



Stanchester
Academy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Written by: Sharon Hooper

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Designated Safeguarding Lead: Sharon Hooper

Sharon.Hooper@stanchester.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Gregg Mockridge

Gregg.Mockridge@stanchester.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mary Cranna

Mary.Cranna@stanchester.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Abi Millard

Abigail.Millard@stanchester.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Gemma Glentworth

Gemma.Glentworth@stanchester.co.uk

Contents

• Induction and Context	Page 3
• Our School's Commitment	Page 3
• Equalities Statement	Page 4
• Glossary	Page 4
• Part One – Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities	Pages 4 - 13
• Part Two – Types of Abuse/Signs/Specific Safeguarding Issues	Pages 13 - 23
• Part Three - Responding to Allegations and Whistleblowing	Pages 23 - 27
• Part Four - Supporting children	Pages 27 - 30
• Part Five – Responding to child-on child abuse	Pages 30 - 33
Appendix A	Pages 33 - 39
Appendix B	Pages 40 - 42
Appendix C	Page 43
Appendix D	Page 44 - 45

Our Vision

Stanchester Academy is a community built on the values of mutual respect and ambition for everyone.

This vision underpins all the work we do, our safeguarding and child protection policy and is reflected in the decisions we have made about our how we safeguard and promote the welfare of children in our school.

Introduction and context

At Stanchester Academy, we are committed to safeguarding children and young people, and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment. Adults in our school take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them. All adults will always act in the best interest of the child. We are committed to providing an environment that nurtures and transforms the lives of children and young people attending our school and take seriously our responsibilities to safeguard and promote their welfare. In addition, our school undertake responsibilities to work in partnership with agencies and partners as part of the wider, multi-agency, safeguarding system, in accordance with our schools individual Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures, statutory guidance and Somerset Safeguarding Partnership (SSCP) policies and procedures.

Personal sensitive information is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and Part 3, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Consent to share information will be sought unless we are required to share information where there are child protection concerns (and consent has been withheld) or we are requested to share information with other statutory agencies such as the police or local authority children's social care in pursuit of their enquiries in order protect and safeguard children and young people

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively we ensure our approach is child centered, always considering what is in the **best interests** of the child or young person.

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance 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
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Most children grow up in loving families and supportive communities and become independent, resilient adults. Wherever possible we want this for all children and young people, so that they and their families can support themselves by engaging with and contributing to their local communities. In order to achieve this children, young people and their families should receive the right intervention as early as possible to tackle problems and prevent issues escalating. All practitioners will adopt an Early Help/Think Family approach meaning they look at the whole family situation and what needs to happen to improve that situation whether that means working with adults, children or the whole family

Our school's commitment

To safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people through:

- The provision of a safe environment in which children and young people can learn.
- Our school will assess the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of children and young people.
- Identifying concerns early and provide appropriate help and support for children and young people and their parents/carers to prevent concerns escalating to a point whereby intervention would be required under the Children Act 1989 and in accordance with the Somerset Effective Support for Children and Families, Thresholds for Assessment and Services guidance.
- Children and young people are taught about safeguarding, including online, through various teaching and learning opportunities. Children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.
- Victims of harm should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, exploitation, or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Equalities Statement

With regards to safeguarding we will consider our duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and our general and specific duties under the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#).

General duties include:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with disadvantages affecting children and young people with certain protected characteristics, in order to meet their specific needs.
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people.
- Foster good relations across all protected characteristics between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Details of our specific duties are published under BTCT's equality statement and measurable objectives. This document is available on BTCT website.

Every school in the Trust will have their own safeguarding and child protection policy available in school and on their school website.

Glossary

- References to "staff" related to any staff-member, paid or unpaid, who contribute to the care, transportation or education of our children and young people.
- SSCP is an abbreviation for the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

Part One - Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and Responsibilities of All Staff

- All staff will read and understand Part 1 of statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024. Those working directly with children will also read Annex B.
- All staff will be aware of the systems in place which support safeguarding including reading this Academy Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy; the Academy Behaviour Policy; the BTCT Code of Conduct; working together to safeguard children 2023, Academy child missing from education policy (CME policy) safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- All staff will know how to contact the DSL and any deputies, Trust Safeguarding Lead, Academy Safeguarding Officer and the named Governor responsible for safeguarding.
- Record concerns appropriately and in a timely manner by using the setting's safeguarding systems.
- Be involved where appropriate, in the implementation of individual plans to further safeguard vulnerable pupils and understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.
- All adults working in our school complete all safeguarding training, including online safety, which amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring cyber security
- Any child may benefit from early help, but all school staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:
 - is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
 - has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education Health and Care plan)
 - has a mental health need
 - is a young carer
 - is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
 - has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from school
 - is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
 - is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
 - has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
 - is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues or domestic abuse
 - who may need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect
 - where a crime may have been committed
 - is a privately fostered child.
- 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 being 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 if they have concerns about a child.
- Be clear as to the setting's policy and procedures about child on child abuse, children missing education and those requiring mental health support, and the impact of technology in relation to online safety.
- All staff will be aware of the need to raise to the Trust Safeguarding Lead or Trust Leader any concerns they have about safeguarding practices within the school.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Our school has a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who has the status and authority to carry out the duties of the post.

Details of our DSL and Deputy DSL are available on the Stanchester Academy website, our newsletters and on noticeboards around the school. Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024, Annex C pg 170).

- The DSL is a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team and has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place) within the setting.
- The DSL works with the headteacher, and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that pupils in need are experiencing or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on pupil's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college.
- Activities include the management of work undertaken by any Deputy DSLs, Safeguarding Officer.
- Manages early identification of vulnerability of pupils and their families from staff through cause for concerns or notifications. This will ensure detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Manages referrals to local safeguarding partners where pupils with additional needs have been identified. These can include those:
 - who need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect;
 - requiring mental health support;
 - who may benefit from early help;
 - where there is a radicalisation concern;
 - where a crime may have been committed.

The DSL will also:

- Be a key point of contact for outside agencies about safeguarding.
- Support and advise other staff in making referrals to other agencies.
- If required, liaise with the case manager and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in relation to child protection cases which concern a staff member.
- Coordinate safeguarding training and raise awareness and understanding to the school community around policies and practice in relation to safeguarding.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about vulnerable pupils with relevant staff. This includes ensuring that staff:
 - know who these children are,
 - understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.
 - are supported to identify the challenges that children in this group might face.
 - provide additional academic support or make reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker to reach their potential.
- Ensure the successful transfer of the Safeguarding/Child Protection File when a pupil moves on to a new setting within 5 days for in year transfer or the first 5 days of the start of a new term.
- Be able to keep detailed accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent programme.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding cover and availability during term time/ any out of hours/out of term activities managed by the school.

The Governing Body (including Trusts or Directors)

Our Trust and governing bodies will ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. They will also have regard to this guidance to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in the provision are effective, comply with the law at all times and Local Safeguarding Partnership arrangements.

Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024, Part 2).

- The appointed Safeguarding Governor will liaise with the Head Teacher and the DSL to produce an annual report for governors and complete the S. 175 (annual safeguarding) audit for the Somerset Education Safeguarding Service;
- Ensure that the school remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to its attention without delay;
- Ensure that this document is updated annually (or when there are significant updates)
- Ensure that the DSL is an appropriate senior member of setting's senior leadership team and ensure that they have adequate time, funding, training, resources, and support to carry out their role effectively.
- Ensure that the training and learning for the school community is robust, effective and regularly updated
- Ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, (including online safety which includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring cyber security at induction. The training should be regularly updated. Induction and training should be in line with any advice from the safeguarding partners.
- Ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding on the curriculum including online safety in compliance with statutory guidance Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education – see RSE policy for details
- To ensure that teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors have appropriate checks carried out in line with statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Ensure that there are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns or allegations against teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors who may not be suitable to work with or pose a risk to pupils, this includes having a process to manage low level concerns.
- Ensure that systems are in place for pupils to effectively share a concern about a safeguarding issue they are experiencing, express their views and give feedback.
- Ensure that the setting has systems in place to prevent, identify and respond to child on child abuse (including sexual abuse and sexual harassment) and mental health concerns
- Ensure they review the effectiveness of the setting's online safety practices by following DfE *Meeting digital and technology standards in Schools and Colleges*.
 - Identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems
 - Review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually
 - Block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning
 - Have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet the safeguarding needs.This information should be included in the school Prevent Duty Risk Assessment.
- Appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement for children in care and other care arrangements. Ensure the academy has current Education of Looked After Children in Schools Policy and they have reviewed the annual report produced by the designated teacher to evaluate the progress of Looked After Children in the academy.

Staff Induction

As part of the mandatory induction process for new employees/volunteers, they will attend an induction briefing with either DSL or DDSL, that will include the school Safeguarding and Child

Protection Policy, School Behaviour Policy, BTCT Code of Conduct, KCSiE 2024 Part 1 and Annex B, working together to safeguard children 2023 and school's response to CME – CME policy. Online safety training will be part of staff induction, to include an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. They will also complete face to face and online safeguarding training package. All our schools will complete: Appendix B: Staff Induction Record. Staff induction includes clear reference to internal whistleblowing policy and guidance for escalating concerns. Where My Concern is used in schools' staff will have a protocol and training on how to use effectively.

Safeguarding Training for all Staff

All staff receive annual safeguarding refresher training, where possible via face to face, delivered by DSL/DDSL or Advanced Child Protection trained member of staff. This includes online safety and FGM awareness training, to understand their legal duty under the Mandatory Reporting Duty. All staff will complete online training which includes Prevent awareness training, this is to ensure that they can comply with the legal expectations under the Prevent duty. Where My Concern is used in schools' staff will have a protocol and training on how to use effectively.

Throughout the year staff will also receive updates via email bulletins and staff meetings. Staff training includes reference to internal whistleblowing policy and guidance for escalating concerns

Training for Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputies

In addition to the all-staff training outlined above, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, all Head teachers and deputies will undergo formal training provided by the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP) to provide them with the knowledge and skills (including online safety) training required to carry out the role. The training will be updated every two years.

Head teachers and deputies/safeguarding officers will be trained to the same level as the DSL.

The DSL and any deputies will liaise with the SSCP and Somerset Education Safeguarding Service to ensure that their knowledge and skills are updated via e-bulletins, attend DSL network meetings, and take time to read and digest safeguarding bulletins. If SSCP is not available Headteachers may use NSPCC training as an alternative.

As part of their whole school safeguarding approach our schools are encouraged to develop safeguarding specialisms within their teams e.g., SHSV, domestic abuse awareness, etc.

Training for Governors

All governors and trustees should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training should be regularly updated.

Reporting concerns

When a child tells me about abuse, they have suffered, what must I remember?

- Stay calm
- Do not communicate shock, anger or embarrassment
- Reassure the child, tell them you are pleased that they are speaking to you

- Never promise confidentiality, assure them that you will try to help but let the child know that you may have to tell other people in order to do this, say who this will be and why
- Encourage the child to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information Use 'Tell Me, explain to me, describe to me' questioning
- Listen and remember
- Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you
- Praise the child for telling you, tell them they have a right to be safe and protected
- It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender
- Be aware that the child may retract what they have told you. It is essential to record all you have heard
- At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know
- As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations

It is not education staff's role to seek disclosures. Their role is to observe that something may be wrong, ask about it, listen, be available and try to make time to talk.

Clear procedures for reporting any concerns are given to all staff and volunteers and visitors. This is done as part of the staff induction, training or on a safeguarding leaflet as they sign in at our school reception. This policy is made available on the school website.

All concerns should be reported in writing, using the schools' My Concern or cause for concern form. Concerns should always be completed as soon as possible, on the same day. Staff should never wait until the next day to report a concern.

Staff will follow the reporting procedures in their school policy. However, they may also share information directly with Children's Social Care, police or the NSPCC if the situation is an emergency and the DSL/DDSL or another Advanced CP member of staff and headteacher are all unavailable.

If it is considered that a child has suffered significant harm or is likely to do so, a referral should be made to Somerset Direct 0300 123 2324 or Emergency Duty Team 0300 123 or Police.

Information Sharing

Our school is committed to having due regard to relevant data protection principles which allow for sharing and withholding personal information as provided for in the Data protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulations. This includes how to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal and should be treated as 'special category personal data'

Staff at the setting are aware that:

- 'Safeguarding' and 'individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data.
- Practitioners will have a lawful basis to share data where possible in line with Information Sharing for Safeguarding practitioners May 2024
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[DfE non statutory information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118111/dfe-non-statutory-information-sharing-advice-for-practitioners-providing-safeguarding-services-for-children-young-people-parents-and-carers.pdf) There may be times when it is necessary to share information without consent such as:

- To gain consent would place the child at risk,
- By doing so will compromise a criminal investigation,
- It cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent,
- or, if by sharing information it will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner, but it is not possible to gain consent.

There are also times when our school will not provide pupils' personal data where the serious harm test under legislation is met, (by sharing the information the child may be at further risk). If in doubt we will seek legal advice.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

Remote Learning and Safeguarding

Remote learning may be appropriate in situations when students, in agreement with the school, have a period of absence but are able to work at home, at least to some extent. This may apply in cases such as exclusion from school, or longer-term illness, assuming students are able to complete schoolwork at home. Another relevant instance would be if, following an infectious disease outbreak, students are self-isolating at home but are not suffering with relevant symptoms. This policy should be read alongside the Policy for children who cannot attend school because of health needs and/or BTCT Remote Learning Policy (available on BTCT website)

All live online teaching sessions will be delivered through Microsoft Teams, either through one-to-one sessions with the student and virtual teacher, or small paired sessions. All sessions will be recorded and stored for accessibility if required.

Attendance will be tracked by the virtual teacher and data shared with their school's attendance officer. If attendance is sporadic, the virtual teacher will make direct contact with the designated member of staff to identify potential barriers to engagement.

Student expectations:

- Students will follow guidance from the Trust Remote Learning policy to ensure they know procedures and practice to keep themselves safe online and able to share safeguarding concerns.
- Students will have access to log-in to Microsoft Teams and follow the agreed set timetable discussed at the initial meeting. They will be expected to manage their timetable and ensure they attend agreed online lessons with the virtual teacher.

Virtual Teacher expectations:

- Ensure settings are safe for use with students and remind the student that all lessons are recorded and stored.
- Look at the 20 safeguarding principles for remote lessons identified in the Trust Remote Learning policy.
- Report any safeguarding concerns to the student's designated safeguarding lead or via My Concern. Follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and directions from the KCSiE document.

Identifying and Monitoring the Needs of Vulnerable Pupils

The DSL and Deputy DSL will regularly review and monitor those students who have been identified as vulnerable. This can include reviewing attendance data, behaviour data, attainment data and safeguarding records. This is to ensure that:

- Proportionate and early interventions can be taken to promote the safety and welfare of the child and prevent escalation of harm.
- Information about vulnerable pupils is shared with teachers and school and college leadership staff to promote educational outcomes.
- Pupils who currently have, or have had, a social worker will have their academic progress and attainment reviewed and additional academic support will be provided to help them reach their full potential.
- Reasonable adjustments are made in relation to school-based interventions – for example responding to behaviour.

Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

This section should be read in conjunction with the Stanchester Academy Behaviour Policy.

When the suspension or permanent exclusion of a pupil is being considered and where additional vulnerabilities are identified it is important that the pupil's welfare is a paramount consideration.

The Head Teacher will consider their legal duty of care when sending a pupil home as the result of a suspension.

Stanchester Academy will exercise its legal duties in relation to its use of such interventions. These include:

- Consideration of whether a statutory assessment should be considered in line with the Children Act 1989
- Decisions being made in an anti-discriminatory manner in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice
- Consideration of the pupil's rights under the Human Rights Act 1998
- Interventions being consistent with statutory guidance Suspension and exclusion guidance

Actions to Take:

- Any child with a SEND and/or a safeguarding record should have an assessment of need undertaken, with a view to mitigating any identified risk of harm, in line with Identifying and Monitoring the Needs of Vulnerable Pupils.
- If the child has an allocated social worker the school should have a formal process to ensure contact is made prior to making the decision to suspend the child.
- If the child is Looked After or Previously Looked After, please follow guidance in Trust/Academy Looked After Child policy.
- In the event of a one-off serious incident resulting in an immediate decision to exclude, please follow DfE guidance '*Suspension and Exclusions for Academies in England, May 2023*'.

Alternative Providers (AP)

Our schools will ensure that the AP has provided written confirmation that all relevant safer recruitment checks have been undertaken. All providers will be registered with DfE. At the initial commissioning meeting our schools will plan the reporting mechanisms for attendance and who is responsible for day-to-day responsibility for any non-attendance and missing

children. Our school will check the AP is safe and suitable on a regular basis by visiting the AP every term, record all checks completed and update risk assessment where necessary. Our school will ensure the AP is helping the children with their personal development. Our schools will complete regular safeguarding audits with AP. Our school will make regular meetings with any child who attends an alternative provider to ensure they feel safe and well within their alternative learning environment. A Trust AP Safeguarding checklist is available to use and record all details.

Use of Reasonable Force

Reasonable force refers to the physical contact to restrain and control children using no more force than is needed. Control means either passive physical contact or active physical contact

The use of reasonable force is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and will be determined by individual circumstances and the vulnerability of any child with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) will be considered. All schools will follow guidance in BTCT Positive Handling Policy

2023 <https://bwttatrust.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/document/BTC-Trust-Positive-Handling-Policy-2023-25-V2-signed-1.pdf?t=1698943330>

Team Teach Training is available via Inclusion Team at BTCT

The use of reasonable force will be minimised through positive and proactive behaviour support and de-escalation and will follow government guidance outlined below:

- [Use of Reasonable Force in Schools \(2013\)](#)
- [Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention \(2019\)](#)

There is robust recording of any incident where positive handling or restraint has been used. Further review of the incident is carried out to reflect on how the incident could be avoided, this will involve the child and their family.

Use of school or college premises for non-school / college activities

Our Trust hire out our school or college facilities / premises to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities).

As part of the letting agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement) as a condition of use and occupation of the premises the organisation or individual has appropriate arrangements in place to keep children safe. Our operation team will have access to their safeguarding and child protection policy and know the procedures they have in place, failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement. This applies regardless of whether the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on our schools roll.

If our Trust provides services or activities under the direct supervision or management of the Trust or school staff, their safeguarding and child protection policy will apply. For example, summer sports events provided by BTCT must have a welfare officer who will follow their safeguarding and child protection policy. The welfare officer will be able to call an Advanced Child Protection trained member of staff for advice and guidance. If there is an allegation relating to an incident that happens when an individual organisation is using our school premises for the purpose of running activities for children, as with any safeguarding allegation, we will follow our safeguarding policy and procedures, including informing the LADO.

Part Two - Types of abuse/signs/specific safeguarding issues

Abuse and neglect (definitions):

All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse, exploitation and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). All school staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviour can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

Our responsibilities are:

- to understand what each category of abuse is
- to understand how this abuse can impact on the welfare and development of our children
- to take appropriate action when we have concerns that a child or young person might be at risk of or already experiencing abuse or neglect

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

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

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

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

Safeguarding in specific circumstances:

In addition to the above there are other areas of safeguarding that our schools must have due regard for. **Part one** and **Annex B** of **Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024)** highlights specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues which staff who work with children and young people should read the following is a synopsis of the areas addressed but are not a fully replica of the guidance.

Children and the court system may be required to give evidence in the criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are a range of guides to support child witnesses. In the civil courts children and young people may be involved in child arrangement hearing and the Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangement information tool detaining the dispute resolution service.

Children who are Absent from Education

This section should be read in conjunction with the Stanchester/ Trust Attendance Policy and the CME policy.

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

Staff follow procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, or who have unexplainable or persistent absences, particularly on repeat occasions. This may indicate the need for early help. These should be discussed with the DSL as safeguarding concerns will be reported to the local authority children's services.

Our School will follow the guidance detailed in Working together to improve schools attendance (from August 2024), Children Missing Education (2016) and Somerset Education Safeguarding Policy for Children Missing Education. Further guidance available on KCSiE 2024

This will include notifying the local authority in which the child lives:

- of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly
- of any pupil who has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more

All staff will have read their school's approach to children missing in education as part of induction and training. Our school will monitor attendance carefully and address poor or

irregular attendance without delay. Our school will always follow up with parents/carer when they are not at school. Our school needs to have at least two up to date contact numbers for parents/carers. Our schools have staff who: -

- Understand what to do when children do not attend regularly. They work with the local authority and will report any concerns to children's services where there is a safeguarding concern.
- Staff who know signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
- Procedures to inform Somerset Education Safeguarding when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they: leave school to be home educated, move away, remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age, are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards) or are permanently excluded.
- Our school will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.
- When a pupil leaves our school will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.

Children with family members in prison are more likely to have poor outcomes, including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. More information to support schools and colleges can be found on the [Nicco](#) website

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child 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. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CSE 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. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and 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).

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country, forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- 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
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

County Lines is the term used to describe gangs and organized criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas

within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move (and store) drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Our staff will treat any disclosure of information relating to Domestic Abuse as a Safeguarding concern and we will follow local Safeguarding Procedures.

We acknowledge the Domestic Abuse Act, 2021 and will work with its new powers when working with our staff, all children and their families, where we believe Domestic Abuse is a feature and children are living with Domestic Abuse.

Stanchester Academy receives a notification (PSN) from Avon and Somerset Police where there has been an incident in a household involving a child at this school. We have agreed processes on how to respond and support the pupil whilst in school and are able to escalate any Safeguarding concerns into Children's Services. All PSN will be recorded as new concerns on My Concern and/or children's safeguarding records.

Teenagers aged 16/17 in a relationship are protected by Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Procedures and the law. If we are aware that any information received about such a concern, we will treat this as Safeguarding concern and follow our Safeguarding processes, where all involved will be offered support.

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a multi-agency approach in managing cases of Domestic Abuse and where children are residing, the victim will be seen as high risk of serious harm/ homicide. A Multi-Agency response is essential in ensuring that victims and their families are as safe as possible.

Further advice and guidance accessed via the NSPCC, Refuge and Safelives spotlight on young people and domestic abuse. The National Domestic Abuse helpline can be called free of charge 0808 2000 247

Further resources relating to violence against women and girls (VAWG) can be accessed [here](#)

Elective Home Education

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, our schools will follow Stanchester's EHE protocol, developed in line with Somerset EHE protocol. Our schools will work together with the LA and other professionals to co-ordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. Ideally, this would be before a final decision is made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has special educational needs. If a child has an EHCP the LA will review the plan and work with parents/carers. If there are significant safeguarding concerns, appropriate action will be taken to ensure the right support is put in place to keep the child safe.

Homelessness or being at risk of being made homeless is a significant risk for children or young people. The DSL should refer to the local housing authority at the earliest opportunity. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils to provide meaningful help, including an assessment of need and circumstances. The DfE and the Ministry of Housing, communities and local government have published joint statutory guidance on the provision of accommodation for 16- and 17-year old's who may be homeless or require accommodation. A series of fact sheets can be accessed [here](#).

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child:

- under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled)
- by someone other than a parent or close relative (*Close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and stepparents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.)
- with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

Cases of private fostering arrangements must be reported to children's social care to ensure that needs are adequately made.

Statutory guidance states that this should be done at least 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to start or as soon as you are made aware of the arrangements. Not to do so is a criminal offence.

Further support and reasonable adjustments should be made by the education setting to promote achievement of positive educational outcomes.

Young Carers

A young carer is a person under 18 who regularly provides emotional and/or practical support and assistance for a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally unwell or who misuses substances. In Somerset Young Carers service can be accessed via an Early help Assessment.

Emotional, Mental Health and Wellbeing

All Staff should also be 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.

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

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

We acknowledge many children will have periods of feeling anxious, afraid and upset, and can develop phobias. However, some children will experience this more frequently.

Undertaking a coordinated and evidence-informed approach to mental health and wellbeing leads to improved emotional health and wellbeing in children, and greater readiness to learn, improved attendance, attention, behaviour, and attainment.

Stanchester Academy has a mental health lead who is developing the knowledge and skills to implement an effective whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing in our school.

We will provide information and signposting services to children and parents. If Staff have an emotional or mental health concern about a child we will respond to the concern, inform, and discuss our concerns with parents/carers and seek ways to support the child in and out of school. If staff have a mental concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL/DDSL or recording on My Concern.

Online Safety, Cyber Security (including remote/blended learning)

We will ensure that we have information and processes to raise awareness of online safety and cyber security for all our staff, children, and parents, our aim is to have a whole school approach to online safety. Our Internet Safety, mobile phone policy and acceptable user policy is available on the school website.

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

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

Stanchester Academy adopts a range of effective safeguarding measures, including those set out in the DfE *'Meeting Digital and Technology Standards in Schools and Colleges'* that both safeguards and empowers children and young people to access support and remain safe online by reducing the risk of harm through the use of filters, monitoring and appropriate use of policies for those accessing our IT system, whilst at the same time providing a safe environment in which children and young people can learn to keep themselves safe online. When children use our school's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems. Our IT system provider has submitted a self-certification to the UK Internet Safety Centre, they also meet technical standards as referenced in the DfE *'Meeting Digital and Technology Standards in Schools and Colleges'* – March 2023. Our schools should complete an annual review of these standards, supported by a Risk Assessment to reflect the risks our children face.

A system has also been applied to devices supplied to children who are accessing online learning whilst out of school. However, many pupils are able to access the internet using their own data, to minimise inappropriate use our schools will have issued guidance and advice to keep children safe whilst online to both pupils and parents/carers.

Cyber Security is a growing safeguarding concern, and we ensure the appropriate level of security protection procedures are in place to safeguard our systems, staff and learners. We review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cyber-crime technologies. Our schools will use the standards and resources available on the National Cyber Security Centre.

The Sending of Indecent Images from one child to another through Digital Media Devices, including nudes and semi-nudes

In the latest advice for schools and colleges (UKCIS, update February 2024), the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos, or live streams by young people under the age of 18 online. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline.

The sharing of nudes and semi-nudes can happen publicly online, in 1:1 messaging or via group chats and closed social media accounts.

Nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams may include more than one child or young person. The term 'nudes' is used as it is most commonly recognised by young people and more appropriately covers all types of image sharing incidents. Alternative terms used by children and young people may include 'dick pics' or 'pics'.

The motivations for taking and sharing nude and semi-nude images, videos and live streams are not always sexually or criminally motivated. This does not apply to adults sharing nudes or semi-nudes of under 18-year-olds. This is a form of child sexual abuse and we will refer this to the police as a matter of urgency.

Stanchester Academy will respond to a child sending indecent images as a safeguarding concern. The DSL/Senior Leadership Team will seek advice from the police and will consider a referral into children's services.

Responding to Incidents of Child-on-Child Abuse

Further details outlining our process for responding to child-on-child abuse (including sexual harassment and sexual violence) are available in **Appendix A**

All staff should recognise that children can abuse their peers, including technology assisted/online abuse.

Our school will have clear systems in place for pupils to report any abuse knowing their concerns will be treated seriously and respectfully

At our school:

- We have a zero-tolerance approach to all types of abuse. Incidents are taken seriously. These will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'.
- Banter and teasing should be acknowledged and recognised as bullying behaviour and may require proportionate intervention.
- We aim to mitigate the risk of contributing to a culture of unacceptable behaviours or a culture that normalises abuse through education and reflective learning.
- Child on child abuse may reflect equality issues in terms of those who may be targeted are more likely to have protected characteristics.
- Early identification of vulnerability to peer-on-peer abuse is made by reviewing attendance, behaviour, attainment and safeguarding records at least on a termly basis.

The school's response will be proportionate, considered, supportive and decided on a case-by-case basis

Stanchester Academy will handle initial reports of abuse by:

- Securing the immediate safety of pupils involved in an incident and sourcing support for other young people affected.

- Listening carefully to the child, being non-judgmental, being clear about boundaries and how the report will progress, not asking leading questions and only prompting the child where necessary with open questions – where, when, what, etc.
- ensuring that children who may have been harmed will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. They will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Ensuring the child’s wishes are taken into consideration in any intervention and any action is taken to ensure safety of the target and other members of the wider peer cohort.
- Not promising confidentiality as it is highly likely that information will need to be shared with others.

Up-skirting involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. This is now a criminal offence and incidents must be reported to the Police in the first instance.

Preventing Radicalisation - The Prevent duty:

Being radicalised is a form of exploitation. Preventing vulnerable people from becoming drawn into terrorism is a key aim of the National Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST). It is about safeguarding children and adults, using existing specialist tools to intervene early and prevent escalation into the ‘criminal space’ through a multi-agency Channel Panel.

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard 109 to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.¹¹⁰ This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent strategy covers all types of extremism, both domestic violent and nonviolent extremism, including the extreme right wing, Islamist militancy and other causes.

Three national objectives of the Prevent strategy have been identified: -

1. Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it.
2. Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support.
3. Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalization that we need to address.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools’ and colleges’ wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 57-76, which are specifically concerned with schools (and also covers childcare).

Our school adhere to the following in terms of four general themes:

- School risk assessment,
- working in partnership,
- staff training, and
- IT policies.

Any concerns of radicalisation should be reported to the DSL. The referral process will be via **Prevent in Somerset**. An individual will be required to provide their consent before any support delivered through the programme is provided.

Special Education Needs and disabilities

There's a concern sometimes that, for children with SEN and disabilities, or certain health conditions, that their disability needs are seen first, and the potential for abuse second. If children are behaving in particular ways or they're looking distressed or their behaviour or demeanour is different from in the past, our staff should think about that being a sign of the potential for abuse and not simply see it as part of their disability or their special educational needs. These children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children. Staff should provide support with communication barriers and difficulties in managing and reporting these challenges.

Children with EHCPs not attending education long term, as a result of parents/carers refusing to send their child to their named placement (typically whilst waiting on outcomes from LA/tribunals).

Our school will ensure a weekly safeguarding call is made to the home from the person identified by the child as a trusted adult e.g. SENCo/Head of Centre. The member of staff making the call will speak with both parent/carer and the child. All details of the call will be recorded, on My Concern where available.

Further support services available to help families with advice, information and services can be accessed through [Somerset SENDIAS](#).

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 they are 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. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

Children who have a social worker

At Stanchester Academy we recognise that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that a child is more at risk than most children. This may mean that they are more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental ill health. Our school takes these needs into account when making plans to support pupils who have a social worker. Our DSLs will work with the Virtual school head to monitor and review the educational attendance, attainment and progress of children who have a social worker.

Looked after children

The 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/or the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care. Schools will make staff aware of the details of their Designated teacher (DT). The designated teacher will submit an annual report in respect of looked after children and previously looked after children to governing body. Our school will produce an Education of Looked After Children in Schools Policy, which will be regularly reviewed by the governing body. Following statutory guidance.

So-called ‘honour-based’ violence (including Female Genital Mutilation, Child Marriage, Breast Ironing) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community. All forms of honour-based violence (HBV) are abuse, regardless of the motivation and should be handled and escalated as such. There are specific mandatory reporting duties for teachers to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

Additional guidance and publications:

- FGM: Mandatory reporting procedural information can be accessed [here](#)
- FGM Fact sheet can be access [here](#)
- Forced Marriages: Multi- agency guidelines(2014) pages 35 and 26 pertain to schools can be accessed [here](#) along with statutory guidance (2014) which can be access [here](#)

Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) – Code C

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) are aware of the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult when in contact with Police officers who suspect them of an offence.

PACE states that anyone who appears to be under 18, shall, in the absence of clear evidence that they are older, be treated as a child for the purposes of this Code and any other Code. PACE also states that if at any time an officer has any reason to suspect that a person of any age may be vulnerable, then that person is entitled to be accompanied by an appropriate adult at any point.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) will communicate any vulnerabilities known by the school to any Police Officer who wishes to speak to a pupil about an offence they may suspect. This communication will be recorded on My Concern or child’s CP file.

If having been informed of the vulnerabilities, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) does not feel that the officer is acting in accordance with PACE, they should ask to speak with a supervisor or contact 101 to escalate their concerns.

A person whom there are grounds to suspect of an offence must be cautioned¹ before questioned about an offence², or asked further questions if the answers they provide the grounds for suspicion, or when put to them the suspect’s answers or silence, (i.e. failure or refusal to answer or answer satisfactorily) may be given in evidence to a court in a prosecution.

A Police Officer must not caution a juvenile or a vulnerable person unless the appropriate adult is present. If a child or a vulnerable person is cautioned in the absence of the appropriate adult, the caution must be repeated in the appropriate adult’s presence.

The appropriate adult’ means, in the case of a child:

1. the parent, guardian or, if the juvenile is in the care of a local authority or voluntary organisation, a person representing that authority or organisation.
2. a social worker of a local authority
3. failing these, some other responsible adult aged 18 or over who is not:
 - a. a Police Officer;

¹ The police caution is: “You do not have to say anything. But it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in Court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence.”

² A person need not be cautioned if questions are for other necessary purposes, e.g.: (a) solely to establish their identity or ownership of any vehicle; to obtain information in accordance with any relevant statutory requirement; in furtherance of the proper and effective conduct of a search, e.g. to determine the need to search in the exercise of powers of stop and search or to seek co-operation while carrying out a search; or to seek verification of a written record.

- b. employed by the police;
- c. under the direction or control of the chief officer of a police force; or
- d. a person who provides services under contractual arrangements (but without being employed by the chief officer of a police force), to assist that force in relation to the discharge of its chief officer's functions.

Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance [PACE Code C 2019](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pace-code-c-2019/pace-code-c-2019-accessible).
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pace-code-c-2019/pace-code-c-2019-accessible>

Part Three - Responding to allegations and whistleblowing

Allegations made against teachers, other staff, volunteers, contractors and Agency Staff: People in a Position of Trust

At Stanchester Academy we recognise the possibility that adults working in school may harm children, including governors, volunteers, teachers, supply teachers, contractors and agency staff. We take an 'it can happen here' approach where safeguarding is concerned.

Any concerns about the conduct of another adult in our school should be taken to the head teacher without delay or the Trust Safeguarding Lead, Sally Power who can be contacted by M: 07867976901 sally.power@btc-trust.org. Any concerns or allegations about the head teacher should go to Peter Elliott Trust Leader.

Our school will adhere to the procedures set out under Allegations Management which can be found on the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership website: [SSCP – Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership \(safeguardingsomerset.org.uk\)](https://www.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk)

Phone Somerset Direct on **0300 123 2224** for a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer or LADO.

We will ensure that the allegations threshold is considered, where it is alleged that anyone working in the school or college that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers and volunteers has:

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

BTCT Management of Allegations policy and procedure is available on the website (<https://bridgwatercollegetrust.org.uk/Governance/BCT-Policies/>)

Low-level concerns (allegations that do not meet the harms threshold)

At Stanchester Academy we aim to create an open and transparent culture where all concerns about all adults involved with our school are dealt with promptly and appropriately. We aim to identify any concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with our ethos. This policy should be read alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection and Code of Conduct policies. The policy should be read in conjunction with the current statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education. This policy applies to all staff and other individuals who work or volunteer in our Trust settings.

Definition of a low-level concern

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 may have acted in a way that: -

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

While low-level concerns are, by their nature, less serious than concerns which meet the harms threshold, the school understands that many serious safeguarding concerns, e.g. child sexual abuse, often begin with low-level concerns, e.g. being overly friendly with children.

The school will ensure that all staff are aware of the importance of recognising concerns before they escalate from low-level to serious, wherever possible. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of the Trust from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Appropriate and inappropriate behaviour

The school will ensure that all staff members are aware of the standards of appropriate behaviour expected towards children.

Staff will ensure that they pay due regard to the fact that:

- They are in a unique position of trust, care, responsibility, authority and influence in relation to children.
- There is a significant power imbalance in the child-staff dynamic.
- There are more stringent expectations on their behaviour with regard to pupils due to their position as a public professional.

Staff will remain aware of the fact that all pupils under the age of 18, are children by law – staff will ensure that they do not assume maturity on behalf of a child and do not engage with children as they would with their own peers. Staff will be aware that where there is any doubt regarding whether the behaviour of another adult is appropriate, this should be reported to the Headteacher immediately.

Inappropriate behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour to behaviour which is ultimately intended to enable abuse. Examples of inappropriate behaviour that would constitute a low-level concern that should be reported to the Headteacher include:

- Being overly friendly with children – this could include, but is not limited to, communication with a child through personal social media or allowing inappropriate conversations or enquiries to occur with children e.g. conversations that are about a staff member’s personal life or are of a sexual nature.
- Having favourites – this could include, but is not limited to, calling children by pet names or terms of endearment or buying pupils gifts.
- Taking photographs of children on their personal mobile phones or devices.
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.
- Using inappropriate, sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

Staff will be aware that some of the above low-level concerns may meet the harms threshold depending on certain factors, e.g. the age or needs of the child or the content of exchanged messages, and that some of the above incidents may not be concerns in context, e.g. one-to-one meeting with a child behind a closed door between the child and a school counsellor who has received all appropriate safety checks.

Staff will also be made aware that behaviour which raises concerns may not be intentionally inappropriate, and that this does not negate the need to report the behaviour. Staff members who engage in low-level inappropriate behaviour in relation to pupils inadvertently will be made aware and supported to correct this behaviour in line with the Staff Code of Conduct. The headteacher will also evaluate whether additional training would be beneficial for any staff members exhibiting concerning behaviour, or the staff cohort as a whole where low-level concerning behaviour is seen more widely.

Reporting low-level concerns

The school will promote a culture in which safeguarding pupils is the uppermost priority, beyond any perceived professional loyalties to colleagues, ensuring that staff are actively encouraged to report concerns, regardless of their relationship with the staff member.

Where a low-level concern has been identified this will be reported as soon as possible to the Headteacher. However, it is never too late to share a low-level concern if this has not already happened.

Where the Headteacher is not available, the information will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Trust Leader.

Low-level concerns about the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be reported to the Headteacher/Trust Safeguarding Lead.

Where the low-level concern has been reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Headteacher, they will inform the Trust Leader/Trust Safeguarding Lead of the details as soon as possible.

Staff members may request anonymity when reporting a concern, and the school will endeavour to respect this as far as possible. The school will not, however, promise anonymity to staff members who report concerns in case the situation arises where they must be named, e.g. where it is necessary for a fair disciplinary hearing. In line with the Trust Whistleblowing Policy, staff will be protected from potential repercussions caused by reporting a genuine concern.

Where a low-level concern relates to a person employed by a supply agency or a contractor, staff will also be required to report this to the Headteacher, who will, in turn, inform the employer of the subject of the concern.

Recording concerns

A summary of the low-level concern should be written down, signed, timed, dated and shared by the person bringing the information forward.

Where concerns are reported verbally to the Headteacher a record of the conversation will be made by the Headteacher which will be signed, timed, and dated.

Concerns should not be recorded on My Concern under any circumstances.

Responding to low-level concerns

Where a low-level concern has been raised this will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly. The Headteacher will:

- Speak with the Trust Leader, Head of HR and Trust Safeguarding Lead to strategise next steps. A case manager will be decided.

These may include:

- Speak to the person reporting the concern to gather all the relevant information
- Speak to the individual about the concern raised to ascertain their response, unless advised not to do so by the LADO or Police (HR advice may also need to be taken).

- Where necessary further investigation will be carried out to gather all relevant information. This may involve speaking to any potential witnesses.

The information reported and gathered will then be reviewed to determine whether the behaviour:

- i) is consistent with the “Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings” (Feb 2022): no further action will be required,
- ii) constitutes a low-level concern: no further action is required, or additional training/guidance/support may be required to rectify the behaviour via normal day-to-day management processes. The employee should understand that failure to improve or a repeat of the behaviour may lead to further action being taken, e.g. via the Disciplinary Policy.
- iii) is serious enough to consult with or refer to the LADO: a referral should be made to the LADO and advice taken from HR. In this case the Trust’s Managing Allegations procedure within the Safeguarding Policy and Disciplinary Policy will be followed.
- iv) when considered with any other low-level concerns that have previously been raised about the same individual, should be reclassified as an allegation and referred to the LADO or Police: a referral should be made to the LADO and advice taken from HR. In this case the Trust’s Managing Allegations procedure within the Safeguarding Policy and Disciplinary Policy will be followed.

Records will be made of,

- i) all internal conversations including any relevant witnesses,
- ii) all external conversations e.g. with the LADO
- iii) the decision and the rationale for it,
- iv) any action taken

Self-reporting

It may be the case that a person finds themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted or might appear compromising to others; or they may have behaved in a manner which on reflection they consider falls below the standard set out in the “Guidance for safer working practice”. In these circumstances they should self-report. This will enable a potentially difficult situation to be addressed at an early opportunity if necessary.

Reviewing low-level concerns

The records will be reviewed periodically, and whenever a new low-level concern is added, so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and referred to the LADO if required. A record of these reviews will be retained.

The school will ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the school’s culture and whether or not it has enabled the inappropriate behaviour to occur. The headteacher will review whether any changes need to be made to relevant policies or training programmes in light of any evaluations of the school’s culture, in order to achieve an open and transparent culture that deals with all concerns promptly and appropriately.

References

Low-level concerns will not be included in references unless a low-level concern, or group of concerns, has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and found to be substantiated. All low-level concerns will be stored whilst the individual remains employed within the Trust.

Whistleblowing Procedures

Staff are aware of the following whistleblowing channels for situations where they feel unable to raise an issue with the senior leadership team or feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed:

BTCT whistleblowing policy is available via the website: <https://bridgewatercollegetrust.org.uk/Governance/BCT-Policies/>

General guidance and advice on whistleblowing: <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

The [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](https://www.nspcc.org.uk) is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can also call 0800 028 0285 or email help@nspcc.org.uk. Phone lines are open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday.

The above channels are accessible to all staff (in the staff handbook, code of conduct and staff noticeboards, part of new staff induction).

Part Four: Supporting Children

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should always consider what is in the best interests of the child.

Education providers and staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is based on the principle of providing help for families to stay together where it is safe for the children to do so, and looking at alternatives where it is not, whilst always acting in the best interests of the child. Children who may require early help will be offered early intervention through Early Help support services for families.

A directory of early help services is available from the Early Help Advice Hub on 01823 355803. Somerset Choices (www.somersetchoices.org.uk) and Professional Choices (<https://professionalchoices.org.uk>) will also help practitioners and families find information and support to prevent escalation of needs and crisis.

Staff are aware of the early help process, and understand their role in identifying emerging problems, sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment of a child's needs. It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. This also includes staff monitoring the situation and feeding back to the DSL/DDSL any ongoing/escalating concerns so that consideration can be given to a request for involvement to Children's Services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving.

Staff will also be alert to the potential need for early help for children also who are more vulnerable. For example:

- Children with a disability and/or specific additional needs
- Children with special educational needs
- Children who are acting as a young carer
- Children who are looked after or previously looked after
- Children who are showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour especially if there is a concern that it is exploitative
- Children missing in education
- Children whose family circumstances present challenges, such as substance abuse, adult mental health or learning disability, domestic violence
- Children who are showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect

Staff will be aware of the main categories of maltreatment: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. They will also be aware of the indicators of maltreatment and

specific safeguarding issues so that they are able to identify cases of children who may need help or protection.

Dealing with a disclosure

If a student discloses that they have been abused in some way, staff should:

- stay calm and listen to what is being said without displaying shock, disbelief, anger or embarrassment
- accept what is being said, reassure the student and allow them to talk freely
- encourage the student to talk but do not ask leading questions or press for information. Use 'tell me, explain to me, describe to me' questioning. Check you have understood correctly
- reassure the student that what has happened is not his or her fault and that it was the right thing to tell, as they have a right to be safe and protected
- not make promises it might not be possible to keep (such as confidentiality) but assure them that you will try to help and that you may have to tell other people; say who this will be and why and explain what will happen next
- as soon as possible, make a written record (report on My Concern) Records should be factual, including date, time and place and use the student's own words.
- record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions
- indicate the position of any injuries using a body map.

It is not the staff's role to seek disclosures. The staff's role is to observe that something may be wrong, ask about it, listen, be available and make time to talk.

Dealing with a disclosure from a student and safeguarding issues can be stressful. Staff should therefore consider seeking support for themselves and should discuss this with the DSL.

Record Keeping

All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded on My Concern or recorded in writing on a concern form. If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the DSL/DDSL.

The academy uses My Concern for the recording and monitoring of safeguarding and child protection issues and the DSL should regularly review the records to scrutinise any patterns or drift and outstanding actions. Working alongside the academy's existing safeguarding processes, My Concern will help with the management of child protection, behavioural, bullying issues and much more. The system allows the academy to record information in a central repository and have relevant people alerted immediately.

All records need to be given to the DSL/DDSL promptly. No copies should be retained by staff. The DSL will ensure that all safeguarding records are managed in accordance with the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005. The academy follows the guidance on safeguarding/child protection records for educational and early years settings in Somerset. Records should be factual, accurate, relevant, up to date and auditable. They should support analysing, monitoring, risk assessment and planning for children; enabling appropriate, informed and timely actions to take place.

If a student who is/or has been the subject of a child protection plan changes educational provision, the DSL will inform the social worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the DSL at the receiving provision as soon as possible, ensuring secure transit and sent separately to the main academy file. Confirmation of receipt should be requested. The DSL should also consider if it is appropriate to share any information with the new school in advance of the student leaving.

All files will be individual to the student and not in shared files on families. All academy records will have an indicator to inform staff a child protection file does exist for the individual.

All child protection recordings should be scrutinised regularly to ensure the action and outcome has been carried and any drift avoided.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Safeguarding and protecting children raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff.

Staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies (Children's Services, Safeguarding and Specialist Services and the Police).

If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the child in a manner appropriate to the child's age/stage of development that they cannot promise complete confidentiality. They must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe. This may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

Staff who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.

Procedure

When a member of staff is concerned about a child, he or she will inform the DSL or the DDSL. Staff must record information regarding the concerns on the same day via My Concern or in person. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations.

The DSL will decide whether the concerns should be referred to Children's Services. If it is decided to make a referral to Children's Services this will be discussed with the parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm. An Early Help Assessment will be completed in most instances.

While it is the DSL's role to make request for involvement, any staff member can make a referral to Children's Services.

If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to Children's Services and/or the Police immediately. Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL must be informed as soon as possible.

Particular attention must also be paid to the attendance and development of any child about whom the academy has concerns, or who has been identified as being the subject of a child protection plan and a written record will be kept and attendance procedures followed.

A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve and maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significant or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Local authorities, with help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment, including all forms of abuse and neglect, FGM or other HBV, and extra-familial threats like radicalisation and sexual exploitation.

The DSL is responsible for making the senior leadership team aware of trends in behaviour or concerns that may affect pupil welfare. Gathering safeguarding data and impact will be embedded into the academy's process to measure effective safeguarding practice and resolve any weaknesses.

Communication with Parents

The academy will ensure this Policy and the SSCP Child Protection Procedures are available publicly via the academy website/SSCP website.

Parents should be informed prior to referral, unless it is considered to do so might place the child at increased risk of significant harm by:

- The behavioural response it prompts e.g., a child being subjected to abuse, maltreatment or threats / forced to remain silent if alleged abuser informed.
- Leading to an unreasonable delay.
- Leading to the risk of loss of evidential material.

The academy may however consider not informing parent/carer where it would place staff at risk.

Part Five – Responding to Child-on-child abuse

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum. It ranges from normal and developmentally expected, to inappropriate, problematic, abusive, and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and is known as harmful sexual behaviour and it may occur online, or in person, or simultaneously. Our school recognizes that children are vulnerable to and also capable of harmful sexual behaviour (HSB).

We follow our child protection procedures if a report of harmful sexual behaviour is made. This may include seeking advice and support from other agencies as appropriate. Decisions are made considering the age and developmental stages of any child involved. We also consider any other factors as appropriate and balance this with our duty and responsibilities to protect all children.

We recognise that a child who has reported abuse may not consider themselves to be a victim and may not want to be described in that way. We also recognise that a child who is reported to have displayed abusive behaviour may not consider that they have done so, and that if abusive behaviour has occurred it will have been impactful on them too.

Consent

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs.

A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity

The age of consent is 16

Sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

We recognise that our children can experience harmful sexual behaviour in various settings. This includes school, home (or at another home), in public places, and online. At school, issues can occur in places supervised and unsupervised.

Our DSL and SGO have a good understanding of HSB and all reports of HSB will be made to the DSL, DDSL or SGO and the response will be effective and proportionate.

Stop – it is important to stop the behaviour immediately before you address it (eg ask them to move hand away, use distraction or change the environment)

Define – after the behaviour has stopped, it is important to define why the behaviour is wrong

State – it is important to clearly state what the school rules are in response to this behaviour

Enforce – we need to enforce consequences for the child but not consequences that will shame or humiliate them.

Staff should report these concerns:

- As soon as possible
- Be clear and explicit
- Name the body parts
- Where and when it happened
- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Don't use euphemisms, as these can be interpreted differently by different people
- Use the child's own words and put in quotation marks

Responses to developmentally appropriate sexualised behaviour could be to carry out age appropriate sex and relationship education across the school to reinforce a positive message. There is no need to report externally if the behaviour is developmentally typical. Using the SDSE tool is a helpful way of supporting a child's understanding of the rules around sexualised behaviours. Where safe for the child, make the parents and carers aware of any incidents of sexualised behaviours.

Responses to problematic sexualised behaviours should always be reported to the Local authority and the DSL and safeguarding team will complete a sexualised behaviour checklist to inform decision making. A safety plan addressing all issues, reflecting the child's view and explained so that the child sees it positively, should be completed and reviewed within three months.

Anonymity

We will do all we reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of harmful sexual behaviour. This means that we will consider carefully, based on the nature of the report, which staff should know about it, and which staff should know about any support. We are aware of the potential impact of social media, which can facilitate the spreading of rumour and expose a victim's identity, making things more challenging. Where this becomes a factor and affects our ability to manage the situation we will address this by linking to agencies as appropriate.

Recording

It is essential that we record all reports about harmful sexual behaviour within our school and as with any other child protection concern, any member of staff receiving a report of harmful sexual behaviour or noticing signs or indicators of this will record it as soon as possible, noting what was said and seen, giving the date, time and location. The record will be present to the DSL or SGO who will then decide on appropriate action and record this action accordingly.

Risk Assessment

We will usually complete a risk assessment following a report of harmful sexual behaviour. Our risk assessment will include considerations for the victim, and any actions appropriate to protect them, whether there may have been other victims, the alleged perpetrator(s), the time and location of the incidents, all the other children at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator (s) or from future harm.

Our risk assessment will be recorded and regularly reviewed to ensure it is relevant and fit for purpose. We will put measures in place to protect our children accordingly.

The following principles will guide us:

the wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed

the nature of the alleged incident (s) including whether a crime may have been committed and/or whether HSB has been displayed.

the ages and developmental stages of all the children involved.

consideration of any power imbalance

consideration of whether the alleged incident is a one-off or part of a sustained pattern of abuse

that sexual violence and sexual harassment can take place within intimate personal relationships between children

the importance of understanding intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents

consideration of any ongoing risks to the victim, other children, school staff and consideration of any other related issues and wider context.

All concerns are considered on a case-by-case basis, our actions will not be judgmental about the guilt of the alleged perpetrator and will always be taken in the interests of all the children involved, balanced with our duty and responsibilities to protect our other children.

APPENDIX A

Responding to incidents of child on child abuse

Stanchester Academy is committed to a whole school approach to identifying, tackling & responding to child-on-child abuse, sexual harm/violence and harassment. We take any allegation of abuse between our children seriously and follow our child protection procedures if a report of abuse is made.

The Department for Education (DfE) publishes statutory guidance for all education settings: Keeping Children Safe In Education (DfE, 2024). Part 5 of this guidance sets out how schools manage reports of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment.

This appendix should be read in conjunction with:

Part 5 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

- The non-statutory guidance: Sharing nudes and semi- nudes Advice for Education Settings, Working with Young People
- Teaching Online Safety in Schools, DfE 2019
- The Voyeurism Act, 2019 (Section Up skirting)

In cases where child on child abuse is identified we will use safeguarding procedures as set out by Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Some of these behaviours we will refer to other policies in school:

- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- The Behaviour Policy.
- The Anti- Bullying policy.
- The Online safety Policy.
- The Acceptable Use of the Internet and Electronic Communication Policy.

We recognise that child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Sexting (youth produced digital imagery);

- Bullying- name calling, physical,
- Prejudiced behaviour- homophobic, disabilities.
- Cyber bullying & online abusive behaviour including sexploitation
- Radicalisation.
- Abuse in intimate relationships, including teenage relationship abuse.
- Children who display sexually problematic/harmful behaviour, including sexual harassment.
- Gang association and serious violence- County Lines, initiation, hazing.
- Race hate and Racism.

Vulnerable Groups

We recognise that all children are at risk but that some groups are more vulnerable than others and includes:

- A child with additional needs and disabilities.
- A child living with domestic abuse.
- A child who is at risk of/suffering significant harm.
- A child who is at risk of/or has been exploited or at risk of exploited (CCE, CSE)
- A looked after child.
- A child who goes missing or is missing education.
- Children who identifies as or are perceived as LGBTQI+ and/or any of the protective characteristics.

Research tells us that girls are more frequently identified as been abused by their peers and more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching, and sexual harassment. They often are exploited by gangs and are victims of sexual violence when in gangs. However, we are aware as a school that these are behaviours not just confined to girls.

Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse and may display other behaviour such as anti- social/criminal behaviours. Boys are more likely to be exploited /entrapped into gangs and subject to violence as a result of gang culture.

Bullying and Online bullying and behaviour

Child on child abuse can happen online and through social media. This school will respond to this form of abuse, cyber bullying and related behaviour.

This school has a behaviour policy which relates to identifying, responding to and reporting this type of behaviour by pupils. We will take a robust approach and educate all our staff to help prevent and tackle this.

Responding to Racism

We acknowledge that Britain is a multi-racial and multi-faith country, and everyone has the right to have their culture and religion respected by others. Racist bullying is not just about the colour, it can be about your ethnic background or religion too.

We recognise that racism is illegal. We will, therefore, notify the police if we believe an offence may have been committed.

We will provide education in school about racism and its impact on children and their families and this will be taught as part of our PSHE curriculum in line with our RSE policy. We will use a whole school approach of tackling and eradicating this type of behaviour.

Hate crime

Hate crimes happen because of race, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation and disability.

Hate crimes can include:

physical attacks - physical assault, damage to property, offensive graffiti, neighbour disputes and arson

threat of attack - offensive letters or emails, abusive or obscene telephone calls, groups hanging around to intimidate you and unfounded, malicious complaints

verbal abuse or insults - harassment over the phone, by text or face to face, abusive gestures and remarks, bullying and threats

Hate crime can happen anywhere - at home, school, work or on the street. It can be frightening for the victim and witnesses. Hate crime can happen in school. It is an offence and we will notify the police if we believe an offence may have been committed.

Sexual Harm, Violence and/or Sexual Harassment

It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school or college should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously. A child who may have been harmed should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a child who may have been harmed ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

Sexual harm, violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age or gender; this can either be a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. We recognise that this behaviour can take place in a school or any setting where pupils are together. The impact of this behaviour on children can be very distressing, having an impact on academic achievement and their emotional health & wellbeing.

All behaviour takes place on a spectrum. Understanding where a pupil's behaviour falls on a spectrum is essential to being able to respond appropriately to it.

We recognise the importance of distinguishing between healthy, problematic and sexually harmful behaviour (HSB).

As a school therefore, we may use the [Lucy Faithful HSB Tool Kit](#) [Preventing harmful sexual behaviour in children - Stop It Now](#), Brooks Traffic Light Tool, Somerset HSB toolkit and/or Hackett's Continuum. These are nationally and local recognised and acclaimed tools to assist in determining healthy, problematic and harmful sexual behaviours in children and young people.

At Stanchester the members of the safeguarding team have undertaken training of the Brook traffic light tool, which helps to identify the behaviour, understand what the behaviour is communicating and responds in a way to meet the child's needs.

We may also use an 'In-School' Health, Wellbeing and Safety Support Plan, or an 'In-School' Risk HSB Management Plan depending on the outcomes of assessing risk in each individual case.

Using tools like this will help us:

- Decide next steps and make decisions regarding safeguarding children.
- Assess and respond appropriately to sexual behaviour in pupils.
- Understand healthy sexual development and distinguish it from problematic/harmful behaviour.
- Assist with communicating with parents/cares about the concerns we have about their child/children.
- Assist with communicating with our partners and agencies about the concerns we have regarding a pupil in the school.

Action following a report of Sexual Harm, Violence and/or Sexual Harassment

We will inform all staff that should they see or hear of any sexism, sexual behaviour they will stop the behaviour immediately; report the behaviour to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and make a written record of the incident.

We will speak to the child to establish their view about what happened and why, what understanding they have, what responsibility they take for their actions, and their willingness/ability to work on their behaviours. This will only be to ascertain clarification; any further investigation may have to be undertaken by the statutory partner agencies.

We will speak to the pupils who have been targeted to establish the impact on them of the behaviour. How the other pupils managed to get in a position to carry out the behaviour, how they are feeling about the other pupil now, and what support they require.

We will assess the support a child may need to help them manage the immediate aftermath of an incident, and to recover from what they have experienced. We will consider the support for the victim straight away and take steps to protect them from attention or peer pressure they may experience due to making a report. It may be necessary to make requests for support to mental health and well being services or for therapeutic intervention.

We have a duty to all children and will protect and support children who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour. We will do this through considering a child's need, any risks to their safety and what multi-agency responses are needed to support them and their family.

We will contact the parents/carers of those involved and share the information. Parents and carers will normally be informed about any report of abuse, unless we consider that this may place the victim at greater risk. In some cases we may need to make a request for support to Children's Social care and/or a report to the police where this is against the child's wishes. In such cases we will explain our reasons for doing so and support the child appropriately.

Following an incident, we will consider:

- The wishes of the child who may have been harmed in terms of how they want to proceed e.g. ask about
- Whether they want to make a police complaint. This is especially important in the context of sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- The nature of the alleged incident(s) e.g. the intention, mitigating circumstances AND Including: whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour.
- The ages of the pupils involved.
- developmental stages of the pupils involved.

- Any power imbalance between the pupils concerned. For example, is the alleged abuser significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the child who may have been harmed have a disability or learning difficulty?
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern.
- intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other pupils, siblings, adult students or school staff, or other related issues in the wider context?

Whilst the school establishes the facts of the case:

- The alleged abuser will be removed from any classes or areas they share with the victim.
- We will consider any reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of the alleged abuser, victim and all other pupils we have a duty to safeguard.
- We will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged abuser/s at a reasonable distance apart on school premises, including transport to and from the school.
- We will use the recommended In School Risk Assessment Plan if assessed as appropriate.
- We will use a Victim Support Plan.

These actions are in the best interests of the pupils involved and should not be perceived to be a judgment on the guilt of the alleged abuser/s.

Responding to an incident/disclosure

Where abuse or violence, including sexual harm and/or sexual harassment, has taken place outside of school e.g. on school transport, off site during lunchtimes, or in the local community involving one or more of our pupils; we will investigate and take action around the conduct of the pupil/s. We will also consider if we should notify the police if we believe an offence may have been committed.

Where child on child abuse or harmful sexual behaviour occurs, including sexual harm or sexual harassment within the school; we will use our procedures as set out by the school's child protection and safeguarding policy, and the procedures as set out by the Somerset Children's Safeguarding Partnership. This may mean a referral to the police and a referral to Children's Social Care Services.

All staff understand that all concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead; however, we acknowledge that anyone can make a referral.

Our staff will follow these safeguarding practice principles:

- wherever possible, managing any report of harmful sexual behaviour with two members of staff present. This will usually be or DSL and SGO or DDSL
- listening carefully to a child in a non judgmental way and ensuring we are clear about how the report will be progressed. We will ensure our children know they can speak to our staff again if they wish to provide more information, or for any other reason
- where a report includes an online element we work to NSPCC when to call the police advice for schools and colleges and the government advice in searching, screening and confiscation and UKCIS – sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice for education settings working with children and young people. We will never view an illegal image of a child as part of our response to a report of harmful sexual behaviour, unless necessary in exceptional circumstances. We will never forward an illegal image of a child and we will work in partnership with other agencies.

We will record all instances of bullying, prejudice, violence and sexual violence and related incidents involving children and young people. This will include racism and racist bullying. We will inform parents/carers of this.

Our records will show what actions have been taken and any outcomes. We will produce these for an OFSTED inspection if requested and we will also demonstrate how we have tackled any of these incidents to prevent recurrence.

Reporting

Any incident of racism, race hate or incitement to hate will be reported to the police if it is believed an offence may have been committed.

Any incident of alleged or an actual incident of sexual harm, violence and/or sexual harassment will be reported to the police if it is believed an offence may have been committed. In all cases consideration is given to reporting the matter to Children Social Care Services.

Safeguarding staff will complete a sexualised behaviour checklist to inform decision-making and where a child already has involvement from Children's Social care, such as a looked after child, child in need or a child with a child protection plan, we will inform the child's social worker and work in partnership as appropriate.

There are circumstances in some cases of sexual harassment/touching which dependent upon age and understanding/age of criminal responsibility, (e.g. one-off incidents), which we may decide that the child/ren concerned are not in need of Early Help or statutory intervention.

In these situations, it would be appropriate to handle the incident internally, for example by utilising the behaviour and bullying policies, providing pastoral intervention and support.

We may also decide that some children/ren involved do not require Statutory Interventions; however, they may benefit from Early Help.

Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, this can be at any point in a child's life. We will decide if an early help approach will benefit a pupil following any outcome of assessment that we may use. This may mean the development of a safety and support plan as part of the early help process.

Providing Early Help is more effective in promoting the welfare of child/ren than reacting later. This school acknowledges that an Early Help Assessment can be useful to address non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

Sanctions

We will consider the sanctions available to use as a school in reference to our Behaviour Policy and/or Anti-Bullying Policy

We recognise disciplinary actions rarely resolve issues of child-on-child abuse and this school will consider all courses of action and intervention.

We recognise that emotions and feelings can run high, and we will endeavour to respond to concerns from any pupil, other pupils, parents and the local community.

We will ensure all necessary parties including the parents/carers are informed and kept up to date. We will listen to any concerns and will work to attempt to resolve these. We will remain vigilant and show sensitivity to the needs of all our children, for example, about attendance to lessons.

Multi-Agency Working

This school will work with our partners and agencies; Children's Social Care, the Police, Health and CAHMS.

We recognise that we will be invited to share information and part of the discussion, being a part of local partnerships and local partnership groups to help identify risks and issues both within the school and in our local community.

Prevention and Training

Stanchester Academy is always working hard to create a culture where child on child abuse does not happen.

We are aiming to create an ethos of good and respectful behaviour, and this should extend to all areas of the school and in a school day, including travelling to and from school.

We through curriculum teaching, learning and events and activities.

We will ensure that all our pupils know who to talk to, how to receive advice and help within the school. We will be able to signpost children to relevant local and national helplines and websites.

We will always seek to ensure that outcomes are appropriate and proportionate to the circumstances in relation to a report, liaising with our safeguarding partners as appropriate. This may include managing internally (for example where children involved in one off incidents do not need early help of statutory intervention), early help (where statutory intervention is not required, but providing support as soon as a problem emerges, working with parents and carers and may prevent escalation) or requests for support to Children's Social care (where a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm, or is in immediate danger).

Management of the policy

We will ensure all our staff, governors, volunteers are trained in the awareness and response to all forms of bullying, all forms of child-on-child abuse, racism and race hate and including any local issues and concerns in the wider context (Extra familial Safeguarding).

In addition, we will ensure all our staff, governors and volunteers are aware of this policy and the supporting guidance, in order that they are clear regarding their role and responsibilities.

The School Designated Safeguarding Lead will take on a lead responsibility to ensure all staff are trained in the use of the available assessment tools, including the use of Health, Wellbeing and Safety Support Plans, the 'In School' Risk Management Plan and the 'Victim/s Support Plan.

The Link Safeguarding Governor in the school will act to oversee and audit any training activity which takes place and activities in relation to this policy.

The governing body should undertake an audit activity to help assess the effectiveness of the school and its processes in tackling all forms of child on child abuse.

We will ensure that parents/carers are made aware of this policy and its availability on the school website.

Appendix B

Safeguarding Induction



Staff Member: Name and Role:	
Date of Commencement:	
Inductor: Name and Role	
Date of Induction:	
Signed by Inductee:	
Signed by Inductor:	

Agenda:

Welcome to our school

Outline of the safeguarding induction meeting

- School Vision and Ethos
- What is Safeguarding (Child Protection)
- What safeguarding means for children and young people at our school
- Vision and influence
- Action to be taken if you have a concern

All members of staff and volunteers need to read and complete a declaration to acknowledge the following key safeguarding documents:

- School Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy (including any appendix templates)
- BTCT Staff Code of Conduct
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 Part 1
- Working together to safeguard children 2023
- BTCT Whistleblowing Policy
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (DfE March 2015)
- School Behaviour Policy

- CME policy - Schools safeguarding response to child who go missing from education and
- The role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of DSL and DDSL)

At Stanchester Academy we aspire to be amongst the best, not just out of a healthy competitive spirit, but because it is our duty to foster and pursue this commitment for our learners and learning community.

What is Safeguarding (Child Protection)

Safeguarding is an overarching term used to ensure that the welfare of children and young people is paramount, and they are protected from abuse and neglect. **We all have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.** This means protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect; preventing impairment of health or development; ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best life chances.

Every member of staff, irrespective of their role in the organisation, has a responsibility to keep children or young people safe and to take appropriate action whenever they hear, observe or are told information that could impact on their welfare and safety.

Child protection is the statutory threshold for intervention in family life whereby a child or young person is suffering or at risk of significant harm. As an organisation [Our School] has a number of statutory responsibilities that must be fulfilled which are set out in legislation and statutory guidance.

You have been issued with Part 1 of **Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024)** and you will have been asked to read the document ahead of today's induction. Have you had an opportunity to do so? Do you have any questions?

What Safeguarding means for children or young people at [Our School]

At Stanchester Academy we expect our staff to exercise high standards of behaviour and provide high quality professional support to our children. It is therefore important that we all understand that the nature of our work and the responsibilities related to it, which places us in a unique position of trust. During the course of your induction you will have the opportunity to access a range of training that will provide you with the knowledge and skills you need to do your job. In addition, you will be required to read several different policies and procedures that will provide you with contextual information and guidance.

All staff, irrespective of their role in the organisation, have a responsibility to ensure that illegal, unsafe, unprofessional or irresponsible behaviour exhibited by staff is challenged and reported. It is always difficult to raise concerns about a colleagues' behaviour, but you must discuss any concerns with the designated or deputy safeguarding lead.

If you do not feel you can raise concerns within the organisation then you can access the NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline on 0800 028 0285 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. or email help@nspcc.org.uk

You must familiarise yourself with the following policies which are available on the Safeguarding Notice Board (Staff Room) and on the School Website:

1. **What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (DfE March 2015)** advice for practitioners
2. **Stanchester Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy and Procedures** can be accessed in the staff room and on the school website.
3. **Stanchester Behaviour policy** and
4. **CME policy and Children Missing Education procedures**

Voice and influence

When working with children and young people communication is crucial, especially in relation to safeguarding. Communication is a two-way process and doesn't just relate to a child's ability to communicate via speech therefore, we need to approach communication in its broadest terms, considering body language, gestures, behaviour and presentation. We must also support our children to make positive choices.

What is important is that you take action and raise your concerns, the designated or deputy safeguarding lead may hold other relevant information, but your information may be new and important - the final part of the information jigsaw.

Updated June 2024

Appendix C: Key Safeguarding staff

Name	Designation	Contact details
Sharon Hooper	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	sharon.hooper@stanchester.co.uk
Abigail Millard	School Safeguarding officer (DDSL)	abigail.millard@stanchester.co.uk
Adam Sturt	The Designated Link Governor for Safeguarding and Looked after Children (LAC/PLAC)	adam.sturt@stanchester.co.uk
Gregg Mockridge	Headteacher and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Gregg.Mockridge@stanchester.co.uk
Mary Cranna	Designated Lead for Anti-Bullying, Designated Teacher for Looked After Children/virtual school and DDSL	mary.Cranna@stanchester.co.uk
Gemma Glentworth	DDSL	Gemma.glentworth@stanchester.co.uk
Liam McLaughlin	SENCO	liam.mclaughlin@stanchester.co.uk

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Appendix D – Multi-Agency Contacts for Safeguarding in Education

If you have concerns about a child or young person in Somerset

If a child is at immediate risk call the POLICE	Call the POLICE on 999	
To make an URGENT referral (i.e., a child is likely to suffer or is suffering significant harm)	Phone Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224	
To make a NON-URGENT referral, complete an Early Help Assessment and send to	Email SDInputters@somerset.gov.uk	
To raise concerns or ask for advice about radicalisation	Phone PREVENT DUTY on 01278 647466 or Email PreventSW@avonandsomerset.police.uk	
To liaise with the specialist Safeguarding Police unit	Phone the Lighthouse Safeguarding on 01278 649228	
DSL Consultation Line 0300 123 3078	Early Help Advice Hub 01823 355803	Critical Incident Support EPS SSE 01823 357000

If you have concerns about a professional working with a child

To raise concerns and ask for guidance in relation to the conduct of someone who works with children	Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Anthony Goble 0300 123 2244 sdinputters@somerset.gov.uk
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For information and guidance relating to safeguarding practice, policy and procedures

Education Engagement Service	Email educationengagement@somerset.gov.uk
Child sexual exploitation & child criminal exploitation	Operation Topaz (Avon and Somerset Police) www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/vul
Child Missing from Education	Online notification form – Somerset County Council

Children affected by Forced Marriage	Forced Marriage Unit Phone 020 7008 0151 Email fmufco@fco.gov.uk
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Online Safety Advice	Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline Phone 0344 381 4772 Email helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Reporting online sexual abuse and grooming	Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/
FGM advice	NSPCC FGM Helpline Phone 0800 028 3550 Email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk
Domestic Abuse Helpline	Phone 0800 694 9999
Young Carers – advice and support	Phone 0300 123 2224 Email YoungCarersmailbox@somerset.gov.uk
Whistleblowing professional policy	NSPCC Whistleblowing hotline Phone 0800 028 0285 Email help@nspcc.org.uk
Primary Mental Health Advice (CAMHS)	Email CYP@somerset.org