

Spittal Community First School

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

September 2023

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body or its equivalent to ensure that the school has a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures in place that are in accordance with Local Authority guidance and/or locally agreed inter-agency procedures approved by the Local Safeguarding Partnership.

Policy statement and principles

Spittal Community First School fully recognises its responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This policy (* these policies are statutory) is one of a series in the school's safeguarding portfolio which includes:

- ✓ Attendance*
- ✓ Behaviour*
- ✓ School Suspensions & Exclusions
- ✓ Personal and Intimate Care
- ✓ Complaints Procedure*
- ✓ Tackling Bullying
- ✓ Physical contact/safe touch
- ✓ Whistleblowing
- ✓ SEND*
- ✓ Staff Code of Conduct
- ✓ Staff discipline, conduct, and grievance procedures including how you manage allegations*
- ✓ E-safety (which may include guidance on staff/pupil online communication)
- ✓ Handheld devices/mobile phones
- ✓ Confidentiality and information sharing
- ✓ Children Missing from school
- ✓ Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- ✓ Children with health needs who cannot attend school*
- ✓ Supporting pupils with medical conditions*
- ✓ Protection of biometric information of children in schools and colleges (where used in school) *

- ✓ First Aid*
- ✓ Health and Safety*
- ✓ Equality Information and Objectives*

Early years settings, schools and further education and skills providers should be safe environments where children, learners and vulnerable adults can learn and develop. To ensure the school setting meets these requirements children's and learners' welfare is promoted and where timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken for children or learners who need early help or who may be suffering, or likely to suffer, harm. By achieving this the school/setting is ensuring they meet the requirements set out by Ofsted who will 'evaluate how well providers fulfil their statutory and other responsibilities and how well staff exercise their professional judgement in keeping children and learners safe.' School policy and practice is also established to meet the requirements set out by our safeguarding partners Northumberland Children's and Adult's Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (NCASP)

The following terminology is used throughout this document -

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Child Protection is a term used to describe the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or likely to suffer from significant harm

Staff refers to all those working for on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity

Child includes everyone under the age of 18

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example stepparents, foster carers and adoptive parents

This policy is available on the school website and is included in the staff handbook/volunteers' handbook and made available to all visitors

All relevant policies have been updated to reflect the increased use of remote learning and all necessary risk assessments have been completed and refer to safeguarding procedures.

Child protection statement

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children/young people are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow procedures to ensure that children receive effective support and protection.

At Spittal Community First School pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online, through various teaching and learning opportunities and the school is fully committed to this as part of the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum.

This policy has been written with reference to key statutory guidance (as referenced throughout)

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers, visitors and governors and are consistent with those of the local safeguarding partnership, Northumberland Children's and Adults Safeguarding Partnership (NCASP).

Policy aims

- To demonstrate the school's commitment regarding safeguarding and child protection to pupils, parents and other partners
- To contribute to the school's safeguarding portfolio
- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice

Policy principles

- **The welfare of the child is paramount**
- **All children and young people, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection**
- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance**
- The school will maintain an attitude of "it could happen here"**
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm**
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support
- safer children make more successful learners
- This policy will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review**

Due to their day-to-day contact with pupils, school staff are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in school when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that **all school staff** are alert to the signs of abuse and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns. The school will always act on identified concerns.

All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Leads) if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

Roles and responsibilities

The named designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is; Wendy Kiff

Contact details: wendy.kiff@spittal.northumberland.sch.uk 01289 307413

The deputy designated safeguarding lead are; Emma Richards and Harriet Bayly

Contact details: emma.richards@northumberland.sch.uk
harriet.bayly@spittal.northumberland.sch.uk

01289 307413

The nominated child protection governor is; Iain Scott

Contact details: iainscott@talktalk.net

The head teacher is; Wendy Kiff

Contact details: wendy.kiff@spittal.northumberland.sch.uk 01289 307413

The Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff
- is appropriately trained, receiving annual updates and refresher training provided by the Local Authority, on behalf of the safeguarding partners every two years. In Northumberland the expectation is that the DSL attends a half day refresher, facilitated by the LA (Local Authority) every two years and on the alternate year they attend safeguarding training relevant to their school and local context, supporting their professional development and delivered by suitably qualified providers
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings
- is alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers
- has a working knowledge of Northumberland Children and Adult Safeguarding Partnership (NCASP) procedures <https://www.proceduresonline.com/northumberlandcs/index.html>
- makes staff aware of NCASP training courses (all available through Learning Together <http://ncc.learningpool.com/>) and the latest policies and procedures on safeguarding
- understands locally agreed processes for providing early help and intervention
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely, but kept separate from the pupil's general file
- refers cases of suspected abuse to children's social care or police as appropriate
- notifies children's social care if a child with a child protection plan has unexplained absences
- ensures that when a pupil leaves the school, their child protection file is sent securely to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained. The pupil's social worker should also be informed of the change in school
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans
- ensures that all appropriate staff members have a working knowledge and understanding of their role in case conferences, core groups and other multi-agency planning meetings, to ensure that they attend and are able to effectively contribute when required to do so
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the NCASP
- ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the child protection policy

- ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated annually, working with governors and trustees
- liaises with the nominated governor and headteacher (where the role is not carried out by the headteacher) as appropriate
- ensures a record of staff attendance at child protection and safeguarding training is maintained
- ensures staff are kept up to date with key priorities within the LA, including learning from serious practice reviews
- makes the child protection & safeguarding policy available publicly, on the school's website
- ensures parents are aware of the school's role in safeguarding and that referrals about suspected abuse and neglect may be made
- has the lead role for Operation Encompass and Operation Endeavour in the school and ensures the school meets all requirements set out in the LA procedures
- reports concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, following the Prevent referral process and refer cases by e-mail to OneCall. If the matter is urgent then Police must be contacted by dialing 999. In cases where further advice from the Police is sought dial 101. The Department for Education has also set up a dedicated telephone helpline for staff and governors to raise concerns around Prevent (020 7340 7264)
- work with others to ensure that the school's filtering and monitoring systems are functional and effective
- Meet all other responsibilities as set out for DSLs (Designated Safeguarding Leads) in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead; this lead responsibility should not be delegated.

The deputy designated person(s):

Are appropriately trained and, in the absence of the designated person, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the designated person, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

If the DSL (or deputy) are not available, staff should contact a member of the leadership team to seek advice. Advice can also be sought from colleagues in One Call, the Local Authority's single point of access on 01670 536400 or from the School's Safeguarding Team on 07976850562

The governing body:

Ensures that the school:

- The governing body (proprietors/management committee) of the school/ setting (including maintained nursery schools) will ensure that all staff have read the appropriate sections of this guidance (Part 1 and Annex B or Annexe A) and will ensure the necessary mechanisms are in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their roles and responsibilities.

- appoints a DSL for child protection who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training
- ensures that the DSL role is explicit in the role holder's job description
- has a child protection policy and procedures
- has a staff behaviour policy/code of conduct, which is reviewed annually and made available publicly on the school's website or by other means
- has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the head teacher and allegations against other children
- follows safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and disqualification by association regulations
- develops a training strategy that ensures all staff, including the head teacher, receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, staff behaviour policy or code of conduct and the role of the DSL on induction, and appropriate child protection training, which is updated at least annually and will receive regular updates. The DSL receives face to face refresher training at two-yearly intervals and accesses an annual update in line with the Local Safeguarding Board requirements
- ensures that all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers are provided with the school's child protection policy and staff behaviour policy
- ensures that the school contributes to early help arrangements and inter agency working and plans
- provides a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified
- considers how pupils may be taught about safeguarding, including online as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

The governing body nominates a member (normally the chair) to be responsible for liaising with the local authority designated officer and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the head teacher.

It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure that the school's safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations procedures take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority, NCASP and national guidance.

An annual audit (s175) will be submitted, annually, to the local authority, including an action plan. Any weaknesses will be rectified without delay.

The head teacher:

- ensures that the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff
- allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements, when necessary, to enable the DSL and deputy to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures
- ensures that pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online

- school leaders and governors ensure that the child's wishes are taken into account when determining action to be taken or services to be provided
- contacts the LADO immediately an allegation is made against a member of staff, seeking advice and then works with the LADO to follow the advice received
- ensures that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards pupils we need to agree standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all staff. Good practice includes:

- treating all pupils with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils
- being an active listener
- being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding the school's safeguarding and child protection policy, staff behaviour policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, extremism, e-safety and information-sharing
- asking the pupil's permission before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse
- applying the use of reasonable force only as a last resort and in compliance with school and NCASP procedures
- referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL, or, if necessary, directly to police or children's social care
- following the school's rules about relationships with pupils and communication with pupils, including on social media.

Abuse of position of trust

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that pupil is over the age of consent.

The school's Staff Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct sets out the expectations of the staff and is signed by/available to all staff members.

Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. It is important to understand that this increase in risk is due more to societal attitudes and assumptions or child protection procedures that fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances, rather than the individual child's personality, impairment or circumstances. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- displaying early signs of abuse and/or neglect
- looked after or returned home after a period of care
- disabled or have special educational needs
- young carers
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs or misusing substances themselves
- asylum seekers
- living away from home or in temporary accommodation
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- live transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- at risk of sexual exploitation
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- at risk of forced marriage
- at risk of being drawn into extremism or being radicalised
- showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation (inc County Lines)
- children who are absent from education
- privately fostered
- It is also worth noting that The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 came into force in February 2023 means that 16 and 17 year olds will no longer be allowed to marry or enter a civil partnership, even if they have parental consent. Any concerns that students may be getting married should be referred to the DSL.
-

Children can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate

relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation. This is sometimes referred to as **contextual safeguarding**

Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT)

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. At Spittal First School, we endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced by providing a safe space for them and an adult to speak to by working with each child to identify an adult in school.

This updated list (above) provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive.

Helping children to keep themselves safe

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult helps prevention. We will therefore raise awareness of child protection issues and equip children with the skills to keep them safe, this will include activities to improve their resilience. Children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

The school will therefore:

- establish and maintain an environment and positive ethos where children feel secure, supported and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to, can learn, develop and feel valued.
- ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- include in the curriculum, activities and opportunities for PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Education) which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse, develop resilience and that they know to whom to turn for help. The curriculum covers how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. We tailor our curriculum appropriately to the needs and vulnerabilities of our children, including those who are victims of abuse and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Relationships and health education are included within our curriculum. We recognise that we play a crucial role in preventative education and preparing our children for modern life in Britain.
- Children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it. Spittal Community First School is a listening school, and all children and young people are encouraged to speak to a member of staff when they are worried about any issues.
- Support for those involved in a child protection issue.

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved.

We will support pupils, their families, and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- responding sympathetically to any request from pupils or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety

- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- storing records securely
- offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support
- where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a pupil, ensure that lines of communication are maintained
- following the procedures laid down in our child protection, whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures
- cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies
- providing access to supervision for those staff dealing with child protection issues

Complaints procedure

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a pupil or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a pupil that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Complaints are managed by senior staff, the Headteacher and Governors. An explanation of the complaints procedure is available on the school website. Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures. Complaints which escalate into a child protection concern will automatically be managed under the school's child protection procedures.

Whistle blowing if you have concerns about a colleague

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The school's whistleblowing code is available from the headteacher or on the school safeguarding board, enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the head teacher. Complaints about the head teacher/principal should be reported to the Chair of Governors

Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure immediate actions

Allegations or concerns about an adult working in the school whether as a teacher, supply teacher, other staff, volunteers or contractors

At Spittal First School we recognise the possibility that adults working in the school may harm children, including governors, volunteers, supply teachers and agency staff. Any concerns about the conduct of other adults in the school should be taken to the head teacher without delay; any concerns about the headteacher should go to the Chair of Governors who can be contacted by email.

Concerns may come from various sources, for example, a suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

The headteacher/principal has to decide whether the concern is an allegation or low-level concern (see Appendix I for further information re low level concerns)

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to pupils, and we must act on every allegation.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. In some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected. In the event of suspension, the school will provide support and a named contact for the member of staff.

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, 2023) and in the school's Managing Allegations Policy and Procedures.

Staff, parents and governors are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites.

Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at the school, or historical allegations will be reported to the police.

Staff training

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff and governors will receive a mandatory briefing during their induction, which includes the school's child protection and safeguarding policy, behaviour policy, staff behaviour policy, reporting and recording arrangements, and details for the DSL.

All staff, including the head teacher (unless the head teacher is the DSL) and governors will receive training that is regularly updated. The NCASP recommends staff receive annual updates and a detailed programme (either online or face to face) at least every three years.

The DSL (and deputies) will receive annual safeguarding training, with subjects reflecting local and national priorities and including a refresher session on their roles and responsibilities every two years.

All staff sign to confirm they have received a copy of the child protection and safeguarding policy and staff behaviour policy/code of conduct and have read *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (Part 1 and Annex B)

Governor Training

Members of the Governing Body of the school take part in mandatory safeguarding training to ensure that they can 'assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective.' This training is regularly updated.

Supply staff and other visiting staff will be given the school's Visiting Staff Leaflet, which will be made available to them on their arrival

Safer recruitment

Our school endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ safe staff by following the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) and the school's Staff Recruitment procedures.

At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

The school obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the school have been appropriately checked.

Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained.

The school maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.

Regulated Activity

Schools are 'specified places' which means that the majority of staff and volunteers will be engaged in regulated activity. A fuller explanation of regulated activity can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) Annex E

Volunteers

Volunteers, including governors will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school and contact with pupils. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised or be allowed to engage in regulated activity.

Supervised volunteers

Volunteers who work only in a supervised capacity and are not in regulated activity will undergo the safe recruitment checks appropriate to their role, in accordance with the school's risk assessment process and statutory guidance.

Contractors

The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks and barred list checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity.

Site security

Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure children in school are kept safe. The head teacher will

exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitors should be escorted or supervised while on site.

Extended School, out of school providers and off-site arrangements

All extended and off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures apply. When we host out-of-school providers on the premises it should be noted that whilst the provider is responsible for their own safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, the school may refer any concerns they have about the provider to the local authority. The school uses [the DfE Keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings-code-of-practice](#) as best practice guidance.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

Photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent and legitimate reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or distributing images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.

To protect pupils, we will:

- seek parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- use only the pupil's first name with an image
- ensure pupils are appropriately dressed
- encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

E-Safety

Our pupils increasingly use electronic equipment on a daily basis to access the internet and share content and images via social networking sites including Facebook, Twitter, MSN, Tumblr, Snapchat and Instagram.

Unfortunately, some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. Pupils may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate websites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behaviour and criminal activity.

The school's e-safety policy, available on the website, explains how we try to keep pupils safe in school and protect and educate pupils in the safe use of technology. This includes reference to the four C's - content/contact/conduct and commerce at relevant, age appropriate opportunities in the curriculum. Cyberbullying and sexting by pupils will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. Serious incidents may be managed in line with our child protection procedures.

All staff receive e-safety training and the school's e-safety co-ordinator is Vanessa Mutch.

The school considers e-safety as a priority and included in this is how we manage pupils' use of their own electronic devices on the school site, and in particular mobile phones. When pupils use the school's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems, which are regularly reviewed for their effectiveness.

- Filtering refers to the technology preventing access to harmful or inappropriate content, whilst monitoring refers to the practical steps staff take to ensure harmful or inappropriate access is not made. Monitoring can include:
 - Physical monitoring
 - Live software monitoring
 - Monitoring user logs
 - Monitoring individual devices
- We make sure that any school devices used away from the school site are also subject to filtering and monitoring procedures.
- Each year (at least) our designated safeguarding lead, along with our IT team and a governor, review our filtering and monitoring procedures to ensure that they effectively prevent access to harmful or inappropriate content. They also ensure that the systems we have in place to report any difficulties with the system are understood by all staff and reports are effectively managed.
- All our staff undertake training to understand the risks of poor filtering and monitoring, and know how to share their concerns
- All our staff have taken part in annual cybersecurity training

However, many pupils are able to access the internet using their own data plan. To minimise inappropriate use, we as a school do not allow pupil's own mobile devices on site.

The school complies with the guidance as set out in

Staff/pupil relationships

The school provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with pupils. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation

This is set out in the school social networking policy.

Child protection procedures

Recognising abuse

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people. 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.

The four types of abuse are physical, sexual, emotional and neglect

Details of the definitions of the 4 types of abuse are included as Appendix A

Detailed below are a number of specific categories where there is evidence of increased vulnerability, and all school staff understand the need to be particularly vigilant, taking advice from the DSL if they believe they identify a child who may need extra support or referred to an external agency.

- **Children Who Are Absent from Education**

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school or college's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about others safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) the school has:

1. Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).
3. Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
4. Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:
 - a. leave school to be home educated
 - b. move away from the school's location
 - c. remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
 - d. are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or
 - e. are permanently excluded

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

When a pupil leaves the school, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.

The school's behaviour and attendance lead will submit a monthly return to the LA, indicating children missing education and the DSL must review this submission before it is sent to ensure they are aware of any concerns or can add additional information

The school procedures reflect the latest DfE guidance

[Working-together-to-improve-school-attendance](#) and [Children-missing-education guidance](#)

The LA guidance is available on the Virtual School web page

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Looked-after/Virtual.aspx#childrennotinschool>

- **Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

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

- **Bullying**

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's wellbeing and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people.

All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our tackling-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents receive a copy of the policy/procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in RHSE education. If the bullying is particularly serious, or procedures implemented to address the bullying are deemed to be ineffective, the head teacher and the DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.

- **Looked After Children and Previously Looked After children**

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children

safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head teacher

- **Children with sexually harmful behaviour (please also refer to Appendix E)**

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's **anti-bullying procedures** where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures.

The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. Staff who become concerned about a pupil's sexual behaviour, including any known online sexual behaviour, should speak to the DSL as soon as possible

- **Sexual exploitation of children**

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.

The school includes the risks of sexual exploitation in the RHSE curriculum. A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often doesn't recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL.

[Child Sexual Exploitation \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

- **Criminal Exploitation of Children**

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity and includes drug networks or gangs grooming and exploiting children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns.

See Appendix A for further details

[Gang Activity, Youth Violence and Criminal Exploitation Affecting Children \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

- **Female Genital Mutilation**

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. Any person found guilty of an offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 is liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment or a fine, or both.

See Appendix A for further details

[Female Genital Mutilation \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

- **Forced Marriage**

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

See Appendix A for further details

[Forced Marriage \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

- **Radicalisation and Extremism**

The government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Some children are at risk of being radicalised: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Nationally, Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form however schools should also remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into white supremacy and extreme right wing factions

School staff receive training to help to identify signs of extremism. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the DfE advice Promoting fundamental British Values as part of SMCS (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014).

[Prevent - Safeguarding Children and Young People against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf

See Appendix A for further details

- **Private fostering arrangements**

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative care for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16 or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in a residential school, children's home or hospital are not considered to be privately fostered.

Private fostering occurs in all cultures, including British culture and children may be privately fostered at any age.

By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible.

When a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will raise this with the DSL and the school should notify the local authority of the circumstances.

[Children Living Away from Home \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

- **Child on Child Abuse**

Staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves as child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), physical abuse, sexual violence, gender-based violence, initiation- type violence and rituals and sending nude images. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or part of growing up. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse and this must always be considered when cases are reviewed. This school maintains a zero-tolerance approach to any forms of sexual violence or sexual harassment. At our school we believe that all children have the right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm from adults and other children. We recognise that some students will negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's behaviour policy.

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school which are of a safeguarding nature. This could include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation and also include girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation, some of the following features will be found –

- the allegation is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger or more vulnerable pupil
- is of a serious nature, including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other pupils in school
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the school may have been affected by this behaviour

To support young people in this situation we will follow our usual safeguarding procedures ensuring all information is recorded and reported to the DSL, with reference being made to NCASP guidance on abuse by children and young people (Plus see Annexe E).

[Child Sexual Exploitation \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

In cases of 'sexting' we will adhere to the guidance given to schools and colleges by the DfE - Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes: how to respond to an incident, published December 2020

- **Domestic Violence**

Our school is fully engaged in Operation Encompass and we recognise the importance of all staff having a basic understanding in relation to domestic violence and the impact it can have on children. The school notifies all parents that we are partners with the LA and police in relation to Operation Encompass and new staff receive a briefing as part of their induction.

Staff understand that violence perpetrated by a child on their parent (Child to Parent Violence and Abuse CPVA (Child to Parent Violence and Abuse)) is also a form of domestic violence and as such will seek advice from the DSL when they are made aware of such incidents

See Appendix 1

[Domestic Violence and Abuse \(proceduresonline.com\)](https://proceduresonline.com)

Mental Health

All staff at Spittal First School are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

School staff are not expected, or trained, to diagnose mental health conditions or issues, but may notice behaviours that may be of concern.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy and completing a cause for concern form.

The school's mental health lead is Mrs Woodhouse email;

ellys.woodhouse@spittal.northumberland.sch.uk

Contextual Safeguarding

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside the school or college. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children's social care assessments should consider such factors so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and

the full context of any abuse. See Appendix A for additional information regarding contextual safeguarding

Impact of abuse

The impact of child abuse, neglect and exploitation should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach, and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.

Any child, in any family, in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”.

Key points for staff to remember for acting are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary call 999
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, by the end of the day
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a cause for concern
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

If you are concerned about a pupil’s welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk but have no ‘real’ evidence. The pupil’s behaviour may have changed, or their patterns of attendance may have altered. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk. The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill, or an accident has occurred. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the cause for concern form to record these early concerns. If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.

Concerns which do not meet the threshold for child protection intervention will be managed through the Early Help process. Relevant Early Help Support Request forms can be found here:
<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Family/Support.aspx#> **HYPERLINK**

If a pupil discloses to you

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, **the staff member will need to let the pupil know that they must pass the information on** – staff are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. If they jump in immediately the pupil may think that they do not want to listen, if left until the very end of the conversation, the pupil may feel that they have been misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During their conversations with the pupils staff will:

- allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and not overreact – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’
- not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how hard this must be for the pupil
- **under no circumstances** ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the pupil’s mother think about all this
- at an appropriate time tell the pupil that to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on and explain to whom and why
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be the staff member’s way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong
- Tell the pupil what will happen next. The pupil may agree to go to see the designated senior person. Otherwise let them know that someone will come to see them before the end of the day.
- report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves
- write up their conversation as soon as possible on the cause for concern form and hand it to the designated person
- seek support if they feel distressed

Sexual Violence or Sexual harassment

Considering confidentiality and anonymity

This school recognises that in cases related to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment there may be situations where the young person asks the school not to tell anyone about the incident and all staff are aware of their duty to report concerns to the DSL

Risk Assessments

Report of sexual violence or sexual harassment will include the time and location of the incident and subsequent risk assessments will include any actions required to make the location safer.

Impact on any siblings

The school recognises the importance of understanding intra-familial harms and will identify any necessary support for siblings following incidents of sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively, and the DSL will contact the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care.

Referral to children's social care

- **The DSL will make a referral to children's social care** if it is believed that a pupil is **suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm.**
- The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless doing so would increase the risk to the child.
- Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.
- The DSL should keep relevant staff informed about actions taken, they do not need to share all information, but staff must be confident their concerns have been actioned

Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL, head teacher or chair of governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However, following several cases where senior leaders in school had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)* emphasises that **any** member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. Information sharing is guided by the following principles. The information is:

- necessary and proportionate
- relevant
- adequate
- accurate
- timely
- secure

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether the decision is taken to share.

Cause for concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access, and sensitive information should not routinely be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. Child protection information, including Operation Encompass and Operation Endeavour notifications will be stored separately from the pupil's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held.

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share sensitive information within the school or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information *without* consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the head teacher or DSL.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

The school's confidentiality and information-sharing policy is available to parents and pupils on request, and is available from the head teacher.

The child's wishes.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, governing bodies, proprietors and school or college leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are considered 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. All systems and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

Reporting directly to child protection agencies

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) if:

- the situation is an emergency and the DSL, their deputy, the head teacher and the chair of governors are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

Work Experience

The school has detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise pupils on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)

- [Adult Safeguarding - Information for professionals](#)

Our designated safeguarding lead who has responsibility for Child Protection issues is/are:

Mrs Wendy Kiff Last trained; 21.11.2022

Deputising arrangements

Emma Richards Last Trained; 17.5.2023

Harriet Bayly Last trained; 21.11.2022

Lead governor for Safeguarding

Iain Scott Last trained October 2022

Our E-Safety Coordinator is:

Vanessa Mutch

Last trained E-Safety; 11.05.2018

Safer Recruitment and Selection online training

One member of the selection panel for staff appointments must have completed either on-line or face-to-face safer recruitment training

Currently the following people are trained

Wendy Kiff and Emma Richards 23/1/2017

This policy was ratified onand will be reviewed on

..... Signed by the Head teacher and Chair of Governors

APPENDICES	
A	Definitions of Abuse and Other Harmful Behaviour
B	LA and NCASP contacts
C	School Paperwork for Recording & Reporting Concerns
D	Raising Safeguarding Concerns about a Child – this is the generic flowchart and schools may choose not to include this, having outlined their own procedures in Appendix C
E	Dealing with Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
F	Standards for Effective Child Protection Practice in Schools
G	Frequently asked questions

H	E-Safety: Children Exposed to Abuse through the Digital Media
I	Dealing with Allegations Against People Who Work with Children