
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses.



- Encourage in all staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings about any measures the school may put in place to protect them.

### **Raise Awareness:**

The DSL ensures the school's policies are known, understood and used appropriately and will:

- Ensure the school's Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum), that the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly and work with the governing body and workforce to ensure its effectiveness. This includes ensuring that all staff receive the policy on their induction.
- Ensure the Safeguarding Policy is available publicly, that parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this.
- Link with the Stockton Safeguarding Children Board (to be replaced by the Safeguarding Partner arrangements) to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.

### **Child Protection File:**

- Where children leave the school, ensure their child protection file is transferred appropriately to any new school or college as soon as possible but transferred separately from the main student file; ensure the secure transit and confirmation of receipt of the file.
- Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as Designated Safeguarding Leads and SENCOs or the named person with oversight for SEN in colleges, are aware as required.
- In addition to the child protection file, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

### **Availability**

- During term time the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) should always be available (during school or college hours) for staff in the school or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
- Whilst generally speaking the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) would be expected to be available in person, it is a matter for individual schools and colleges, working with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to consider whether in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and or Skype or other such mediums is acceptable.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead and school should arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

**In addition, Safeguarding First Ltd (our advisor) recommend as best practice that: (taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2018: Annex B).**

- The DSL will ensure that each member of staff has access to and understands the School's safeguarding policies particularly the Safeguarding Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct Policy, and especially new or part-time staff who may work with different establishments.
- The DSL will be informed of all school excursions and residential and will clarify with the educational visit co-ordinator/group leader(s) their role and responsibility in connection with safeguarding/child protection.
- The DSL will ensure that a whole school policy on managing behaviour and discipline including the use of reasonable force, is in place There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force to safeguard students. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain students. This can range from guiding a student to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a student's path, or active physical contact such as leading a student by the arm out of the classroom. When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving students with SEN or disabilities or with medical conditions, Northfield will, in considering the risks carefully, recognise the additional vulnerability of these groups and will also consider its duties under the Equality Act 2010/36 in relation to making reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and its Public Sector Equality Duty.
- The DSL will ensure that an effective whole school policy against bullying/cyber-bullying inclusive of measures to prevent all forms of bullying among students, is in place.
- The DSL will inform the LA of any student to be deleted from the school admission register and will follow missing from Education protocols.
- The DSL will inform the LA of any student who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

**Governing Body Role and Responsibilities**

Best practice would advise that a Safeguarding Governor at senior level is appointed to support the Designated Safeguarding Lead in their role.

At Northfield the Nominated Governor for Safeguarding is Mr Gary Cookland.

**The role of the Nominated Governor (and Chair) is to:**

- Ensure that the allocation of funding and resource is sufficient to meet the current safeguarding and child protection activity and challenge the safeguarding activity.

- Ensure the self-assessment tool and Designated Safeguarding Lead report demonstrates fully and accurately the safeguarding arrangements and any action to progress areas of weakness or development.
- Ensure that the governing body receives training to clarify their statutory role in keeping children safe to support their quality assurance of those statutory arrangements.
- Ensure that the governing body is aware of the changes from Local Safeguarding Children Board to Safeguarding Partner arrangements and the need for the school to understand its role in effective multi-agency working under the new arrangements.

**If the Safeguarding Governor is NOT the Chair of Governors it is important to indicate the role of the Chair in safeguarding, which is to:**

- Ensure that they liaise with the local authority and/or partner agencies on issues of child protection and in the event of allegations of abuse made against the Headteacher.
- Ensure that the appointed member of the Governing Body for safeguarding holds the Headteacher to account on all matters involving safeguarding through an effective Safeguarding Policy that is embedded and followed by the entire workforce in all of the above raised areas.
- Ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding training at induction and that they receive regular updates.
- Ensure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place for online content (inclusive of 3 and 4G).
- Ensure that children are taught about safeguarding through Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and/or Sex and Relationships Education.
- Ensure that a Designated Teacher is appointed to promote the educational achievement of looked after children, including working with the Local Authority's virtual school Headteacher and discuss how pupil premium funding for looked after children will be used.

**Information for Parents**

At Northfield, Governors and staff are committed to keeping our children safe and will take any reasonable action to safeguard and promote their welfare. In cases where the school has reason to be concerned that a child may be suffering significant harm, ill treatment, neglect or other forms of harm, staff will follow Stockton Safeguarding Children Board procedures and inform The Children's Hub or police of their concern.

**Procedures**

The DSL (or deputy DSL) will be informed immediately by an employee of the school, student of the school, parent of the school or other persons, in the following circumstances:

- There is suspicion that a child is being harmed
- There is evidence that a child is being harmed

The threshold of significant harm is defined in the Children Act 1989 Section 31 (9) as:

- Ill-treatment
- Impairment of health (as compared to a similar child)

Note: harm now includes the impairment of a child's health or development as a result of witnessing the ill-treatment of another person (Adoption and Children Act 2002).

Working together 2018 defines the categories of harm as:

### **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.

### **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 misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **Sexual Abuse**

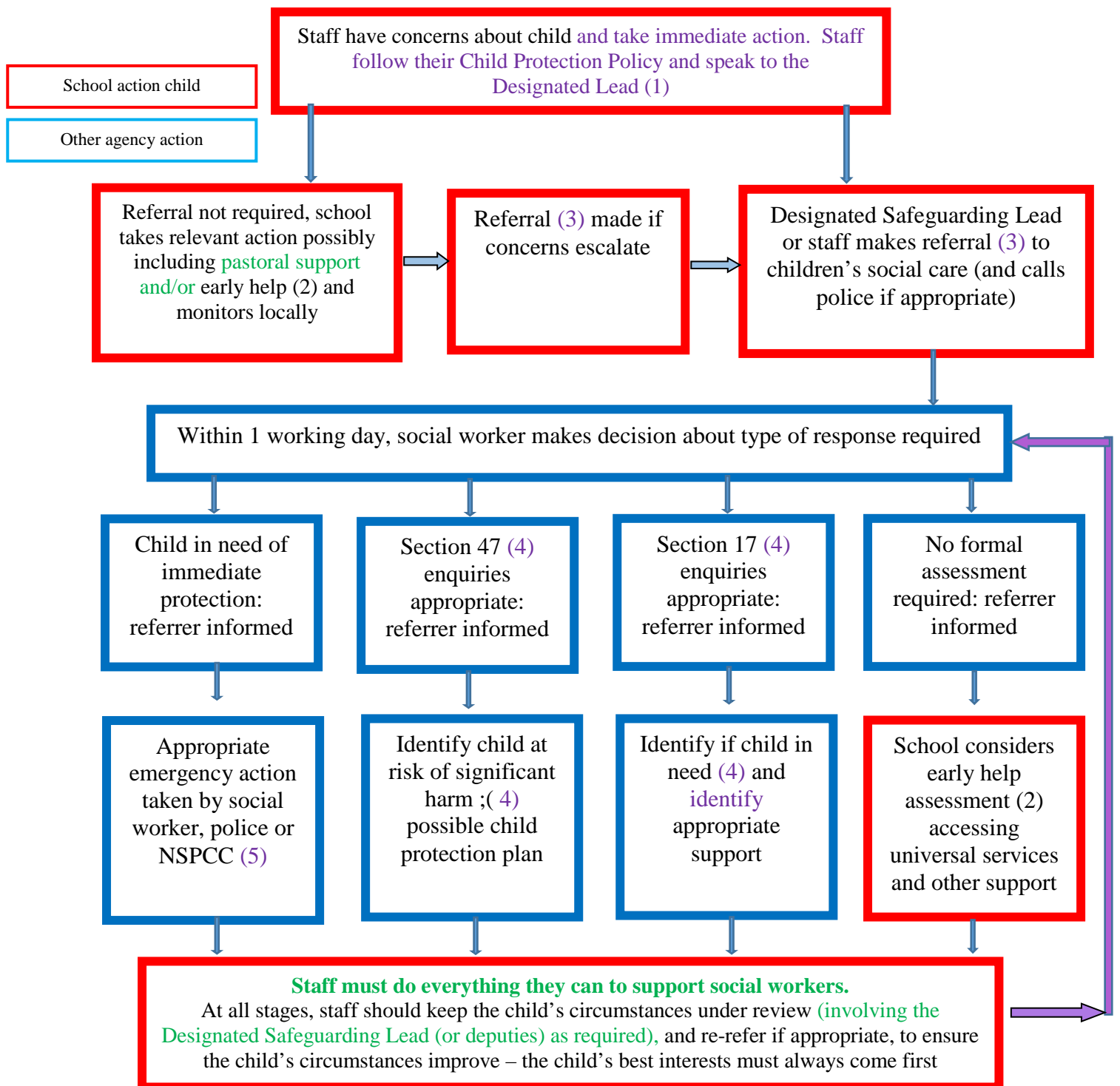
Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral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

### **Emotional Abuse**

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

The DSL will keep a full record of concerns raised and make referrals to The Children's Hub if necessary. These records may be either handwritten or electronic and stored via a secure system (CPOMS). The Head teacher will be kept informed at all times.

## Actions where there are concerns about a child



1. In cases which also involve a concern or allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part Four of KCSIE 2018
2. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, an early help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Chapter One of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) provides detailed guidance on the early help process.
3. Referrals should follow the process set out in the local threshold document and local protocol for assessment. Chapter 1 of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
4. Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make enquiries to decide whether to take action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Full details are in Chapter 1 of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
5. This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO)

### **Safe Schools/Safe Staff**

Governors have agreed and ratified the following policies, procedures, processes or systems which must be read in conjunction with this policy.

### **Whistle Blowing / Confidential Reporting**

Northfield's Confidential Reporting Policy provides guidance to staff and volunteers on how they can raise concerns and receive appropriate feedback on action taken, when they have concerns about any adult's behaviour.

### **Complaints / Allegation Management**

A Safeguarding complaint involving a member of staff must be reported to the Headteacher immediately. Where there are concerns about the Headteacher, this should be referred to the chair of governors. (KCSIE 2018: pg 12)

Consultation without delay with the DO: **Phil Curtis, Tel: 01642 527413** will determine what action follows. A multi agency strategy meeting may be arranged to look at the complaint in its widest context, the Headteacher/senior member of school staff must attend this meeting, which will be arranged by the DO. All issues must be recorded on the allegation management form and the outcome reached must be noted to ensure closure.

**[www.teescpp.org.uk/allegationsandconcernsagainststaff](http://www.teescpp.org.uk/allegationsandconcernsagainststaff)**

### **Training and Support**

All staff members are made aware of the systems within the school which support safeguarding and these are explained to them as part of their induction into the school to ensure they can discharge their responsibilities effectively. This includes: the Safeguarding Policy; Staff Code of Conduct Policy; Safer Working Practice Document and the name of the DSL and their deputies.

All staff members also receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated. The governing body in consultation with SSLB decides the frequency and content of this CPD. At Northfield school our whole school training is held annually in September. In addition, all staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates via staff meetings and internal CPD as required but at least annually to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively, with opportunities to contribute to reviewing and shaping safeguarding arrangements in school inclusive of, the Safeguarding Policy.

### **Professional Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of safeguarding. Northfield recognises that the only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child. (Child Protection Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures / to be replaced by Safeguarding Partner arrangements <http://www.teescpp.org.uk/>).

### **Record Keeping**

Well-kept records are essential to good safeguarding practice. Northfield is clear about the need to record any concerns, discussions held, decisions made and reasons for those decisions about a child or children within its care. All staff follow the school's information sharing and recording policies to ensure recording keeping is compliant and in line with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 and Data Protection Act 2018.

Safeguarding records at Northfield are held electronically through a secure management system of CPOMS and all staff have received training in the recording expectations and retention. Following a

child leaving our school we follow the appropriate transfer procedures and retention guidelines. At Northfield School we started electronic recording from September 2017. All recording prior to this is in paper format. Retention guidelines are followed accordingly.

### **Attendance at Safeguarding Conferences**

In the event of Northfield being invited to attend child protection conferences, the DSL (or deputies) will represent the school and/ or identify the most appropriate trained member of staff to provide information relevant to child protection conference (initial/review).

### **Supporting Children**

Northfield School recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. Northfield may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of some of the children in its care. The school, therefore, recognises that such children might exhibit challenging and defiant behaviour and will take careful note of the context of such behaviour.

As an Operation Encompass partner, we work closely with the OE Lead with regard to Domestic Violence incidents and offer wellbeing checks to our students if we are contacted following an incident which has occurred in one of our students' homes.

Northfield also recognises that children are capable of abusing their peers. Peer on peer abuse can take many forms and any concerns raised will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. No peer on peer abuse will be tolerated or minimised as part of growing up and all those involved will be provided with an appropriate level of support. It is understood that those students who have experienced abuse in their own lives may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered and sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support. Our policy and procedure on Peer on Peer Abuse is detailed from page 17 below.

Northfield will endeavour to support all its students through:

- The curriculum to encourage self-esteem, self-motivation, self-protection.
- The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all students and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- Approaches which allow students to develop critical thinking, literacy skills and digital literacy skills.
- A curriculum where students develop personal resilience, understand and can take appropriate risks or have personal strategies/safety plans that allow them to manage their own safety. This can include topics covered as part of Relationships and Sex and Relationships Education as well as Fundamental British Values and the SMSC Curriculum which cover harm, abuse, positive and healthy relationships and crime.
- A coherent management of behaviour and discipline policy and procedures, inclusive of the use of reasonable force.
- Liaison with other professionals and agencies who support students and parents.



- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents whenever it is in the student's interest to do so.
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group whose role it is to respond appropriately in all safeguarding situations.

Northfield recognises that, statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are the most vulnerable to abuse. School staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behavioural problems will be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse. School staff must give consideration to children who are subject to a statement of special needs, an education health and care plan or have a medical condition, as these can mask safeguarding issues and may often be attributed to the medical condition rather than that a child may be being harmed. Concerns such as changes in behaviour and presentation (both physical and mental) must be considered for each individual child and their own circumstances and must not be dismissed. Children with SEN are often more prone to peer group isolation than other children and there is greater potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs. Therefore, time must be taken to ensure that the full circumstances of any child who has additional needs and requires support around language and communication is shared at the point of referral to ensure the best possible outcome for the child is always achieved and their voice through any form of communication is always heard. To address these additional challenges, Northfield will consider extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities.

Northfield also recognises that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol misuse or mental health issues, children may also be vulnerable and in need of support and protection.

This policy MUST be read in conjunction with other related policies and guidance in school including:

- The School's Recruitment and Selection Policies - inclusive of safer recruitment guidance and regulation, for example the Single Central Record which demonstrates the pre-employment vetting checks for all staff (e.g. identity, professional qualifications, right to work in the UK, further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK including recording checks for those EEA teacher sanctions and restrictions), for the workforce who are in regulatory activity (enhanced DBS, children's/adult barred list, prohibition from teaching check, section 128 check for management positions) and supervision of those who don't meet this requirement

Clear recruitment procedures which embed keeping children safe across every aspect from vacancy to conditional appointments, induction and on-going vigilance. A trained interview panel who ensure that the policy works in practice within all recruitment and selection within school.

School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, Regulation 9: requires governing bodies of maintained schools to ensure at least one member of a recruitment panel must undertake safer recruitment training to satisfy all requirements in the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 and Working Together 2018.

- School Human Resources policies and procedures.

- Staff Code of Conduct Policy. Safer Recruitment Consortium Guidance for Safer Working Practices for those working with Young People in education settings, October 2015. The school ensures that all staff and volunteers are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with young people and that they agree to work within all policies and procedures to safeguard both children and adults.
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force Policy/positive handling / confiscating and searching.
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- E-Safety Policy (including: Acceptable Use, Cyber bullying and Online Safety)
- Photographic & Digital Imagery Policy
- Peer on Peer Abuse Policy
- Special Needs Policy
- Trips and Visits Policy. This reflects the consideration we give to safeguarding our children both within the school environment and when away from school when undertaking trips and visits.
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy
- Attendance Management Policy (school management for attendance and the partnership with the LA in reporting children missing from education and those deleted from the school's admission register) This includes the need for two emergency contact details for every pupil, where possible.
- Missing Children Policy
- Single Equality Scheme
- Concerns and Complaints Policy
- Confidential Reporting Policy
- Data Protection Policy (exchange of information)
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Curriculum
- Looked after Children Policy inclusive of named LA teacher whose role is to champion the achievement of Looked After Children in school and work closely with the DSL and the Virtual Head Teacher within the LA who has responsibility for the LAC.
- The school ensures that staff and volunteers are aware that sexual relationships with students under 18 are unlawful and could result in legal proceedings under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Abuse of a Position of Trust).

This policy has been informed by the following legislation and national & local guidance:

Children Act 1989/2004

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

CP Referral Form

[New Multi Agency Referral Form to Children's Social Care = Click here to download the referral form](#)

Data Protection Act 2018

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted>

DfE Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2017

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/596629/EYFS\\_STATUTORY\\_FRAMEWORK\\_2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596629/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf)

Education Act 2002 Section 175

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/175](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/175)

Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/schedule/made>

Equality Act 2010  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

General Data Protection Regulations, 2018  
[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/justice-and-fundamental-rights/data-protection/2018-reform-eu-data-protection-rules\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/justice-and-fundamental-rights/data-protection/2018-reform-eu-data-protection-rules_en)

Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners providing safeguarding services  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>

Freedom of Information Act 2000  
[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/pdfs/ukpga\\_20000036\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/pdfs/ukpga_20000036_en.pdf)

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/728/made>

Public Sector Equality Duty Guidance for Schools in England  
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-schools-england>

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents>

School attendance: Guidance for schools  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

Sexual Offences Act 2003  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents>

Stockton Safeguarding Children Board Procedures  
<http://www.teescpp.org.uk>

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/419604/What\\_to\\_do\\_if\\_you\\_re\\_worried\\_a\\_child\\_is\\_being\\_abused.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf)

Working together to safeguard children HM GOV (2018)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

## Review

This Policy is reviewed annually or in light of any changes in legislation and/or guidance. This policy will be updated by our School at any time that local solutions such as front door services in social care or the LADO details change. This policy may also be amended following the annual review with staff where our School procedures or practices may change following whole staff discussion or training to ensure it is the most effective policy in keeping our children safe.

This policy must be ratified by the governing body signed/dated by both the Headteacher and Chair.

Whole-School Policy: Child Protection

### Children and Young People

#### Northfield School & Sports College

Academic Year	Designated Safeguarding Lead	Named Operational Lead	Nominated Governor
2015 - 2016	Mr P Richardson	Mr A Bimson	Mr L Wadey
2016 - 2017	Mr P Richardson	Mr A Bimson	Mr L Wadey
2017 - 2018	Mr P Richardson	Mr A Bimson	Mr L Wadey
2018 - 2019	Mr P Richardson	Mr A Bimson	Mr G Cookland

Review Date	Changes made	Ratification Date by Governing Body
January 2016	New LA template adopted	25 January 2016
April 2016	New LA template adopted	23 May 2016
June 2016	Amended LA template adopted including Children's Hub	Not required (see DMcC email 31 May 16)
September 2016	Amended LA template adopted, reflecting changes to KCSIE 2016 (statutory from 5 Sep 2016)	26 September 2016
September 2017	No changes required	25 September 2017
December 2017	Revised template provided by PG: Safeguarding First Ltd (Pam Gartland) adopted	29 January 2018
September 2018	Revised template provided by PG: Safeguarding First Ltd (Pam Gartland) adopted	1 October 2018

## Peer on Peer Abuse Policy

### Introduction

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 states that *'Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse'*. The document also states it is most important to ensure opportunities for seeking the voice of the child: *'Governing bodies should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately, all systems and processes should operate with the **best** interests of the child at their heart.'*

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger. All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

At Northfield School & Sports College we are committed to the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of peer on peer abuse. We continue to ensure that any form of abuse or harmful behaviour is dealt with immediately and consistently to reduce the extent of harm to the young person, with full consideration to impact on that individual student's emotional and mental health and well-being.

Our policy includes a clear and comprehensive strategy taking a contextual whole-school approach to preventing and responding to peer on peer abuse, which includes a clear understanding to staff, students and their parents about everyone's responsibility in managing any peer on peer abuse incidents. This will include both our prevention measures as well as our response to any incidents of harm (Farrer and Co. 2017).

All staff and governors have signed to say that they have read, understood and agreed to work within this policy framework and parents have access to this policy.

### Purpose and Aim

Children and young people may be harmful to one another in a number of ways which would be classified as peer on peer abuse. The purpose of this policy is to explore the many forms of peer on peer abuse and include a planned and supportive response to the issues.

At Northfield School & Sports College we have the following policies in place that should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- E - Safety Policy
- Children Missing from Education Policy
- Behaviour Policy – inclusive of positive handling and searching and confiscating

## Framework and Legislation

This policy is supported by the key principles of the Children Act 1989 that the child's welfare is paramount. Another key document that focuses adult thinking towards the views of the child is Working Together 2018, highlighting that every assessment of a child, should '*reflect the unique characteristics of the child within their family and community context*' (Working Together, 2018:28). This is clearly echoed by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 through ensuring procedures are in place in schools to hear the voice of the child and to be mindful of the contexts children live in.

## What is Peer on Peer Abuse?

For these purposes, peer on peer abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate). Peer on peer abuse can take various forms, including: serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), relationship abuse, domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, youth and serious youth violence, harmful sexual behaviour, and/or gender-based violence. Children's experiences of abuse and violence are rarely isolated events, and they can often be linked to other things that are happening in their lives and spaces in which they spend their time. Any response to peer on peer abuse therefore needs to consider the range of possible types of peer on peer abuse set out above and capture the full context of children's experiences. This can be done by adopting a Contextual Safeguarding approach and by ensuring that our response to incidents of peer-on-peer abuse takes into account any potential complexity (Farrer and Co. 2017).

Abusive behaviour can happen to students in schools and settings and it is necessary to consider what abuse is and looks like, how it can be managed and what appropriate support and intervention can be put in place to meet the needs of the individual and what preventative strategies may be put in place to reduce further risk of harm.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Equally, abuse issues can sometimes be gender specific e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted and boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence (KCSIE 2018). Research suggests that peer on peer abuse may affect boys differently from girls, and that this difference may result from societal norms (particularly around power, control and the way in which femininity and masculinity are constructed) rather than biological make-up. Barriers to disclosure will also be different. As a result, schools need to explore the gender dynamics of peer on peer abuse within their settings and recognise that these will play out differently in single sex, mixed or gender imbalanced environments (Farrer and Co. 2017).

It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.

## Children with Special Educational Needs

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. These can include:

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

To address these additional challenges, Northfield will consider extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities particularly when investigating any form of peer on peer abuse.

### **Language**

For the purposes of this policy the language used will refer to alleged victims and alleged perpetrators as research has shown that many children who present with harmful behaviour towards others, in the context of peer on peer abuse, are themselves vulnerable and may have been victimised by peers, parents or adults in the community prior to their abuse of peers. (Farrer and Co. 2017). The language used to children and parents in the reporting of any incidents that may have occurred could impact on any future rehabilitation of children and young people following any investigations that may occur.

### **Types of abuse**

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and this list is not exhaustive. Each form of abuse or prejudiced behaviour is described in detail followed by advice and support on actions to be taken.

#### **Physical abuse e.g. (biting, hitting, kicking, hair pulling etc.)**

Physical abuse may include, hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

#### **Sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse e.g. (inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault etc.)**

Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as well as the young person it is intended towards. Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another, sexual assault, rape or abuse.

#### **Sexual violence and sexual harassment**

Sexual violence refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

**Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

**Assault by Penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

**Sexual Assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual harassment means 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. In referencing sexual harassment, it is in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment (KCSIE 2018).

### **Bullying (inclusive of all types)**

The new definition of bullying is, 'a person who habitually seeks to harm or intimidate those who they perceive as vulnerable'. (Taken from the Oxford, Cambridge and Collins dictionary, updated 2018).

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. (Preventing and Tackling Bullying July 2017)

### **Cyber bullying**

Cyberbullying is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above.

It is important to state that cyber bullying can very easily fall into criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 under section 1 which states that electronic communications which are indecent or grossly offensive, convey a threat or false information or demonstrate that there is an intention to cause distress or anxiety to the victim would be deemed to be criminal. This is also supported by the Communications Act 2003, Section 127 which states that electronic communications which are grossly offensive or indecent, obscene or menacing, or false, used again for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another could also be deemed to be criminal behaviour.

If the behaviour involves the use of taking or distributing indecent images of young people under the age of 18 then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support young people may require in these instances, the school will have no choice but to involve the police to investigate these situations.

### **Sexting (Youth Produced Imagery)**

Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending 'nude pics', 'rude pics' or 'nude selfies'. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can occur in any relationship, to anyone, whatever their age, gender or sexual preference.

However, once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and these images could end up anywhere. By having in their possession, or distributing, indecent images of a



person under 18 on to someone else, young people are not even aware that they could be breaking the law as stated as these are offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

### **Initiation/Hazing**

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a private school, sports team etc. There are a number of different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies.

The idea behind this practice is that it welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

### **Prejudiced Behaviour**

The term prejudice-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – in particular, prejudices to do with disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity (homosexual, bisexual, transsexual).

### **Teenage relationship abuse**

Teenage relationship abuse is defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, in order to gain power and maintain control over the partner.

### **Measuring the behaviour**

Simon Hackett's continuum of behaviour (taken from Farrer and Co. 2017) can be a useful guide to measure the behaviour that has occurred and consider the circumstances around the incident (s). The continuum looks at whether it:

- is socially acceptable
- involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time
- is socially acceptable within the peer group
- is problematic and concerning
- involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability
- involves an element of coercion or pre-planning
- involves a power imbalance between the child/children allegedly responsible for the behaviour and the child/children allegedly the subject of that power
- involves a misuse of power

Behaviour which is not abusive at first may potentially become abusive quickly or over time. Intervening early and addressing any inappropriate behaviour which may be displayed by a child is vital and could potentially prevent their behaviour from progressing on a continuum to become problematic, abusive and/or violent - and ultimately requiring (greater/more formal) engagement with specialist external and/or statutory agencies.

### **Expected action taken from all staff ( to include governors and those with legitimate reason to have contact with students)**

All staff must be alert to the well-being of students and to signs of abuse, and must engage with these signs, as appropriate, to determine whether they are caused by peer on peer abuse. However, staff should be mindful of the fact that the way(s) in which students will disclose or present with behaviour(s) as a result of their experiences will differ (Farrer and Co. 2017).

Although the type of abuse may have a varying effect on the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator of the harm, these simple steps can help clarify the situation and establish the facts before deciding the consequences for those involved in perpetrating harm.

It is important to deal with a situation of peer abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get a true, accurate account of the facts around what has happened, so that nothing is forgotten. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved. For example; do not use the word perpetrator, this can quickly create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled.

In all cases of peer on peer abuse it is necessary that all staff are trained in dealing with such incidents, talking to young people and instigating immediate support in a calm and consistent manner. Staff should not be prejudiced, judgemental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

Staff should also be mindful of contextual safeguarding and that wider safeguarding concerns may influence the student's account of the event(s). Alongside this peer pressure and the impact of sharing information about the incident(s) may also influence a student's account.

### **Gather the Facts**

In cases specifically relating to sexual violence and sexual harassment, part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2018 states that two members of staff (one being the Designated Safeguarding Lead) should be present to manage the report, *where possible*.

In all circumstances, staff must speak to all the young people involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use **consistent language** and **open questions** for each account. The easiest way to do this is not to have a line of questioning but to ask the young people to tell you what happened. Only interrupt the young person to gain clarity with open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene? A full and clear record of exactly what the young person has said in their own language must be made and stored following Northfield's recording protocols.

### **Consider the intent (begin to Risk Assess)**

Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

### **Decide on your next course of action**

If from the information that you gather you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm, you must make a safeguarding referral to social care immediately (where a crime has been committed the police should be involved also). This action would, in most circumstances be undertaken by the Designated Safeguarding Lead but in the event of their absence the referral can be made by another member of staff. If this is the case, once social care has been contacted and made a decision on what will happen next then you will be informed on your next steps.

If social care and the police intend to pursue this further, they may ask to interview the young people in school or they may ask for parents to come to school to be spoken to also. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

It may also be that social care feel that it does not meet their criteria in which case you may challenge that decision, with that individual or their line manager. If on discussion however, you agree with the decision, you may then be left to inform parents.

### **Informing parents**

If, once appropriate advice has been sought from police/social care you have agreement to inform parents, or have been allocated that role from the other services involved, then you need to inform the parents as soon as possible. If services are not going to be involved then equally, this information may need to be shared with parents. Parents would not be informed if by doing so the child was put at further risk of significant harm.

If a young person is deemed to be 'Gillick Competent' following the 'Fraser' guidelines and does not wish you to share the information with parents, then the school must consider this especially for example if the young person is pregnant and this is why they are being bullied (unless this has occurred through significant harm in which case a criminal/social care case is likely or the young person is under the age of 13).

In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the child is evident then the school should encourage the young person to share the information with their parent or even with them (they may be scared to tell parents that they are being harmed in any way). Where school can evidence they are acting in the best interests of the young person they would not be criticised, however this would be the case if they actively breached the rights and choices of the young person.

The best way to inform parents is face to face. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

### **Points to consider:**

#### **What is the age of the children involved?**

How old are the young people involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved? In relation to sexual exploration, children under the age of 5, in particular 1-4 year olds who are learning toileting skills may show a particular interest in exploration at around this stage. This, however should not be overlooked if other issues arise.

#### **Where did the incident or incidents take place?**

Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so was it observed? If not, is more supervision required within this particular area?

#### **What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?**

Can each of the young people give the same explanation of the incident and also what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one young person different from another and why?

#### **What is each of the children's own understanding of what occurred?**

Do the young people know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they have knowledge of body parts, of privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch? Is the young person's explanation in relation

to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour deliberate and contrived? Does the young person have understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

In dealing with an incident of this nature, the answers are not always clear cut. If you are concerned or unsure as to whether or not there is any risk involved, please seek advice from Children's Services Social Care.

### **Repetition**

Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion? In the same way, it must be considered has the behaviour persisted to an individual after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved?

### **Outcomes**

The outcome of the investigation will follow the local threshold tiered guidance.

- Northfield may have made a referral to either the police/social care for a full investigation (tier 4).
- The above may have resulted in Children's Services undertaking a further assessment (Tier 3) or Northfield may have identified additional services/intervention that are non-statutory completed an early help assessment (Tier 2).
- It may be that on investigation, a decision has been made to handle the incident (s) internally in which case Northfield may have implement a risk assessment plan (Tier 1).

In any of the above outcomes Northfield has a duty of care to manage the education needs of both children/young people in which case a risk assessment plan may be needed irrespective of the outcome.

### **Next Steps**

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

### **For the young person who has been harmed (alleged victim)**

What support they require depends on the individual young person. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends. In which case it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on cyber bullying, relationship abuse etc. It may be that through the continued curriculum of PHSE and SMSC that certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently.

If the young person feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support.

### **For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour (alleged perpetrator)**

In this circumstance it is important to find out why the young person has behaved in such a way. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed

themselves in a similar way. In such cases support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary. Particular support from identified services may be necessary through an early help referral and the young person may require additional support from family members.

Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the young person has been met, it is important that young person receives a consequence for their behaviour. This may be in the form of restorative justice e.g. making amends with the young person they have targeted if this has been some form of bullying.

In the cases of sexually harmful behaviour it may be a requirement for the young person to engage in one to one work with a particular service or agency (if a crime has been committed this may be through the police or youth offending service). If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that this young person cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education whilst off site.

Even following the conclusion of any investigation the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi-agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved including the young person and their parents. This may mean additional supervision of the young person or protective strategies if the young person feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

The school may also choose a punishment as a consequence such as exclusion or internal exclusion/inclusion/seclusion for a period of time to allow the young person to reflect on their behaviour.

### **After care**

It is important that following the incident, the young people involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm). In which case, regular reviews with the young people following the incident(s) are imperative.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Northfield will consider whether disciplinary action may be appropriate for any student(s) involved – any such action will address the abuse, the causes of it, and attitudes underlying it. Disciplinary action may sometimes be appropriate, including (a) to ensure that the student(s) take(s) responsibility for and realise(s) the seriousness of their behaviour; (b) to demonstrate to the student(s) and others that peer on peer abuse can never be tolerated; and (c) to ensure the safety and wellbeing of other students. However, these considerations must be balanced against the student(s) own potential unmet needs and any safeguarding concerns.

Before deciding on appropriate action, Northfield will always consider its duty to safeguard all students from harm; the underlying reasons for a student's behaviour; any unmet needs, or harm or abuse suffered by the student; the risk that the student may pose to other students; and the severity of the peer on peer abuse and the causes of it.

Northfield will, where appropriate, consider the potential benefit, as well as challenge, of using managed moves or exclusion as a response, and not as an intervention, recognising that even if this is ultimately deemed to be necessary, some of the measures referred to in this policy may still be required. Exclusion will only be considered as a last resort and only where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the other students in the school. Northfield will engage in Fair Access Panel Processes to assist with decision-making associated with managed moves and exclusions (Farrer and Co. 2017).

### **Review of Circumstances**

Following any incident of harm, Northfield will consider if anything could have been done differently using the PGSF proforma. This will identify internal lessons learnt and will support Northfield in identifying, under the business model of PGSF, what changes within the school need to occur. This demonstrates how proactive Northfield is in continually reviewing its policies and systems in effectively keeping children safe.

### **Preventative Strategies**

It is important to develop appropriate strategies in order to prevent the issue of peer on peer abuse rather than manage the issues in a reactive way.

Firstly, and most importantly for schools is recognition that peer on peer abuse can and will occur on any site even with the most stringent of policies and support mechanisms. In which case it is important to continue to recognise and manage such risks and learn how to improve and move forward with strategies in supporting young people to talk about any issues and through sharing information with all staff.

This can be supported by ensuring that each school has an open environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them. This can be strengthened through a strong and positive PHSE/SMSC curriculum that tackles such issues as prejudiced behaviour and gives children an open forum to talk things through rather than seek one on one opportunities to be harmful to one another.

To enable such an open and honest environment it is necessary to ensure the whole workforce and governing body feels confident and enabled to talk about issues and challenge perceptions of young people including use of inappropriate language and behaviour towards one another. In order to create such an environment, it is necessary for whole staff training and CPD around abusive behaviours and talking to young people in a way that continues to create an open and honest environment without prejudice.

It is incredibly important that staff do not dismiss issues as 'banter' or 'growing up' or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. It is necessary that staff consider each issue and each individual in their own right before taking action. If staff minimise the concerns raised it may result in a young person seeking no further help or advice.

Parents will be informed and included in policy forming, lesson plans and through open and frank conversations, training/courses about what peer on peer abuse is and how Northfield will be tackling it. This can help to alleviate any concerns and worries and create a joined-up approach.

It is important that signposting is available to young people in the event that they don't feel confident raising an issue to staff or a peer. It is useful to have a resource board with support services on a wide range of issues so young people can seek their own solutions should they wish to.

In the same way external services or support programmes could be brought in to talk to young people about specific issues in support of the prevention of peer on peer abuse.

It is useful to ensure young people are part of changing their circumstances and that of the procedures within schools. Having a school council and student voice and encouraging young people to support changes and develop 'rules of acceptable behaviour', will go far in helping to create a positive ethos in school and one where all young people understand the boundaries of behaviour before it becomes abusive.

Multi agency working can consolidate in house procedures in schools. By accessing advice, support and guidance, effective decisions can be made in collaboration to improve outcomes for children who may be at risk of harm. Seeking advice and guidance can act as a preventative measure so that the right course of action is taken at the earliest opportunity. It is also necessary that the school actively refers concerns/allegations of peer on peer abuse where necessary to front door services/children's social care and the police where appropriate. This is particularly important because peer on peer abuse can be a complex issue, and even more so where wider safeguarding concerns exist. It is often not appropriate for one single agency (where the incident cannot be managed internally) to try to address the issue alone – it requires effective partnership working (Farrer and Co. 2017).

Schools which excel at tackling bullying (and peer abuse) have created an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. That culture extends beyond the classroom to the corridors, the dining hall, the playground, and beyond the school gates including travel to and from school. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest. (Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017).

**This policy has been heavily supported by the key document:**

Farrer and Co: Peer on Peer Abuse Toolkit. December 2017.

<https://www.farrer.co.uk/Global/Peer-on-peer%20abuse%20toolkit%2014.pdf>

**This policy should be read in conjunction with:**

DFE: Keeping Children Safe in Education. September 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

DFE: Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies. July 2017

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/623895/Preventing\\_and\\_tackling\\_bullying\\_advice.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf)

DFE: Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges. December, 2017

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>

Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

UKCCIS: Sexting in Schools and Colleges

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/609874/6\\_2939\\_SP\\_NCA\\_Sexting\\_In\\_Schools\\_FINAL\\_Update\\_Jan17.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609874/6_2939_SP_NCA_Sexting_In_Schools_FINAL_Update_Jan17.pdf)

## LSCB's Procedures/Safeguarding Partner arrangements