



WESTFIELD SCHOOL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Safeguarding and Child-Protection

PRINCIPAL AUTHOR: Nicki Gilbert
DATE REVISED: August 2025
VERSION: 13

Westfield School Child-Protection/Safeguarding Policy and Procedural guidance.

Westfield School places the safeguarding of children in its care as core to its priorities and responsibilities. We are committed to the safety and well-being of our pupils.

Accordingly, we will: follow the Area Child Protection Committee's (ACPC) guidelines; refer to the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) comprising Herefordshire Council's Children's Services; NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board, (ICB) and West Mercia Police, when appropriate; work together with other agencies to protect the children of the school; attend and provide reports for Child Protection conferences and contribute, where appropriate, to any Child Protection Plan. We will follow the current DfE statutory guidance set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', Government multi-agency statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', and Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges, and Herefordshire's 'Right help, Right Time, document.

For the purpose of this policy, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined 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 the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Making sure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

'Children' refers to anyone up to the age of 18.

'Safeguarding' is what we do for all children in our care on a daily basis, to ensure their continued well-being. 'Child Protection' refers to the procedures put in place for children at risk of significant harm or who have been harmed.

When the school has concerns about a child, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy will decide what steps should be taken in accordance with the 'Right help, right time' document, as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life and initiate a response accordingly. This may include providing a single agency early help response, undertaking effective support or Graded Care Profile 2 or referral to Children's Social Care for a statutory social work assessment.

Due to the specialist nature of Westfield School, and the fact that every young person attending has an identified learning difficulty and/or disability, each pupil is already seen as more vulnerable than their mainstream peers. The majority of students on roll have communication difficulties, and many are reliant on others for activities that their non-disabled peers would be able to carry out independently. Every student has delayed

development and requires specialist strategies to support them with their learning and understanding of the world around them.

Staff are made aware that, in all situations, this must be considered since the trust and reliance that is placed upon others could easily place them at risk of harm, or potential abuse. For this reason, strict rules apply when working with individuals in a one-to-one situation, or when involved in personal care or therapeutic activities. (ref Intimate Care guidance).

In addition, it is acknowledged that some initial indicators of potential abuse, ie altered behaviours or demeanour, responses to individuals, or sudden mood changes, are often attributed to the nature and characteristic of a learning disability. Staff are trained to observe and report ALL subtle changes in an individual's presentation, for any indicator of potential abuse to be identified as opposed to overlooked.

Staff are on high alert for any signs of peer-on-peer abuse, (referred to as child-on-child abuse in KCSIE) and high levels of adult supervision and monitoring exist throughout the whole school day, with any possible examples being reported and taken seriously, not viewed as merely 'having a joke', or 'banter'.

Traditional signs of the existence of child-on-child abuse, such as becoming withdrawn, or absenteeism, can be hard to discern in young people with learning difficulties, which is why the curriculum at Westfield contains embedded pastoral and peer support opportunities, as well as social skills and emotions groups, staffed by appropriately trained professionals. Any evidence or suggestion of the existence of this type of behavior must be immediately reported to the DSL, and plans are put in place to explore the reasons and provide solutions.

All episodes of perceived child on child, abuse are taken extremely seriously, with each individual being offered support, guidance, and on-going input through a number of possible channels. Each reported incident is recorded onto the school safeguarding system immediately; investigated by the DSL; and reported to parents and wider professionals if found to be substantiated.

Responsibilities

The School

Westfield School recognises and accepts that teachers, along with all other adults associated with the school, because of their unique position, are well placed to observe children and note any emotional, behavioural or physical signs which may be suggestive of child abuse or safeguarding concerns. It recognises that the relationship between teachers and pupils, which fosters respect, confidence and trust, can lead to the disclosure of abuse. All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

All staff receive appropriate and timely training on Safeguarding children, with specific reference to children with disabilities that will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and child protection effectively. The school will provide this training and staff receive refresher training and updates every year; designated safeguarding leads will update their training every two years, with additional informal updates, such as e-bulletins, meeting colleagues, and studying safeguarding updates, at least annually.

The school is supported in all matters relating to Child Protection by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership which gives advice, support and guidance regarding child protection matters.

All newly appointed staff are provided with a copy of this policy and familiarised with the LA procedures on induction, and all existing members of staff will receive updates to documentation as they occur.

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children, to prevent concerns from escalating. School staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. We will work with social care, the police, health services and other professional colleagues to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

In order to ensure accurate and timely reporting and tracking of all concerns within school, a computerised system called *MyConcern* is used, which enables teachers, admin staff, and senior support staff to log-in to a secure, password protected, encrypted cloud-based database, specific to our school, to report any concern instantly. The system then sends a notification e-mail to the DSL who can follow up in a number of ways depending upon the urgency and severity of the concern. The database can be interrogated according to any aspect or characteristic, and provides fast, up-to-date access when it really matters. Each user can only view information relating to the concern they have raised, and the DSL has complete control over individual access.

DSLs liaise to review all current concerns, whether formally recognised, or being handled via the school pastoral system, and feedback any recent attendance at multi-disciplinary meeting regarding pupils with a recognised level of need.

As described in the introduction of this document, vigilance and proactivity by all staff can often lead to effective and supportive measures being implemented via the Early Help process, which then prevents any escalation of a situation by providing support for the family as a whole.

The Herefordshire Levels of Need Guidance is available via the council website and is updated annually.

[Thresholds Guidance - Herefordshire Safeguarding Boards and Partnerships](#)

Staff should possess a working knowledge of the local levels of need thresholds guidance, which will inform the identification of risk and harm.

Outline Levels of Need categories:

- Universal (Level 1) No additional support beyond that which is universally available.
- Early Help (Level 2) Children and young people where some concerns are emerging and who require additional support, usually from professionals already involved with them (Threshold to Consider Early Help Assessment **EHA**).
- Targeted Early Help (Level 3) Children and young people who are causing significant concern or where concerns recur frequently (Threshold to initiate **EHA**).
- Specialist (Level 4) Children and young people who are very vulnerable. (Threshold to refer to Children's Social Care). This can be supported either through a Child in Need plan, or, in more extreme cases, a Child Protection Plan.

Early Intervention

It is generally expected that referrals to children's social care would follow significant input at levels 2 and 3.

The School's Early Help Offer is published on our website and sets out the range of services and assistance that school provides for children and families.

Governors

The Governing Body fully recognises its responsibilities with regard to child protection, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It will:

- appoint a **Designated Safeguarding Lead**: Westfield School's Designated Safeguarding Lead, (DSL) is the Headteacher (Nicki Gilbert). The DSL takes the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. She will liaise with staff, families and all other professionals where appropriate in relation to all safeguarding and Child Protection matters.
- Designate a **governor for safeguarding and child protection** who will oversee the school's safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and champion child protection issues. The Designated governor for safeguarding at Westfield is Emma Townsend.
- Ensure that all newly appointed governors receive safeguarding training as part of induction
- Undertake regular safeguarding training
- Ensure an annual report is made to the governing body, on child protection matters, to include changes affecting policy and procedures, child protection training received, the number of incidents/cases anonymised, and child protection in the curriculum. The governor for safeguarding meets regularly with the Head Teacher and reports termly to the Full Governing Body.

Additionally, governors will undertake their responsibilities in relation to allegations against staff and any disciplinary procedures.

The Governing Body recognises the expertise of school staff in managing safeguarding concerns and welcomes suggestions and contributions of all staff members to shape ongoing improvements to all safeguarding arrangements.

Should Nicki Gilbert not be available, there are two deputy DSLs Kate Newby, Family Support Worker, and Val Jacks, the sixth form Pastoral Lead, who can take the lead. Whilst these staff members are able to deputise should the designated person be off site; the overall responsibility remains with the DSL.

Where students are 'Looked After' by a local authority, (CLA), or have been previously Looked After, and may have been adopted, or subject to a special guardianship order, (SGO) the most common reason is for either abuse or neglect: therefore, it is paramount that staff have the relevant skills and understanding to support these young people to remain safe within their CLA status. In addition, these young people may also experience significant emotional vulnerability. For all of these young people, the Designated Teacher for looked after children at Westfield, (DLACT), is Nicki Gilbert.

The DLACT/DSL, will ensure that individual teachers, and other staff responsible for administration, support etc, have the relevant information regarding each child's looked after status, and any specific contact arrangements in place with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. This is crucial to maintaining the level of safeguarding and child protection put in place by the responsible local authority, which could be many hundreds of miles from where the young person attends school.

The DLACT will link with the Virtual Head of each authority, to identify how allocated pupil premium funding can be used to support the progress of looked after or previously looked after children. S/he will also ensure that the statutory timeframes for reviews and personal education plans (PEP) are implemented and reviewed termly. Individual teachers will have more operational involvement with looked after children regarding teaching, progress etc, whilst the DLACT takes a strategic and co-ordination role of liaison and monitoring safeguarding and well-being.

Partnership with parents and carers

We recognise the importance of good relationships with parents and carers of children in our care and attempt to preserve these whenever possible. However, the school recognises that the protection of children must always be of paramount importance and consideration, and that the primary focus in child protection should always be the child's safety and welfare.

Good child protection practice and outcome rely on a positive, open, honest working partnership with parents and carers. We will ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We will respect carers' right to privacy and confidentiality unless they give permission for information to be shared, or it is necessary to infringe this in order to protect the child or children.

When a referral has been made without informing parents, we will clearly explain that we have acted:

- following consultation and
- in line with our statutory responsibilities, this policy and Local Authority and Safeguarding Partners Board procedures

Parents are made aware of this policy and guidance and that we may on occasion, need to make referrals without consultation with them. However, we will make every effort to maintain a positive working relationship with them whilst fulfilling our duties to protect the child or children.

In order that professional boundaries are maintained, all staff and parents are advised of the risk of making social media links with each other and strongly advised against this. Any such links are required to be communicated to the SLT and DSL, who then undertake a risk assessment.

Parents and Carers will be made aware that they can view this policy on request, or via the school website as a pdf.

Supporting the child

The school will continue to support the child, and staff should not assume that because other services are involved, they no longer have a role to play. The school will work together with other agencies involved with the family.

Children are entitled to an age appropriate explanation of what action is being taken on their behalf and why. We will provide a secure, caring, supportive and protective relationship for the child.

The Headteacher/designated person will need to decide which members of staff 'need to know' what has occurred and how much information is to be made available, in order to support and protect the child.

If a child moves from the school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure safeguarding records are forwarded on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the new school, with due regard to their confidential nature and in line with current government guidance on the transfer of such records. Direct contact between the two schools may be necessary, especially on transfer from primary to secondary schools. The school will record where and to whom the records have been passed and the date which should be within 5 days.

Safeguarding and Child protection in the curriculum

Westfield School is committed to raising pupils' awareness that they have a right to feel safe, and not be treated in a way that makes them uncomfortable, unhappy or hurt; that sometimes they may not feel able to stop an adult or a peer doing something that they do not like, but that there are people in and out of school who will listen to them and take steps to protect them from harm. We raise children's awareness of these issues through our PSHE (Personal, social and health education) and RSE (Relationships and sex education) curriculum elements, and discussing current national events that involve such issues, in a sensitive and appropriate way.

With the increasing accessibility of the internet and social media, elements of the curriculum are evolving and developing to ensure we can introduce safety messages in an appropriate and non-threatening way to our youngsters. The content of the PSHE curriculum is shared with parents and carers, and sharing sessions are delivered where appropriate. The school complies with the requirements of the Government's filtering and monitoring standards, using the 'Securly' web filter and safeguarding system. This alerts the DSL to all potential violations or risks immediately via e-mail, which can then be interrogated, and includes users trying to access blocked sites, users typing in trigger words, eg radicalisation, sexual exploitation etc.

Child on child (previously called peer on peer) abuse is a particular potential element of e-safety and social networking identified, as well as the implied meaning of the term 'friend', requiring much explanation.

We will arrange parent share sessions for our older students and invite the involvement of Community Police Officers where available, and specialist staff to deliver personal and e-safety sessions within small groups, supported by familiar staff.

Relationships lessons also focus on key areas of personal safety, (ref RSE policy). All teachers have received training on how to support children who may be questioning their gender, and aspects of curriculum implementation openly introduce and address these issues.

The emphasis on British Values in the curriculum, as a response to the importance of protecting children and young people from radicalisation, is addressed through elements of citizenship, RE and PSHE, and includes relevant and appropriate detail for those able to understand the difference between tolerance of multi-culturalism, as opposed to radicalisation. These issues will be dealt with sensitively and in a non-threatening way to avoid any misunderstanding by our learners.

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'. All staff have undertaken on-line Prevent training, which is renewed annually.

Where staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalized, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Safeguards for pupils and staff

Westfield School follows local and national guidance regarding the safe recruitment selection and employment of staff in order to ensure that every effort is made to deter and prevent any person who may pose a risk to children from working with them. In order to ensure that children are protected whilst at this school, we will ensure that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised. Due to the high support level required for our young people, the vast majority of employees are termed as being in regulated activity.

Regulated Activity includes:

- a. teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children if the person is unsupervised, or providing advice and guidance on well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children
- b. work for a limited range of establishments (known as 'specified places' which include schools and colleges), with the opportunity for contact with children, but not including work done by supervised volunteers.

Work under a) or b) is regulated if done regularly; however certain activities, examples of which listed under c) are regulated regardless of their frequency, or whether they are supervised or not.

- c. relevant personal care, or health care provided by or provided under the supervision of a health care professional:
 - personal care includes helping a child, for reasons of age, illness or disability, with eating and drinking, or in connection with toileting, washing, bathing and dressing
 - health care means care for children provided by, or under the direction or supervision of, a regulated health care professional.

We accept that it is our responsibility to follow the guidance set out in 'Keeping Children safe in Education', in particular:

- Before appointing someone, references for the applicant's suitability to work with vulnerable children will be checked and validated
- All adults at this school will have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before starting work, and prior to confirmation of appointment. This also applies to all members of the Governing Body.
- All offers of employment will be **conditional** based upon satisfactory completion of an enhanced DBS check.
- At least one member of **every** appointment panel will have undergone accredited Safer Recruitment Training.
- All existing staff have satisfied the requirements of the confidential declaration form, as per the supplementary advice regarding Childcare disqualification requirements.
- It is now also advised that online searches are undertaken for shortlisted applicants as part of the due diligence process for expected standards for working with children, and applicants will be advised of this.

In addition, we will ensure that the following checks are satisfactorily completed before a person takes up a position in the school:

- verify a candidate's identity from current photographic ID, and proof of address except where, for exceptional reasons, none is available;
- obtain a certificate for an enhanced DBS check with a barred list information where the person will be engaging in regulated activity; (see appendix for current definition)
- check that a candidate to be employed as a teacher is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State, using the Employer Access Online service;
- verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and

health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role.

- verify the person's right to work in the UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then prospective employers, or volunteer managers, will follow advice on the GOV.UK website;
- if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks the school or college consider appropriate; and
- verify professional qualifications, as appropriate.

Previous employment history will be examined and we will expect that any gaps can be reasonably accounted for.

Staff and volunteers who have not been checked in this manner will not be allowed to work alongside our young people.

(Please note: If an extended delay is likely for DBS clearance to occur, for instance if a birth certificate is lost, or an overseas national has to re-apply for key documents, or provide identification verification based on finger printing, which can be a lengthy process, then a risk assessment can be undertaken with strict conditions and monitoring procedures attached, to enable the individual to commence paid employment. However, these appointments remain temporary until satisfactory clearance is received. This decision is communicated to the Local Authority HR department, and the risk assessment justified.)

Volunteers and students

We understand that some people otherwise unsuitable for working with children may use volunteering to gain access to children; for this reason, any volunteers in the school, in whatever capacity, will be given the same consideration as paid staff.

Where a parent or other volunteer helps on a one-off basis, he/she will only work under the direct supervision of a member of staff, and at no time have one to one contact with children. However, parents or other volunteers who are in school regularly or over a longer period undergo the same DBS checks as employees to ensure their suitability to work with children, despite always working under strict supervision.

F.E. Students on placement will have undergone an enhanced DBS check by their provider, and this will be asked for during a pre-placement visit.

Work experience students, usually in year 10, will not be put in a position that may leave them, or any other student, vulnerable to unsafe supervisory conditions. A separate guidance document exists for these students.

School staff will always act professionally and conduct any relationships with children in a professional manner.

Governors

There is a requirement for all governors to have undergone a section 128 check as part of their enhanced DBS. This checks for whether or not an individual is banned from being involved in the management and governance of schools.

Confidentiality

Westfield School and all members of staff at the school will ensure that all data about pupils is handled in accordance with the requirements of the law, and any national and local guidance. Annual permission forms are sent to parents regarding use of

photographs, video etc; memory sticks and laptops containing pupil specific data are not permitted off-site; e-mails must be sent by secure means, and hard copies of pupil information must be kept in a locked office or cabinet.

Any member of staff who has access to sensitive information about a child or the child's family must take all reasonable steps to ensure that such information is only disclosed to those people who need to know.

Regardless of the duty of confidentiality, if any member of staff has reason to believe that a child may be suffering harm, or be at risk of harm, their duty is to forward this information without delay to the DSL.

Staff will not be put in a position which renders them particularly vulnerable to allegations of abuse. Any concerns that for whatever reason, a member of staff may be vulnerable will be shared with the designated person who will make appropriate arrangements to reduce/eradicate this risk. The decisions made will be recorded and include the reasons for them. If the risk relates to a particular child, a copy will be retained on that child's file (CP file where appropriate). Parents, where appropriate, will be informed.

At all times, members of staff are required to work in a professional way with children. All staff are made aware of the dangers inherent in:

- * working alone with a child
- * physical interventions
- * cultural and gender stereotyping
- * dealing with sensitive information
- * giving or receiving gifts from children and parents
- * contacting children or their parents through private telephones (including texting), email, or social networking websites
- * disclosing personal details inappropriately
- * meeting pupils outside school hours or school duties

Due to the difficulties our pupils may have accessing universal leisure activities such as Brownies, Cadets etc, many can be supported to access social activities by personal assistants (PAs) funded via direct payments through social care. These additional roles are often undertaken by class-based staff during evenings, weekends and holiday periods. Such secondary employment status introduces additional potential complexities regarding professional boundaries, and it is imperative that any such employees adhere to strict safeguarding protocol, for which a separate signed agreement exists. It is strongly advised that these separate activities are undertaken in a neutral environment with no access to individual homes unless a formal agreement exists with the parent or care giver, of which the school must hold a copy. This is to ensure correct safeguards for both pupil and employee.

Any member of staff who has concerns around the behaviour of another member of the school's staff will immediately inform the Headteacher. If these concerns relate to the Headteacher, the designated person and/or designated Governor will be informed.

Any member of staff who feels that, for whatever reason, they may behave in a manner which is abusive or neglectful to pupils has a responsibility to report this to the Headteacher who will make arrangements to secure the safety and protection of pupils. Advice, where necessary, may be sought from Local Authority officers.

The school's policy on positive behaviour support, including physical intervention relates to this policy, where a 'restraint' appears to have been conducted in a manner which could constitute abuse. (ref: policy on Behaviour and Ensuring student safety)

Where abuse by children is either suspected or becomes known, the designated person will consult with LA colleagues in order to secure appropriate arrangements for the safety and protection of all and make child protection referrals where appropriate.

School have made appropriate arrangements for ensuring the safe use of the Internet by having in place an on-premises filtering solution that allows in depth reporting of internet access in line with our e-safety requirements.

The Local Authority's policy on e-safety is adopted by all LA schools. Additional curriculum activities are delivered in age-appropriate format to instil the importance of safe use of the internet both in and outside of school.

Allegations of abuse made against a member of staff

All children will be listened to and taken seriously whenever making a disclosure, irrespective of the person about whom they are making the allegation. We acknowledge that this is particularly difficult when the subject of the allegation is a colleague and/or friend. On no account, however, will the person listening to the allegation offer an alternative explanation or blame the child. LA procedures in the ACPC handbook, will always be followed. It is acknowledged that such allegations may be:

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation;
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive;
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either to prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.
- **Unfounded:** there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made. It might also indicate that the person making the allegation misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what they saw. Alternatively, they may not have been aware of the circumstances;
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;

We acknowledge that education staff may on occasion be abusive to children. It is essential for both the children and the member of staff that allegations are investigated properly in order that the children are protected and that any member of staff who has been falsely accused can be proven innocent. In the event that an allegation is made against the Headteacher the matter should be reported to the nominated Governor, whose role it is to ensure that the agreed procedure is followed. They will proceed as the 'head teacher' as follows:

The person who has received an allegation or witnessed an event will immediately inform the head teacher, who will take steps to secure the immediate safety needs of the child or children and seek any urgent medical attention required. The member of staff will not be approached at this stage unless necessary to address the immediate safety of children.

The head teacher will consult with the lead Local Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection (LADO) in order to decide how to proceed. This decision will be made with

regard to DfE guidance and LA procedures designed to secure the rights and well-being of children and staff.

Low level concerns

If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers or contractors) that does not meet the harm threshold, then this should be shared in accordance with the Low-level concerns policy.

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

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

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

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

It is crucial that all low-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of the school from becoming the subject of potential false low-level concerns or misunderstandings.

Consideration will be given throughout to the support and information needs of pupils, parents and staff.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise a concern, or who feels their genuine concerns are not being addressed, the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available to offer support on 0800 028 0285, or on help@nspcc.org.uk

Children who go missing

When a child who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan goes missing' or is significantly absent, the DSL will immediately inform Social Services, and/or the police.

It is a statutory requirement for each child to have at least two emergency contact details, one of which ideally will be a landline telephone to a confirmed address. If children do not arrive at school when no reason has been given by the parent, the procedure for unauthorised absence will be followed, as per the attendance policy. This involves the parent, or emergency contact being contacted and asked to provide a reason for the absence. Any concerns following this communication will be reported to the DSL, who will follow up with either social care or the police.

Children who change school with no information available regarding the receiving school, Westfield School will immediately inform the SEN team in Herefordshire, Social Care and the relevant Local Authority, who will take appropriate action to trace the child.

Support for staff

Child Protection work can be difficult, distressing and extremely stressful. School staff who become involved in this area of work will therefore often need support and a 'listening ear'. Staff will be supported by the Head Teacher, who will be supported by the senior management team. Please note that additional support is always available from the LA;

the role of Safeguarding Education Officer exists to support education-based staff in all matters related to safeguarding.

Out of School activities

Where the Governing Body transfers control of use of school premises to bodies (such as sports clubs) to provide out of school hours activities, we will ensure that these bodies have appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, and that there are arrangements in place to link with the school on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the bodies.

Contracted services

Where the Governing Body contracts its services to outside providers, we will ensure that these providers have appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, and that there are arrangements in place to link with the school on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the provider.

Personnel Changes

Any change to personnel undertaking the roles of DSL or nominated governor will be reported to the Safeguarding Board in order that LA records can be updated and training offered.

Ofsted Inspections

If an OFSTED Inspection comment suggests that Westfield School should address any matters regarding child protection, this will be communicated to the Safeguarding Board who will offer any necessary advice, guidance or training. Our school will also report any positive comments or practice in order that this can be shared to promote good practice in all schools.

Summing Up

- each individual has statutory responsibility in Safeguarding and Child Protection
- every case is different
- immediate action is essential
- children's safety and well-being come first
- never hesitate to seek the advice of the designated person
- everyone has a right to make a referral to the Social Services Department
- the child may need to continue at the school and must feel safe
- the local safeguarding arrangements are there to support you and will make a referral on your behalf if necessary/appropriate
- dealing with child protection issues can be upsetting, distressing and extremely stressful. It is important to offer support and a listening ear to colleagues.

To this end, this policy must be seen in light of the school's policies on:

- Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education; child protection issues will be addressed through the curriculum as appropriate.
- Child on Child abuse; the school will pay particular attention to sexualized behaviour, bullying that is homophobic in nature, where there could be links to domestic abuse in the family home, or peer on peer abuse.
- Safer recruitment and code of conduct for staff
- Low Level Concerns procedure

- Safeguarding procedural information for staff and checklist (attached)
- Racist incidents
- Confidentiality
- Behaviour including the use of physical intervention
- Health & Safety
- Physical Intervention
- Allegations against members of staff
- Intimate Care

Documents referenced in this policy:

DfE Statutory Guidance for schools and colleges:

Keeping Children Safe in Education. September 2025

DfE Guidance

**Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
September 2021**

HM Government Statutory Guidance:

Working Together to Safeguard Children. December 2023

HM Government advice for practitioners:

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused. March 2015

DfE Statutory Guidance:

Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff 2012

DfE Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers

The Prevent Duty. June 2015

Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Right Help, Right time Levels of Need.

Types of abuse and neglect

Staff should be mindful 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

Abuse

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

Physical Abuse

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

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

Sexual Abuse

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

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, for example as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate 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.

Specific safeguarding issues

Current guidance from the government document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' refers to the requirement for all staff to have awareness of following specific safeguarding issues: broad government guidance on the issues listed can be found via the GOV.UK website:

- Child abduction and community safety incidents
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- County lines
- Children and the court system
- children missing education
- children with family members in prison
- child missing from home or care
- Cyber crime
- domestic abuse, (including controlling and coercive behaviour)
- drugs
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- So-called 'honour-based' abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage)
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- hate
- homelessness
- 'honour based' violence
- mental health
- peer on peer abuse/ child on child abuse; including bullying (including cyber-bullying), physical abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment, upskirting, sexting, and so-called initiation ceremonies
- private fostering
- preventing radicalisation
- relationship abuse
- serious crime
- serious violence
- trafficking

Further information on some of the above categories-

The full list is available in Annex B of the document, available to all staff in class bases and shared communal areas.

Children missing education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education, which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area. Effective information sharing between parents, schools, colleges and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children are safe and receiving suitable education.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and such children are at risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation. School and college staff should follow their procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future.

Schools and colleges should put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur through the use of technology.

Like all forms of child sex abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex;
- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual;
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity;
- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media);
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of child sexual exploitation:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Child criminal exploitation: county lines

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation.

Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

‘Honour based’ violence

So-called ‘honour-based’ violence (HBV) encompasses 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 so-called HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubt, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV, or already having suffered HBV.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

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 along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by “to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out” is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information](#).

Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should also still consider and discuss any such case with the school or college’s designated safeguarding lead and involve children’s social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into

marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

Preventing radicalisation

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools' or colleges' safeguarding approach.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including 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.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media) and settings (such as the internet).

However, it is possible to protect vulnerable people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being radicalised. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a referral to the Channel programme.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

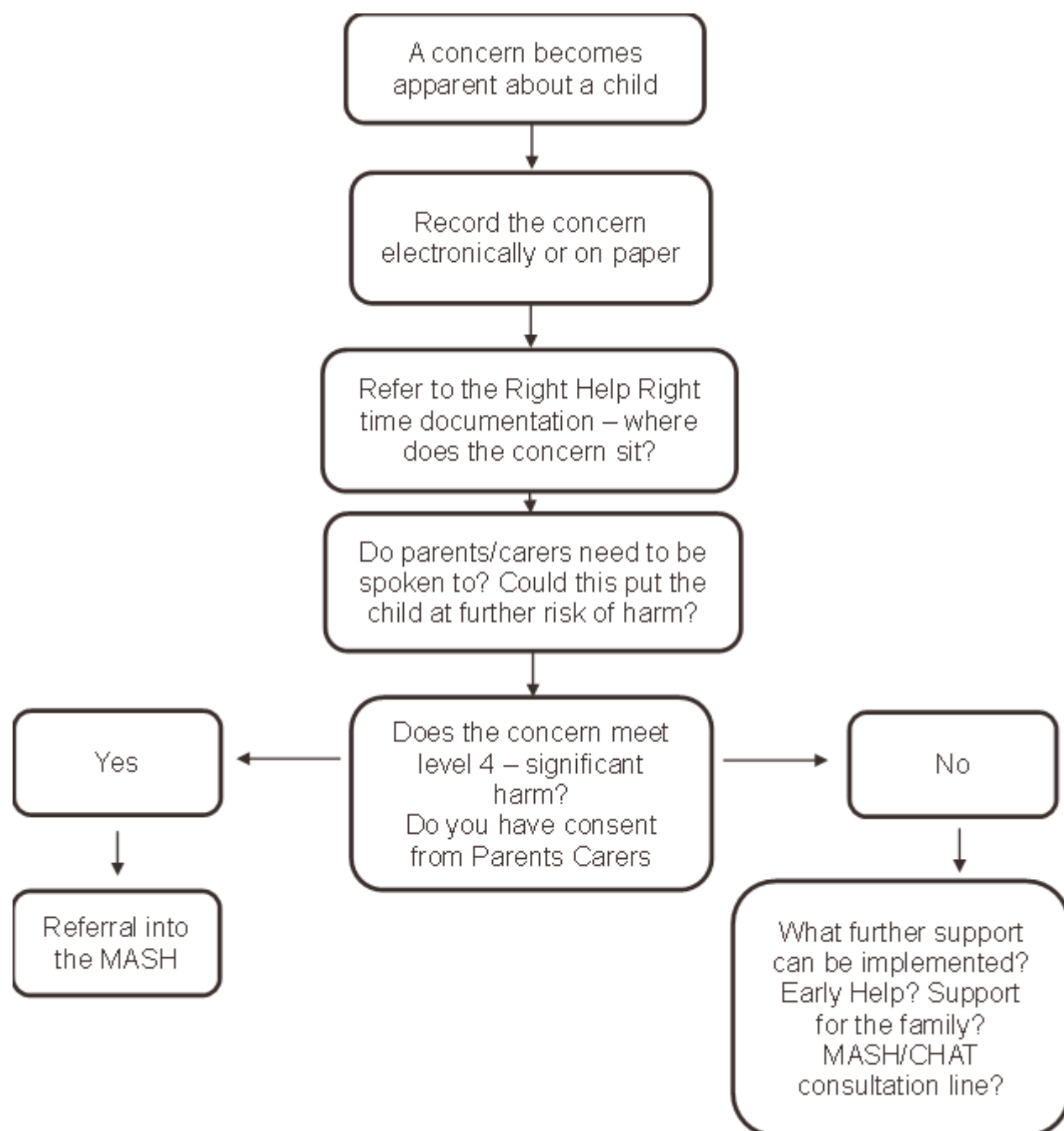
Context

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk. Staff Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges Context Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Quick reference guide for addressing all concerns



WESTFIELD SCHOOL
Safeguarding and Child Protection: Quick Prompt Card
(for everyday use but also remember to read all safeguarding policies)

DO always try to avoid working alone with a pupil, but when this is necessary always inform a member of staff where you are working and remember to leave the door ajar, whilst also protecting a pupil's dignity when necessary

DO observe pupils on a daily basis and remember you have a duty to report any and all concerns to the Headteacher/DSL

DO request support from a first aider and Headteacher/DSL when there are signs of serious injury/illness so emergency intervention can be summoned

DO be alert to any unexplained pupil changes in behaviour and/or emotion and report these to the Headteacher/DSL

DO report any and all disclosures of possible abuse immediately to the Headteacher/DSL both via MyConcern and verbally

DO respond immediately if you detect any unexplained injuries by reporting the incident on the Headteacher/DSL or Deputy designated person, who will support the recording of the marks on a body chart

DO give a pupil time to share what they wish to say and remember some pupils may prefer to communicate via sign, symbol or augmentative device.

DO remain passive and listen carefully to what is being communicated. When the pupil has shared what s/he wished to communicate, arrange to be excused from the class and report what has been disclosed to the Headteacher/DSL both in writing and verbally

DO reassure a pupil that s/he has done the right thing by sharing the disclosure and react calmly by giving gentle, simple and re-assuring responses, but promising nothing

DO NOT stop a pupil from sharing a disclosure but allow him/her to talk freely

DO NOT question a pupil or ask for more information

DO NOT tell a pupil you will keep a disclosure secret

DO NOT share information about an incident or disclosure with any person other than the Headteacher/DSL, or in her absence, the deputy designated person and remember that all information is absolutely confidential

DO NOT communicate with pupils out of school hours for social reasons via mobile phones, social networking sites, email etc.

Please familiarise yourself with the school's social networking policy and adhere to it at all times.