Sherdley Primary School

Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy

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'Growing Together, Respecting Each Other'

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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Rationale and Purpose

At Sherdley Primary School, 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 about anything that worries them, with a trusted adult. We will always act in the best interest of the child.

Sherdley Primary School recognises its obligation under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and the Children's Act 1989 and 2004, to promote and safeguard the welfare of all its pupils and sees its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy as fulfilling a key part of this duty.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there is clear guidance and robust procedures around safeguarding and child protection, for all governors, staff (including volunteers), parents, carers, visitors and most importantly, for our pupils and their siblings and/or wider family. Sherdley Primary believes that all children, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, religion, culture, gender, family circumstances and ability, have the right to be protected from abuse. Sherdley Primary also believes that all children also have the right to have a safe and nurturing childhood, so they are placed in the best possible position to meet all their health, social, emotional and educational outcomes.

Furthermore, this policy works in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy, Low-Level Concern Policy and Staff Code of Conduct in order to promote our focus on ensuring that child-on-child abuse is tackled appropriately; that **ALL** reports are acted upon swiftly, and in the best interests of the child and with their views reflected in actions whenever possible; that **EVERYONE** challenges inappropriate behaviours, particularly those relating to sexual abuse or harassment (which could include those taking place outside of school and/or online) and that **ALL** victims should be taken seriously, supported, kept safe and **NEVER** be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, or be made to feel embarrassed or ashamed for making a report.

This purpose and rational directly runs alongside our Vision, Mission Statement and Core Values/aims:

VISION: Growing together, respecting each other.

MISSION STATEMENT: To inspire children to achieve their true potential in a happy and safe environment.

Values:

- Aspiration
- Potential
- Challenge
- Resilience
- Family

At Sherdley Primary, we fundamentally believe that every child has the right to be happy, healthy and safe. Therefore, we must ensure that our safeguarding practices are thoroughly effective and appropriately developed to meet the individual needs of our children.

Definition

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, paragraph 3 as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental or 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. (Children include everyone under the age of 18)

Introduction

Sherdley Primary fully recognises the responsibility it has to effectively safeguard children. We believe that we have a significant contribution to make in ensuring all children are kept safe and achieve the outcomes they deserve.

There are three main elements to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy:

- **Procedures** for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases of abuse and key named members of staff with specific safeguarding responsibilities. Due to our day-to-day contact with children, we strongly believe school staff are well placed to identify and act upon signs and indications of abuse and ensure that the overall ethos and values of the school promote challenge to any examples of harassment.

- **Support** for pupils who may have been subject to abuse and working with families and additional agencies to address any safeguarding issues and achieve positive outcomes, as well as providing systems across school to enable pupils to access support themselves, and share messages to provide support for anyone in the Sherdley Community; knowing who they can speak to and how; promoting and when necessary, challenging the fundamental belief that all victims and reports of abuse should be taken seriously, and nobody made to feel ashamed or embarrassed for making a report or sharing a concern, including promoting a culture of 'zero tolerance' in relation to the principle of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment.

- **Prevention** through teaching children how to keep themselves safe, building relationships with parents and partners (including specific learning linked to online behaviour and possible abuse) ensuring staff are fully supported and trained (including being aware of the potential behaviours which can put children at greater risk of harm and those groups who may be more vulnerable; such as girls being potentially more at risk of CSE), and supporting attendance using a range of school specific measures and systems, and building the self-esteem and resilience of pupils and authentic and valued relationships with children and families.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in Sherdley Primary, community education staff, temporary, part-time and supply staff and governors. All adults who come into school have a statutory duty to safeguard all our children. Learning Support Assistants, Welfare Assistants, Office staff, Midday Supervisors, Cleaning staff as well as teachers can be the first point of disclosure for a child and therefore it is essential that all adults present in school are able to deal with child protection concerns quickly, confidently and effectively. Concerned parents, carers or members of the community may also contact the:

Deputy Headteacher DSL Katie Bennett, DSL Catherine Eccleston, Deputy DSL's Tom Gawne, Jill Stroud and Matt Davies. Phase leaders, Ruth Roberts EYFS, Michael Hughes LKS1 and Emily James, Senior Leader for KS1 Caroline Fleming, any of the pastoral team or any other named member of the Sherdley team if they are concerned about the welfare of a child of family. If none of the named staff listed here are on site, staff are advised to phone the headteacher's mobile phone, EDT 0345 0500 148 out of hours or 999 if a child is in danger.

This policy is written in line with Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and the Children's Act 1989 and 2004. The policy is also compliant with key statutory guidance including 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2026) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2026). This policy also runs alongside the government guidance 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused – Advice for practitioners' (2015) and 'Early years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework' (Jan 2024). Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy also reflects and is in line with the policies and practices of the St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership and Pan-Merseyside Safeguarding Procedures.

All staff at Sherdley Primary have a responsibility to read and adhere to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, along with other relevant supporting documents. These include 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)' (full document for the DSL, Deputy DSL, Senior Leaders and Governors and Part 1 for all staff "All staff, including those who do not work directly with children, will read and understand KCSIE Part One." KCSIE 26 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused – Advice for practitioners' (2015); and the Sherdley Code of Conduct, Staff Handbook, as well as the Low-level Concerns Policy.

The Governing body must ensure that the Headteacher ensures that policies and procedures are understood and followed by all staff, and should further ensure that ALL governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online), which should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place are effective. This training should be regularly updated, at least annually.

All staff should ensure that they have read, understood, and are applying all aspects of the school's Safeguarding policies and procedures, which have been agreed upon by the governing body.

Safeguarding is **everyone's responsibility,** and therefore all adults have a part to play in keeping our children and young people safe. This includes members of school staff working with families and additional external agencies in order to achieve the best outcomes for our children. Sherdley Primary recognises that collaborative working and sharing information is essential in order to effectively safeguard our children.

Please note that if you are ever concerned about the welfare of a child or family you must call The Contact Centre on 01744 676600 or, if it is after 5pm, The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 03450500148.

Please contact the Police on 999 if you feel that a child or young person is in immediate danger

If a child is at risk of/suffered from Female Genital Mutilation/FGM contact 101. If in immediate risk to life or harm, 999.

Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Children's Act (2004) states that every organisation must have a "named person" for safeguarding. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026), states that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be an 'appropriate senior member of staff, from the school or college leadership team'. At Sherdley Primary we have two named DSLs and three named Deputy DSLs. The DSLs and the Deputy DSLs are members of the Senior or Middle Leadership Team and have a variety of roles and responsibilities related to safeguarding which are listed below.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads are:

Mrs Katie Bennett – Deputy Head

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) are

Mr Tom Gawne - Headteacher

Mrs Catherine Eccleston – Pastoral & Attendance Manager

Mrs Jill Stroud - Assistant Head

Mr Matt Davies – Assistant Head

Contact can be made via email sherdley@sthelens.org.uk

Telephone – 01744 678683 [this is the general school number for ALL Designated Safeguarding leads]

Carol Robertson – Safeguarding Governor sherdley@sthelens.org.uk

Roles and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

- The DSL has lead responsibility for dealing with any safeguarding and child protection concerns, including Online Safety. It is important that someone is available during term time to deal with any concerns or offer support or guidance to staff. This means that Sherdley Primary has implemented safeguarding systems that are robust and allow an alternative appropriate member of staff (such as the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads) to deal with a child protection concern quickly and effectively in the DSL's absence.
- Safeguarding concerns should never be routed solely through school email during closure periods and must be directed to Children's Social Care, EDT or Police where immediate action is required. During holidays Katie Bennett, Deputy Head/ Designated Safeguarding Lead and Tom Gawne, Headteacher will periodically check emails and where necessary, act up on the information received, however there may be a delay in responding. Automatic responses encourage anyone who may email with a concern to contact the Duty Team and / or Police
- The DSL acts as a source of support, guidance and expertise when deciding how to deal with a child protection concern. This can include making a referral to an external agency, including Local Authority Children's Social Care.
- The DSL receives additional training, including Designated Safeguarding Leads for schools provided by St Helens Council, which qualifies them as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This needs to be updated a minimum of every two years however Sherdley Primary recognises that it is good practice to update this annually. Katie Bennett has completed training for DSLs June 2026 and Tom Gawne DSL Sept 2026. The DSL also receives additional training on a wide variety of safeguarding topics to ensure they are confidently able to deal with a vast array of issues at a professional level. All Safeguarding Training is recorded within School-ip CPD.
- The DSL will deliver statutory Level 2 Safeguarding Training to all staff and long term volunteers or students on an annual basis, and will inform parents, carers, pupils and the governing body of safeguarding policies, procedures and updates regularly across the year – through various means including training, assemblies, shared online links and APP message 'shout outs' - to ensure that everyone in the school is involved in all parts of the safeguarding process. There is a safeguarding agenda point each week on the Monday morning briefing. The Single Central Record will be updated termly, as well as when new staff join. For short term volunteers and members of staff, such as supply teachers, a Safeguarding Induction will be completed which will adequately equip them on how to effectively deal with safeguarding concerns, share key policies such as the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Positive Behaviour policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Children Missing in Education and role of the DSL.
- The DSL, along with all staff, will be able to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse. However, it will be the DSL's responsibility to make an appropriate judgment on what action to take. This will be based on the

concern raised and the DSL will always make decisions in collaboration with the other DDSLs or other professionals as appropriate (if referral initially made or raised from another agency, for example)

- DSLs have a responsibility for "understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place" as part of their remit – KCSIE 2026. The DSL is responsible for keeping all staff up to date with St Helen's monitoring and filtering policies and ways to record any concerns. Staff will report any online filtering concerns to either the DSL or DDSL who will then report the breach to IT services.
- A school's child protection policy should include how it approaches 'appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks.' Schools and colleges should consider meeting the DfE's new Filtering and Monitoring Standards and Cyber Security Standards. Check list included Appendix 10.
- The DSL will make the decision of when to offer families support and at what level and will use the St Helens Descriptions of Need Document to assist in this decision. This may include a decision to open an EHAT, refer the family to Level 3 social care support, or to remain at Early Help level of support with increased and 'more than Level 1' monitoring utilising the Sherdley pastoral staff.
- The DSL will attend regular training and network events and keep up to date with statutory guidance and changes in legislation, and will be allocated the time, funding, training, resources and support needed to carry out their role.
- The DSL is responsible for writing and reviewing the school's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and ensuring it contains relevant and up-to-date information. All staff, governors and parents/carers of children who attend Sherdley Primary have a responsibility to read and adhere to the school's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy.
- The DSL is responsible for overseeing and maintaining records of child protection and safeguarding concerns. ALL children have an individual safeguarding file via the school CPOMS system, which can provide a chronology for professionals, and which can be shared with other schools using the system at points of transition. This includes a description of the concerns that have been raised; details of how the concern was followed up and resolved; notes of any actions taken, decisions made and the outcome - meeting minutes or multi-agency referrals which are attached as scanned documents. Sherdley Primary adheres to GDPR data protection rules and regulations; this means that individual safeguarding files will be stored and retained securely for 18 years. However, please note that we will share information with other professionals if this is deemed to be necessary and in the best interest of the child's safety. This includes requests for information from other services such as the police or Children's Social Care. All individual safeguarding files should create an accurate and factual picture of a child and should be a tool in preventing any safeguarding concerns from escalating.
- The DSL and DDSL reviews the CPOMS records of concerns termly with the other DDSLs and, when appropriate, with members of the Local Authority Safeguarding Team when additional guidance or validation is needed, in order to address any outstanding actions and to provide an opportunity for collaborative work, supervision of case load and progress, and to moderate decisions made and identify what lessons may be learned from any incidents.
- The DSL will either complete or contribute to the S175 Audit which is reviewed and quality assured by the St. Helens Safeguarding Children's Partnership. This is a self-assessment tool which is used to ensure that school's safeguarding procedures are robust and effective.
- The DSL is aware of the St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership (SHSCP) and how it operates. The DSL will also attend regular training provided by SHSCP.
- The DSL will attend multi-agency meetings and provide concise and accurate written reports stating the school's perspective and professional opinion on the situation. The DSL will work with class teachers and other relevant members of staff in order to comprise an accurate and factual report. The DSL will also seek to obtain the wishes and feelings of the child or young person so their views are incorporated and shape the report. The DSL will attend Child Protection Conferences, when included, and will be responsible for contributing to the decision as to whether a child should be subject to a child protection plan, based on discussion and agreement with the Head teacher when possible.
- The DSL will provide written reports and contributions to external agency assessments. This can include Child and Family Assessments (social care), CAMHS assessments and Family Action Meetings (this is not an exhaustive list). Again, if sharing information is deemed to be necessary in order to ensure the safety or protection of a child. Then the DSL will provide a report to the relevant agency. Parents or carers consent will be sought in most cases; however there may be occasions where this is not appropriate or may compromise the safety of the child.

- The DSL will create and maintain the school's Safeguarding Register within Arbor. This is a fluid, working document which is a register of all the school's vulnerable children. This document allows the DSL and senior staff to be aware of and vigilant to individual vulnerabilities so that we can be proactive and offer families the best support possible. The records are now stored as part of Arbor and are also part of the Attendance Support Officer's daily reviews.
- The DSL monitors attendance and checks on the welfare of children who are not in school. The Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy is directly linked to and supports the school's attendance policy.
- The DSL is responsible for monitoring the Low-Level Concerns of staff. These are recorded in StaffSafe.
- Alternative Provision: The DSL will be proactive and responsible for pupils who attend an alternative provision. Responsibilities will include, Quality assurance of providers, Information sharing before placement, Attendance monitoring, DSL contact arrangements, Welfare checks and Review meetings.

Roles and responsibilities of the Deputy Safeguarding Lead

- The Deputy DSL is responsible for dealing with any child protection concerns in the absence of the DSL.
- The Deputy DSL is a strategic part in the development and implementation of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The Deputy DSL also receives additional training, including the Level 3 training, which qualifies them as the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The Deputy DSL will provide a source of supervision and professional dialogue with the DSL. This can be in response to serious cases or professionally deciding and agreeing next steps.

Representation at meetings during school holidays

Due to the term-time working pattern of school staff, and the statutory time scales for multi-agency meetings such as Child Protection Conferences, schools may be unable to attend certain meetings during school holidays. However, Sherdley Primary recognises that continuity is vital and that school input into said meetings is essential. Therefore, **if school are aware that they are unable to attend a meeting during the holidays, given sufficient prior notification**, a referral will be completed to the Safeguarding Children in Education (SCIE) Officer, who is based within the Safeguarding Unit within the Local Authority. A report will be completed and submitted by school in advance – based on the information held by school at the point of the end of the most recent school term - and a handover meeting will be held between the SCIE officer and the school representative prior to the meeting (using a suitable online method, which may include secure email, phone conversation and/or a video conference), to ensure all information is shared and communicated effectively. The

KCSIE Officer will then feedback any outcomes of the meeting back to school which will be recorded on the CPOMS system as per the usual system. However, it may also be the case that communication in this manner is not possible due to timescales and notification not being received in due time, in which case Sherdley Primary will request feedback on a missed meeting and full minutes, any actions of which will be shared as appropriate as soon as possible thereafter.

Supervision of Designated Safeguarding Leads and Frontline Staff

Sherdley Primary School recognises that dealing with safeguarding and child protection concerns can be emotionally distressing for the member of staff involved. We also recognise that working in isolation can be detrimental and presents a high risk when making decisions relating to child protection. Therefore, reflective practice is also essential, not only for the DSL but also for whole school safeguarding procedures. Therefore, we aim to support staff who are frequently dealing with child protection concerns by offering regular, formal and recorded supervision. We believe this to be fundamental in creating a culture why safeguarding practice is robust and staff well-being is valued. This is done via a regular, at least termly, meeting of the DSL and DDSLs to review all cases, case load and progression and includes challenge and opportunity for reflection. The DSL also meets at least half termly with the Pastoral Team to review their case load, discuss case progression and remind them of the staff who can support them. In practice these meetings occur much more frequently and are recorded as part of the school CPOMS system.

Role of the Governing Body and the Governor for Safeguarding

The governing body have a strategic leadership responsibility for Sherdley Primary's safeguarding arrangements and **must** ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. They work alongside all members of staff, including the DSL, to ensure that the best practice is always being adhered to. Governors also have the following roles and responsibilities:

- To approve and help review all school policies including the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy. Governors also have a responsibility to check that all policies contain the correct information and are up to date.
- To ensure the school operates safer recruitment procedures, including attending Safer Recruitment Training, references, DBS checks and quality assuring the Single Central Record (this is not an exhaustive list). Other checks include:
    - Online searches for shortlisted candidates.
    - Agency and third-party staff checks.
    - Written risk assessments where appropriate.
    - Single Central Record monitoring arrangements.
    - Online searches
    - Agency checks
    - Contractors
    - Volunteers
    - SCR monitoring
- To be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty) and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- **ALL** governors must receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction, which should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the policies and procedures linked to safeguarding at Sherdley Primary are effective. This training should also be regularly updated, at least annually.
- Governing bodies should ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training. It should give them "an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring"
- To look at and review data and information relating to safeguarding and child protection and to challenge pre-existing systems in order to improve practice. **The governing body should immediately express concerns if it feels that the school is not fulfilling its duty to keep its pupils safe.**
- To support staff during difficult or serious incidents that may have occurred.
- To deal with allegations against members of staff where appropriate and to deal with any allegations made against the Headteacher. Please note any allegations or concerns regarding the Headteacher should be referred immediately, via the school office, to the Chair of Governors, Mrs Cathey Briars.

The Governor responsible for Safeguarding works directly with the DSL and Deputy DSL to ensure that children are kept safe from harm. It is an opportunity for the named governor to challenge appropriately and improve practice but also as a means for the Safeguarding Team to report back on the positive work that they are doing. We believe that at Sherdley Primary, that this joint working makes our systems more robust and effective whilst placing clear levels of accountability on staff, volunteers and governors.

The named Governor for Safeguarding is Mrs Carol Robertson

If you wish to contact the named governor responsible for safeguarding, please email the school office sherdley@sthelens.org.uk or telephone on 01744 678683 and staff will inform the governor of your message.

Types and Definitions of Abuse

Child abuse can take many different forms. Staff at Sherdley Primary receive comprehensive statutory Level 2 training annually to understand the different forms of abuse and their signs and symptoms, they also receive regular updates across the year as part of an on-going drive to ensure that policies and procedures are transparent, clear and easy to understand.

Definitions, examples and procedures for the different forms of abuse can be found in **Appendix 2. Types of abuse and neglect can be found in KCSIE 2026, Part 1.**

The four main categories of abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

As documented in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026), Sherdley Primary also recognises additional specific safeguarding issues which may put a child's safety or wellbeing at risk. These include:

• Bullying, including cyber-bullying, prejudice based and discriminatory bullying	• Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) including County Lines
• Child-on-child abuse including childon-child sexual violence and sexual harassment * see additional section in APPENDIX 2	• Domestic Abuse – which can encompass a range of behaviours as part of a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Abuse may be physical, or may be controlling and coercive.
• Children missing from home or care	• Fabricated or induced illness
• Children Missing in Education	• Faith abuse and so-called honour-based abuse
• Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
• Contextual Safeguarding	• Gangs and youth violence
• Drugs and alcohol misuse	• Gender based violence / violence against women and girls (VAWG)
• Forced marriage	• Hate
• Mental health	• Online abuse, which may include sexual harassment, threats of physical abuse or psychological abuse
• Modern slavery	• Private fostering
• Radicalisation and extremism	• Trafficking
• Sexting or sharing of 'Nudes'	• Upskirting
• Serious violence * See additional section in APPENDIX 2	

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

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

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy. This should be recorded on CPOMS and followed up with a discussion. Concerns relating to self-harm, suicidal thoughts, suicidal ideation or expressions of hopelessness will be treated as safeguarding concerns and immediately shared with a DSL.

Katie Bennett is the Senior Mental Health Lead.

Prevention and Early Help Assessment

Prevention

Sherdley Primary believes that a proactive and preventative approach to safeguarding is the most effective. We are committed to addressing any safeguarding or welfare issues as soon as possible to prevent child abuse and ensure children achieve their outcomes.

For Early Help to be successful, Sherdley Primary recognises that good levels of self-esteem, supportive friends, and positive relationships with trusted adults support prevention and early intervention when it comes to safeguarding children. We also believe that we should take a child-centred approach in everything we do, and that by listening to the voice of the child, we make decisions in their best interest. Where appropriate we will engage with Early Help and Family Help arrangements operating within the local authority.

The school will therefore:

1. Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, encouraged to talk and are listened to; we will provide opportunities for children to express their wishes and feelings regardless of age, circumstances or ability;
2. Ensure children know that there are adults in school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
3. Embed skills throughout school that help children to keep themselves safe. This includes throughout the curriculum, whole school initiatives and bespoke interventions. This can also include external agencies such as, but not limited to, Family Welfare Counselling, the NSPCC, Police or Barnardo's who come into school and deliver lessons on specific issues.
4. Include in the curriculum materials which will help children develop a realistic perspective and appropriate attitude to the responsibilities of adult life and the treatment of children.
5. Take **ALL** reports from victims seriously; listen and act upon information shared whilst NEVER making the victim feel ashamed for making their report, or that they are creating a problem by raising their concerns.
6. Make clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, that it is never acceptable, and will not be tolerated and never passed off as "banter" etc. We will therefore challenge physical and other inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears relatively innocuous) in order to help prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviours in the future and ensure that our school culture does not normalise abuse leading to children accepting it and therefore not coming forward to report it.

Early Help Offer

The Early Help Offer is supported and underpinned by the St. Helens Descriptions of Need Document.

Sherdley Primary works to support through a Families First approach and seeks to ensure that the safety of children in the setting is underpinned by the safety of ALL family members involved with the child in the care of Sherdley Primary.

Sherdley staff (Pastoral staff, DSL, DDSLs) will utilise the St Helens Descriptions of Need Document to highlight the level of concern and will act upon the outcome.

This could be as a result of:

* ***CPOMS recorded incidents which alone do not meet the criteria for Level 2.***

* ***Staff concerns based on recent and unusual changes to behaviour and/or presentation.***

* ***Concern raised from other or previous setting but which has not reached the level of referral for support, or which is in the stages of being assessed.***

Sherdley Primary will involve parents and carers, where appropriate to do so, and will use their information to inform the Descriptions of Need document assessment.

The outcome of this information gathering may result in the opening of an EHAT with the information from the Descriptions of Need document forming the basic assessment and, in some cases, may have the DSL as Lead Practitioner, or will involve the DSL liaising with other agencies. This initial assessment may also immediately require a referral for Level 2 + support via the Level 2 Panel. It may result in a higher-level referral for support at Level 3, in which case a referral will be made to Local Authority children's social care.

All of the above outcomes are addressed and explained with parents/carers as part of this information gathering, Early Help Offer from Sherdley Primary.

If the Descriptions of Need Document shows no cause for further action, the family will remain open to 'Sherdley Plus' level of care – which is above the Level 1 basic provision and support, but not currently significant enough to move to Level 2.

All of these 'Sherdley Plus' families are discussed at the Safeguarding Team meetings going forwards (currently as part of the DSL/DDSL and Pastoral Team meetings) and if progress is not made on actions requested further assessment may take place resulting in an escalation of the level of need and concern.

Safeguarding within the curriculum

As a school we play a crucial role in preventative education, which is most effective in the context of a wholeschool approach that prepares pupils for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/harassment.

Our behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as the regularly timetabled and evidence-based PSHE underpins how we expect these standards to be upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life, for all pupils and staff.

Our PSHE is fully inclusive and age appropriate and also takes into consideration to developmental stage of pupils (including those with SEND.)

An enhanced PSHE, SMSC and RSHE curriculum is taught across school using the KAPOW primary curriculum of planned themes and activities, as well dedicated and targeted lessons focusing on specific subject areas or topics, some of which are detailed below:

Focus area	**Curriculum initiatives and interventions**
Sexual Abuse	Children are taught about the parts of boy/girl/male/female bodies which constitute 'private' and sexual body parts and which should be considered as personal. They are also given strategies around avoiding and dealing with pressured situations linked to male/female relationships in Year 6 and Year 4 unit on Relationships.
CSE	Targeted lessons around Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and the dangers around sexting/sharing online and associated risks, are taught as part of the Relationships unit in Year 6, 5, 4. The concept of grooming is introduced at an age appropriate level. These lessons are not intended to cause fear or worry for pupils and their families, but rather to proactively teach our children how to keep themselves safe in the modern world and link into general learning about online safety which is covered as part of the Computing curriculum.

E-Safety and Online Safety	Learning about online and E-Safety is a specific part of the curriculum, with themes covered in EVERY year group, and every half-term. The Online Safety curriculum covers a wide range of themes and is detailed as part of the Computing Curriculum. We understand that our children are growing up in a world where they have access to a wide range of technological devices and we also understand how various social media platforms may present a risk to our children and young people. Therefore, we
	believe we have a duty to ensure our children know how to keep themselves safe and report any concerns. As part of the PSHCE curriculum, the Kapow curriculum units include - Healthy Me Unit in EYFS (Stranger Danger), Year 3 where they focus on identifying and strategies to deal with unsafe situations, and in Year 6 where there is a link to exploitation specifically and pressure from same/opposite sex. The issue of 'commerce risks online' will also be addressed in units such as Media Choice and Media Balance and units looking at whether online material can always be believed, including making pupils aware of how they can become targeted by advertisers.

We utilise outside agencies coming into school to support our children with a wide range of issues. This may include, but is not exclusive to school health, the Police, NSPCC and ChildLine as well as more targeted services such as dedicated days focusing on fire safety or Prevent.

As part of the whole school assembly plan we tackle multiple issues linked to safety and awareness, which link directly to the KAPOW themes, and also to world, national and local events, which includes explicit education on themes of tolerance, consent, bullying, harassment and abuse as well as repeating and communicating information about what pupils can do if they feel concerned for themselves or others.

Online Safety

Online Safety is a vital part of our safeguarding approach, ensuring that children are protected from potential risks associated with digital technologies. In line with the statutory guidance outlined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)2026*, our school takes a proactive approach to teaching pupils how to stay safe online, including recognising and responding to risks such as cyberbullying, online grooming, and exposure to inappropriate content. We embed online safety throughout our curriculum and provide regular staff training to ensure all adults working with children understand their responsibilities.

We recognise the crucial role parents and carers play in supporting online safety. Our school actively engages families through our school App – sharing weekly advice and hints for parents and carers, newsletters, and guidance materials to help them understand current online risks and how to support safe digital behaviour at home. We encourage open communication between school and home and provide clear channels for reporting concerns. By working in partnership with parents, we aim to create a consistent and supportive environment where children can develop the skills and confidence to navigate the online world safely.

Artificial Intelligence and Safeguarding

Deepfake imagery

AI-generated sexual content

AI-assisted grooming

AI chatbots

Manipulated images

Misinformation and radicalisation risks

Staff use of generative AI

Data security when using AI systems

Filtering and Monitoring

In accordance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026)*, our school has robust filtering and monitoring systems in place to safeguard pupils from harmful or inappropriate online content. **Filtering** refers to the technology used to block access to unsuitable websites, images, and online platforms. **Monitoring** involves the practical steps taken by staff to ensure that pupils are not exposed to online risks while using school devices and networks. St Helens IT services are responsible for our school filtering and monitoring and conduct checks on websites to ensure they are safe.

Our monitoring procedures include:

- **Physical monitoring** by staff during device use
- **Live software monitoring** to track real-time activity
- **Monitoring of user logs** to review access history
- **Monitoring of individual devices**, including those used off-site

We ensure that any school-owned devices used away from the school premises are subject to the same filtering and monitoring standards as those used on-site. This helps maintain a consistent level of protection regardless of location.

Each academic year, our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), in collaboration with our IT team, conducts a thorough review of our filtering and monitoring systems. This review assesses the effectiveness of current measures, identifies any gaps, and ensures that reporting mechanisms for technical issues are clear and accessible to staff and pupils. Governors will receive and scrutinise an annual filtering and monitoring report.

We also work closely with parents and carers to raise awareness of online safety and the systems we use to protect children. Through regular communication, workshops, and guidance, we support families in understanding how they can reinforce safe online behaviours at home and report any concerns they may have.

Disclosures

Any disclosures or safeguarding concerns raised during or outside a safeguarding focused lesson will be dealt with effectively and immediately in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures; adhering to the principle that **ALL** reports will be listened to and taken seriously by staff and that victims will NEVER be made to feel as if they are creating a problem, or that they should be ashamed, of making a report.

The schools Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy is directly linked to the school Relationships and Sex Education Policy, as well as the Online Safety Policy, Low-Level Concerns Policy and the Behaviour Policy.

If you have any questions or concerns around these discussion topics, please contact Mr Gawne, Mrs Bennett or Mrs Kerr relating specifically to the PSHCE curriculum content, and we will be happy to answer any questions and offer any support required.

Child Protection Procedures

Sherdley Primary Child Protection Procedures coincide with the procedures set out by the St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership. These are available at www.sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk . Sherdley Primary also has clear and exact internal procedures for dealing with safeguarding issues; these should be adopted and followed by all staff members, visitors and volunteers.

All staff should know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and local authority children's social care. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of any form of

abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child. Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2026

APPENDIX 1 OUTLINES THE SHERDLEY PROCEDURE FOR RECORDING CONCERNS AT ANY LEVEL AND DETAILS THE ACTIONS WHICH WILL RESULT

Written or online records provide a chronology and can help prevent further issues from escalating. In more serious circumstances, they may be used as evidence in legal or Child Protection cases.

If a case is referred in and school disagree with the outcome, or if school are unhappy with the conduct of a professional agency, then the St Helens Resolution Policy will be followed. Sherdley Primary recognise that they have a duty to challenge other professionals where they feel that a child's needs are not being met.

Recognising Abuse

All staff are given comprehensive safeguarding training annually; this covers in detail how to potentially recognise the different forms of abuse and neglect listed in **APPENDIX 2**. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Identifying significant changes in a child's behaviour
- Deterioration in a child's general well-being – which could include unusual or excessive tiredness
- Unexplained bruising, marks or possible signs of neglect
- Children's comments or disclosures that give cause for concern
- Any reason to suspect abuse or neglect outside the setting
- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff

Staff are made aware that some groups of children are more at risk from certain types of abuse than others – such as girls being more at risk of Sexual exploitation as a result of Criminal Exploitation; boys and those frequently absent from school being more at risk of Serious Violence; and that behaviours such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, consensual or non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images/videos can also indicate signs of abuse.

Based on recent Serious Case Reviews shared in St Helens staff should also be aware of repeated signs of seeking attention – such as repeated negative behaviour outbursts which **MAY** be a sign of underlying neglect.

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. Children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or they may be being threatened. This could be due to their disability, vulnerability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL/DDSL, or recording their concerns via CPOMS.

Staff should also be mindful of, and determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which will facilitate communication.

Referrals

Referrals for further support are made in line with APPENDIX 1 and based on the appropriate level of concern for the well-being of a child within a family.

All referrals are made using the St Helens Safeguarding and Children's Partnership recommended proformas.

ANY member of Sherdley Primary staff may make a referral; however it is best practice to involve the DSL or DDSLs in the process in order to ensure effective communication and use of the various tools to support the referral process.
Sherdley Primary uses the St Helens 'Descriptions of Need' document to help identify the appropriate level of concern; in discussion with appropriate adults involved with the family; and where appropriate with the family itself.

Consent is required and requested to make any Level 2 referrals for support.

Informed consent is required for a Level 3 or above referral to Local Authority social care – this means that parents and carers, where appropriate, will be informed that the referral is being made. Lack of consent for the referral at this level would NOT prevent Sherdley Primary from making the referral.

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to Local Authority children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately. In the case of an immediate Level 4 concern, or where concern for the safety of a child in the home is significant informed consent is not required before making a referral. However it is still good practice to inform parents unless it puts the welfare or safety of the child at risk.

Sherdley Primary may receive information from other agencies regarding the well-being and welfare of children and families. We will support other agencies in making referrals and share relevant information when this is in the best interests of the children concerned.

Managing allegations against staff members

Any member of staff who wishes to draw attention to something which they feel is seriously wrong within Sherdley will be supported following the Sherdley Whistleblowing and Confidential Reporting Policy.

Any allegation made against a staff member will always be taken seriously and dealt with immediately. At Sherdley Primary it is important to ensure that any allegation is thoroughly investigated in order to effectively ensure the safety of the child but also the staff member involved.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, staff should not solely wait for a disclosure when considering concerns against staff members. We know that children and young people may feel intimidated to disclose about people they consider to be in positions of power and authority. It is therefore imperative that staff are vigilant against patterns of behaviours, observations and other issues or concerns, so they can take proactive action. This could include being aware of children breaking minor rules to see what response is carried out, or 'pushing boundaries' to check whether awareness is increased or reduced as a result.

In line with **KCSIE 2026, Part Four**, we recognise that there are two levels of allegation/concern, which are 1) – Allegations which **may** meet the harm threshold, and 2) Allegations/concerns that **do not** meet the harm threshold – referred to as 'low-level concerns'.

All concerns are recorded.

Low-level concerns can form patterns.

Records are reviewed by the Headteacher/DSL.

Repeated concerns may meet the harm threshold.

For any allegations which may meet the harm threshold, these would be examples which might indicate that a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in a school or college. This could include behaviour which may have happened outside of the work environment.

Where we identify that a child has been harmed, or there is an immediate risk of harm to a child, a referral will be made immediately to the Local Authority children's social care system, and if appropriate, also to the police.

When dealing with an allegation it is the responsibility of the school to conduct basic enquiries in order to determine facts and help determine whether there is any foundation to an allegation, whilst being careful to not jeopardise any future police investigation. Examples of these enquiries could be to discover whether the individual was in school at the time of the allegation, whether the individual could potentially have come into contact with the child, whether there are any potential witnesses and whether any CCTV footage could exist. However, the DSL/DDSLs will be guided by the LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer – who will support in this process.
In such instances the DSL is responsible for ensuring that the child is not at risk – which may include making referrals when cases are suspected of meeting this level.

Any allegation should be reported to the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead, or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in their absence. It may be done so in person – especially in the case of a concern of IMMEDIATE harm - or via the CPOMS StaffSafe system.

The St Helens Children's Partnership – Procedure for managing Allegations against Staff recommendations will be followed for dealing with the allegation.

It may be necessary to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for further advice and guidance. However, if it is evident that the allegation is true, or if we are advised by the LADO, then a LADO referral will be completed and the LADO will ensure that an appropriate investigation is carried out, which could be through Local Authority children's social care, the police, the school, or a combination of these.

LADO contact details for St Helens : contact the LADO secretary who will pass the referral onto the professional who is working on the rota system that day.

LADO Contact Details

Telephone: 01744 671252 Email: sthelenslado@sthelens.gov.uk

False or malicious allegations will be taken extremely seriously and will not be tolerated under any circumstance. If the allegation is deemed to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and the case manager should consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else, and in these circumstances a referral to the Local Authority children's social care may be appropriate.

If the allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per the school behaviour policy.

The LADO will also be contacted so the child's details can be recorded within the Local Authority in order to protect staff.

Allegations made against the Headteacher should be referred to the Chair of Governors or directly to the LADO.

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, it **does not** mean that the staff member will automatically be suspended. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors where appropriate, will make decisions based on individual cases in conjunction with the LADO and HR.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, there may be some circumstances where schools have to consider an allegation against an individual not directly employed by them, for example supply teachers, where the school disciplinary procedures do not fully apply because agencies will have their own. Whilst not the actual employer, schools have a responsibility to ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances should the school cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome. The agency itself should be fully involved with these enquiries, and when using a supply agency, schools will inform them of the process for managing allegations, but will also take account of the agency's policies and the duty placed on agencies in relation to the DBS as personnel suppliers.
Allegations which do not meet the harm threshold are referred to as **'low-level concerns'**.

This term does not mean 'insignificant', however it applies to concerns, no matter how small, which cause a nagging doubt that an adult working in or on behalf of school may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Sherdley Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of school, or a concern which does not meet the harm threshold and not serious enough to consider a LADO referral.

Sherdley has a Low-Level Concern Policy which outlines the school procedures for sharing, recording, actioning and monitoring such concerns.

Staff should refer to this policy and ensure that they are aware of the procedure for raising a concern. The online CPOMS 'StaffSafe' system is the preferred method, however a paper 'Low-Level Concerns Form' is available – copies are available from the DSL, DDSLs and also located in the main stationery cupboard in case staff wish to remain anonymous.

Supporting the pupil at risk

We recognise that children who are subject to abuse, in whatever form, may experience a significant effect on their physical and social and emotional wellbeing as well as their academic attainment. Sherdley Primary recognises that school is a stable, predictable and secure environment in the lives of our pupils. Therefore, we strive to create a safe and consistent place where children feel secure and valued.

In accordance with Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2026 (Updated 2026) , Sherdley Primary recognises that some children may be considered more vulnerable than others. These include:

- A child who has special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND)*
- A young carer
- A child with a social worker
- Children living in kinship care arrangements may have experienced trauma, loss, separation or family instability and may require additional safeguarding consideration and support.
- A child who is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- A child who is questioning their gender
- A child who is in a family circumstance that is presenting challenges for them such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic violence and/or
- Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.
- Children with medical conditions may face additional vulnerabilities including increased absence, social isolation, emotional wellbeing concerns and dependence on adult support.

* Children with additional learning difficulties or disabilities can face additional barriers in regard to recognition of abuse. These barriers can include:

Barrier	Resolution / Additional Support
Communication Difficulties It can be significantly more challenging and unlikely for a child to disclose abuse if they have difficulties with communication.	Speech and language interventions Utilising key members of staff who have good understanding and relationships of that pupil Alternative communication means such as sign language, Makaton, PECs etc.
Behavioural Difficulties Screaming, shouting, emotional distress, marks being ignored, overlooked or failure to investigate if this is considered to be 'regular behaviour for the child'.	Ensure that incidents are questioned and challenged. Understanding behaviours displayed such as triggers, relation to mood. Individual Behaviour Plans Gaining the views, wishes and feelings of the child. Always questioning any marks, bruises etc.
Physical Disabilities Physical disabilities can present a significant barrier for some children as it can limit their independence and personal ability to keep safe.	Always questioning any marks, bruises etc. – never assuming why an injury may be present. Using times such as during personal care to be vigilant against marks and bruises. Ensuring open dialogue and trusting relationships at all times.
Marks and Physical Injuries Assumptions that marks relate to the child's physical disability or individual need without further exploration.	Always questioning any marks, bruises etc. – never assuming why an injury may be present. Seeking advice from external agencies including Children's Social Care.
Bullying and prejudice behaviours Children with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities may be more at risk of bullying and prejudice behaviour. Children with SEND may be more prone to peer group isolation.	Ensuring that equality, diversity and difference is taught to all children throughout school. Challenging and dealing with anti-bullying incidents immediately. Supporting children with forming healthy friendships with their peers.

Cognitive difficulties Some children may have difficulty understanding or recognising abuse.	Ensure PSHE and SMSC lessons are differentiated accordingly. Clear and direct conversations to be had regularly with those who are most vulnerable. Utilise skills of Pastoral Team to offer additional support surrounding 'difficult' concepts.

Protecting pupils with additional needs is underpinned by the school's SEND policy.

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges.

The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- Our prevention procedures, including our Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Regularly reviewing and updating the Safeguarding Register
- The school's positive behaviour policy is aimed at supporting all pupils in our school, especially those who are identified as being vulnerable. All staff will adopt a consistent approach which focuses on the behaviour displayed by the child and not by condemning the child themselves, thus preventing damage of the children own sense of self-worth. Sherdley Primary recognises that all behaviour is a form of communication and we aim to address any underlying issues through pastoral intervention. **The Child Protection and Safeguarding policy is linked to the Positive Behaviour Policy.**
- Sherdley Primary is committed to working with the appropriate agencies that best support our children and their families; we will complete any referrals deemed necessary that would provide a child with the right specialist support.
- Sherdley Primary will continue to refer children who are already open to Social Care and will exercise the Local Authority's Escalation Policy when deemed necessary.
- When any vulnerable pupil leaves our school, we will forward on any record using CPOMS (which ensures appropriate GDPR measures are adhered to) OR all information will be printed out and transferred to the new school, in person unless out of borough, with the documents signed for by the receiving school. Social Care would be informed where necessary (such as if a child were to move to a different Local Authority).
- We will always listen to each and every one of our pupils and utilise our trusting and authentic relationships to ensure that a child's voice is heard. **ALL** reports will be taken seriously, in line with our whole school culture, and children will **NEVER** be made to feel as if they are creating a problem, or ashamed, for making a report.

Further Safeguarding Arrangements Voice Further Safeguarding Arrangements of the Child

Supporting our pupils in ensuring their voice is heard is a significant part of effective safeguarding procedures.

ALL staff will reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Victims will NEVER be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse or expressing their views, and they should **NEVER** be made to feel ashamed when expressing their views and concerns.

Sherdley Primary uses a number of methods to gather Pupil Views in line with requests from social care and health (My Views, SDQs, LAC children views as part of EPEP).

All records are scanned and stored alongside the pupils' other safeguarding records on CPOMs, and are shared with appropriate agencies when requested and essential for fluid partnership work.

It may also be appropriate for dedicated work to be completed with a child throughout a case or situation to ensure that their input is at the centre of that particular plan or intervention. Sherdley Primary's approach to Child Protection and Safeguarding will always be child centred.

Safeguarding and Attendance

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is directly linked to the school's Attendance Policy.

At Sherdley Primary we acknowledge that good attendance is essential not only for academic attainment but also to ensure the safety of the child. Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about other safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) the school has:

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

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

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

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

As a result of this, we have set procedures in place to ensure the safety of pupils through their attendance.

- The absence of any child, who we do not receive an appropriate reason for, is followed up with a phone call to any of the emergency contact numbers held. A phone call/email to their designated social worker if appropriate. Calls may also be made to a sibling's high school.
- If we still have no reason for absence, we would consider making a home visit to ascertain the safety and well-being of the child.
- For Looked After Children their absence data is collected daily, and again, any lack of attendance without reason would be shared with the Virtual School Head who has a non-statutory responsibility for Looked After pupils and those with a social worker. The St Helens Virtual School Head is Heather Addison.
- When a Child is Missing Education (CME), Sherdley Primary will follow **Education Welfare's Child Missing Education Policy and Procedures.**
  https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/media/5861/st-helens-la-procedure-for-locating-missing-childrenhttps://www.sthelens.gov.uk/media/5861/st-helens-la-procedure-for-locating-missing-children-december-2016.pdf**december-2016.pdf**
- There is a named CME Officers within the Education Welfare Service. The named CME officer for St. Helens is: **Diane Russell – 01744 676636**
- There is also a dedicated CME email address for any enquiries relating to Children Missing Education. The email address is: **cme@sthelens.gov.uk**
- If it becomes known that a child has gone missing from school during the school day, we will firstly utilise our electronic Signing In and Out system to ascertain whether they have been collected and the

- reasoning/name of the adult who has collected. We will then try to make contact with emergency contacts, as per our list on Arbor, which may include making contact with a social worker (if one is allocated) or the Virtual School Head (if child is CLA). If the child has not been located, we will notify the police.
- Children must be collected at the end of the school day by an appropriate adult, unless we have received direct, parental signed notification for children in years 5 and 6 that they may walk home themselves. We may request the use of a 'password' to be used when other adults are collecting children.
- Any adult with Parental Responsibility has the right to collect their child from school, unless there is a Contact, Residency or Child Arrangement Order in place, or if there are child protection concerns surrounding a parent or carer. For families with orders in place, we ask parents and carers to inform us of any such instance and provide paper evidence where necessary. **Please note we will not keep original copies of orders but may take photocopies which will be stored securely within the child's individual safeguarding file on CPOMS.**

Children not currently On Roll

We regularly receive and request information on children due to start Sherdley Primary prior to their admission date, and prior to them having been added to the school register. This is part of good practice in relation to transition into school and ensuring support for families and children is stable.

This information may be made available to us by another agency or may result from our own information gathering process prior to entry.

If we are made aware of any existing EHAT episodes, or discover these as a result of our own information gathering a request will be made for access and in some cases for the Lead Role to be transferred to school.

Upon entry into school and being placed on the official school register and roll, any information stored and saved will be transferred to the relevant place for secure storage and effective dissemination – such as CPOMS, EHAT etc

Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras in Schools

Staff, or visitors to school, must NOT access or use mobile phones whilst working with or around children.

This is in keeping with and supports our intention to ensure that the opportunity for 'low level' safeguarding incidents linked to staff are minimised.

Mobile phones can only be used in the staffroom, or any of the office areas around school, where the door should be closed and no pupils should be present.

The exception for staff is during a school visit when a mobile phone should be taken – the contact number for which should be part of the risk assessment and left at school – however, the device should NOT be used throughout the visit except for emergencies.

If staff have need to take an image using their own mobile device – there are a few circumstances where this could be the case – the image should be transferred as soon as possible to a school based storage device and removed from the original phone, in the presence of another member of staff to verify its removal.

Mobile phone guidance specifically for pupils:

Pupils from Reception to Year 4 should NOT bring mobile phones to school, this includes for after-school events, such as cinema nights or discos. If these pupils bring mobile phones onto school premises, pupils should understand that they will be removed and kept as safe as possible until they can be reclaimed by a parent. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 that have parental consent are able to bring mobile phones to school. These are kept in a locked

safe (in the school office) during the school day and are only used for travelling to and from school. Children bringing a mobile phone to school should switch it off when entering the school site.

Mobile phones are a prohibited item for children in school. Where children may need their phone to walk to and from school each day, parents / carers must sign an agreement with SLT. This is sent via our school app. Children must switch their phones off as they enter the premises and must not switch them on until they leave. Any breach of these expectations may result in the agreement being removed.

This minimises the risk within our premises of cyber-bullying, online prejudice based or discriminatory based bullying, as well as minimising the opportunities on school site for the sharing of nudes and semi-nude or other inappropriate imagery.

Pupils are reminded that the taking and sharing of images on school devices is NOT permitted and will be regularly monitored by staff.

Parents and carers must provide information regarding consent for pupils to use school IT equipment.

Parents and carers must update school on their preference of whether consent is given for their child's image to be used as part of promotional and online materials linked to Sherdley Primary – this includes the school website.

Smart Glasses

Smart glasses, including any wearable technology capable of recording, storing, transmitting, or receiving images, video, audio, or internet content, are prohibited for pupils on the school site**.** Smart glasses present safeguarding, privacy and online safety risks, including the potential for covert recording, image capture and unauthorised sharing of content. Any pupil found in possession of smart glasses will be required to hand them to a member of staff, and parents/carers may be asked to collect the device. Concerns relating to the misuse of smart glasses will be managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy and Online Safety Policy.

Pupils will be educated on specific roles and responsibilities linked to owning and sharing on a media device, which will include looking at Online Safety as part of the Computing curriculum.

Pupils are educated on Digital Friendship, Cyber Bullying, Digital Citizenship, Media Choices, Digital Trails, Putting a STOP to Online Meanness and Watching Videos online. These, and many other curriculum themes, address the concept of an online media relationship with children at all ages and stages of development; with themes revisited for consolidation and the addition of new, age-appropriate aspects.

Mobile phone guidance specifically for parents and carers:

Mobile phones should only be used during school assemblies and production performances once SPECIFIC GUIDANCE has been shared from the member of school staff in charge of the event. In most cases we will stipulate that images MUST focus on your own child/ren and must NOT be shared via any form of social media.

Any parents and carers not adhering to these principles may be asked to leave the premises or will have the post referred to social media administration.

Links to other policies

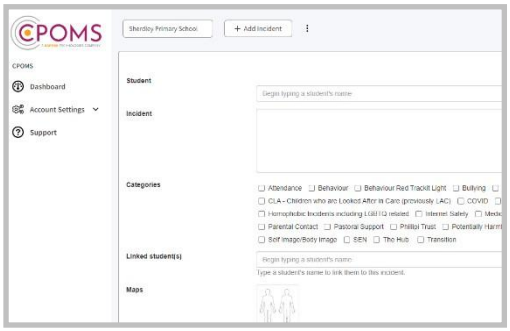
Sherdley Primary Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy links to the following school, Local Authority and Pan-Merseyside policies and procedures:

Positive Behaviour Policy	Code of Conduct
Low-Level Concerns Policy	Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Whistle Blowing and Confidential Reporting Policy	Procedure for managing allegations against people who work with children and young people
Health and Safety Policy/ Health Care Plans	Managing Medicines in School Policy
Risk Assessment Policy	Anti-Bullying Policy
E-Safety Policy	Attendance Policy
CLA and Previously CLA Policy	Mental Health Policy
Sherdley Staff Handbook	Guidance for Safe Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People
Recruitment and Selection Policy	

Appendix 1

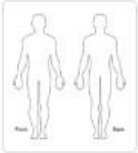
SHERDLEY PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AT ANY LEVEL



ANY member of staff should **record ANY concern**; no matter how small or 'insignificant' they feel it may be – every part of the jigsaw puzzle is important – and regardless of the origins of the concern – it could be from your own observation, something you hear, something another person mentions etc **using the school CPOMS system.**

Ensure that the person making the report is reassured, supported and never made to feel like they are creating a problem by making their report, nor that they should be ashamed of reporting.

Record using the **Body Map tool** any marks or bruising visible, or where a child indicates a site of physical chastisement – please make clear in the record whether a mark IS or IS NOT visible. Please maintain your own safety and if possible, examine marks in the presence of a second member of staff.



Please consider your wording and ensure you make **no value judgements**. Remain factual, but use description that accurately reflects any part of the incident you are recording – for example, if the child/parent was shaking, crying, looking down, scrunching up their jumper etc

IF YOU HAVE AN IMMEDIATE CONCERN FOR THE SAFETY AND WELFARE OF A CHILD, PLEASE RECORD THE INCIDENT ON CPOMS AND SEEK OUT THE DSL OR ONE OF THE DDSLS AND INFORM THEM THAT YOU HAVE MADE AN URGENT CPOMS RECORD.

CPOMS incidents are automatically forwarded to the DSL and DDSLs who will read the record and take appropriate action.

DSL &/or DDSL will request person recording the further action, such as clarification from further guidance themselves, which may include an outside agency for support. In these cases the DSL/DDSL will add other relevant staff into the CPOMS thread so that siblings can be monitored at the same level of detail. following CPOMS DSL/DDSL will include ANY RELEVENT STAFF into the threads.

DSL &/or DDSL will request no further action, but incident may suggest additional monitoring of the family. a parent, or will seek

DSL & DDSLs have a regular meeting, alongside the Safeguarding Team, to review CPOMS records.

Any which require further action or follow up will be done so at this termly review meeting

If further support is required the DSL/DDSLs will work together to gain consent (where necessary) in order to seek out Level 2, Level 3 or Level 4 support, following the Local Authority Safeguarding Children's Partnership system for referrals.23 The St Helens Description of Need Document will be used to help the DSL/DDSLs decide on what level of support/referral is appropriate; the results of the document may then form part of any subsequent school lead EHAT.

Appendix 2 – Categories and Definitions of Abuse

Abuse is defined as maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical, as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or by another child or children.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately hurting a child and causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts. Types of physical abuse include:

- Hitting with hands or objects
- Smacking
- Slapping or punching
- Kicking
- Shaking
- Throwing
- Poisoning
- Burning or scalding
- Biting and scratching
- Drowning
- Suffocating
- Fabricating or inducing symptoms* • Any other way of causing physical harm.

*Fabricated or induced illness (FII) is a rare yet serious form of child abuse. It occurs when a parent or carer exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child. FII is also known as “Munchausen’s syndrome by proxy” (not to be confused with Munchausen’s syndrome, where a person pretends to be ill or causes illness or injury to themselves).

It is important to remember that physical abuse is any way of intentionally causing physical harm to a child or young person.

Signs of physical abuse

It is normal for children to get bumps and bruises through everyday activities such as playing. This does not mean that they are subject to physical abuse. However, if a child regularly has injuries, if there seems to be a pattern to the injuries, the child discloses abuse or the explanation doesn’t match the injuries, then this is a strong indication that abuse may have taken place. It is vital that all marks and bruises are recorded using the Body Map on CPOMS, even if a reason is provided which explains the mark, in order to develop awareness of a wider pattern.

Physical abuse symptoms include:

- Bruises
- Broken or fractured bones
- Burns or scalds
- Bite marks
- Marks that look like a distinct object and/or shape

It can also include other injuries and health problems such as:

- Scarring
- The effects of poisoning, such as vomiting, drowsiness or seizures
- Breathing problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning

Head injuries in babies and toddlers can be signs of abuse so it’s important to be aware of these. Visible signs include:

- Swelling
- Bruising

- Fractures
- Being extremely sleepy or unconscious
- Breathing problems
- Seizures
- Vomiting
- Unusual behaviour, such as being irritable or not feeding properly

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It is sometimes referred to as psychological abuse. Emotional abuse is often a part of other kinds of abuse which means it can be difficult to spot the signs or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own.

Types of emotional abuse include:

- Conveying they are worthless, unloved, and inadequate or only valued in so far as they meet the needs of another person.
- Humiliation or constantly criticising a child
- Threatening, shouting at a child or calling them names
- Making the child subject of jokes, or using sarcasm to hurt a child
- Not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately 'silencing' them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- Not recognising a child's own individuality or trying to control their lives
- Blaming and scapegoating
- Inappropriate expectations for their age or development – including overprotection, pushing a child too far or not realising their limitations, or, having too limited impressions of what should be expected for their age and using this as a rationale for lack of development or opportunities.
- Making a child perform degrading acts
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of others such as domestic violence or abuse.
- Exposing a child to upsetting events such as drug taking
- Failing to promote a child's social development; not allowing them to have friends
- Persistently ignoring a child
- Never saying anything kind, expressing positive feelings or congratulating a child on success • Never showing any emotions in interactions with a child, also known as emotional neglect
- Serious bullying and causing the child to feel frightened or in danger.
- Exploitation or corruption of children
- Manipulating a child

Signs of emotional abuse

There might not be obvious physical signs of emotional abuse or neglect, and a child might not tell anyone what is happening until they have reached a 'crisis point'. Staff therefore need to be vigilant and know what signs and symptoms to look out for.

As children grow up, their emotions change. This means it can be challenging to tell if a child is being emotionally abused. Children who are being emotionally abused might:

- Seem unconfident or lack self-assurance
- Struggle to control their emotions
- Have difficulty making or maintaining relationships
- Act in a way that is inappropriate for their age

The signs of emotional abuse can also present differently depending on the age and developmental stage of the child.

Babies and toddlers (pre-school age children)

- Be overly affectionate to strangers or people they don't know well
- Seem unconfident, wary or anxious
- Do not have a close relationship or bond with their parent
- Be aggressive or cruel towards other children or animals

Signs in older children

- Use language you wouldn't expect them to know for their age
- Act in a way or know about things you wouldn't expect them to know for their age
- Struggle to control their emotions
- Have extreme outbursts
- Seem isolated from their parents
- Lack social skills
- Have few or no friends

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, developmental and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. This can also occur during pregnancy as a result of parental substance misuse. It is the most common form of child abuse.

There are 4 different types of neglect:

- **Physical neglect** – a child's basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter, are not met or they are not properly supervised or kept safe.
- **Educational neglect** – a parent doesn't ensure their child is given an education
- **Emotional neglect** – a child doesn't get the nurture and stimulation they need. This could be through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them.
- **Medical neglect** – a child isn't given proper health care. This includes dental care and refusing or ignoring medical recommendations.

Signs of neglect

Poor appearance and hygiene

- Being repeatedly or persistently smelly or dirty
- Being hungry or not given money for food
- Having persistently or repeatedly unwashed clothes
- Having the wrong clothing, such as no warm clothes in winter or ill-fitting shoes
- Having frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants

Health and development problems

- Anaemia
- Body issues such as poor muscle tone or prominent joints
- Medical or dental issues
- Missed medical appointments, such as for vaccinations
- Not given the correct medicines
- Poor language or social skills
- Regular illness or infections
- Repeated accidental injuries, often caused by a lack of supervision
- Skin issues such as sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm
- Chronic head lice
- Thin or swollen tummy
- Tiredness
- Untreated injuries
- Weight or growth issues

Housing and family issues

- Living in an unsuitable home environment, such as having no heating
- Being left alone for a long time
- Taking on the role of a carer for other family members

Change in behaviour

- Becoming clingy
- Becoming aggressive
- Being withdrawn, depressed or anxious
- Changes in eating habits
- Displaying obsessive behaviour
- Finding it hard to concentrate or take part in activities
- Missing school
- Showing signs of self-harm
- Using drugs or alcohol

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. A child might not understand what is happening or know that it is wrong. They may be afraid to tell someone what is going on. Sexual abuse can occur anywhere, including in person and online

There are two types of sexual abuse: **contact** and **non-contact** abuse.

Contact abuse is where an abuser makes physical contact with a child. This includes:

- Sexual touching, rubbing or kissing a child's body, whether they are clothed or not
- Using a body part or object to rape or penetrate a child
- Forcing a child to take part in sexual activities, including masturbation
- Making a child undress or touch someone else
- Any physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts, including touching, kissing and oral sex.

Non-contact abuse is where a child is abused without being touched by the abuser. This can be in person or online and includes:

- Exposing or flashing
- Involving children looking at or in the production of sexual images, including nudes and semi-nude images and videos
- Exposing a child to sexual acts
- Making a child watch sexual activities
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- Making a child masturbate
- Forcing a child to make, view or share child abuse images or videos
- Making, viewing or distributing child abuse images or videos
- Forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or conversations online or through a smartphone
- Grooming a child in preparation for abuse
- The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue and **all** staff should be aware of it – see section below for further important details.
- Upskirting is a form of non-contact sexual abuse.

Signs of sexual abuse

Emotional signs

- Avoid being alone with or frightened of people or a person they know
- Language or sexual behaviour you wouldn't expect them to know
- Having nightmares or bed-wetting
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Self-harm
- Changes in eating habits or developing an eating problem

Physical signs

- Bruises
- Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy

Child- on child Abuse

*"**All** staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school. ALL staff should be clear as to the school's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it."* **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026** *Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.*

Child-on-child abuse features physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse of a child/young person by their peers. Child-on-child abuse is often located within the neighbourhoods, schools, peer groups and families associated with the young people who are affected.

It can also take place online and through various forms of social media, including without the victim's initial knowledge.

All staff should understand that even if there are no reports at Sherdley, this does not mean that child-on-child abuse is not happening.

It is essential that **ALL** staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forwards to report it.

Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even when it appears relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

For this reason, we expect **ALL** staff to listen to children if they share a report of possible abuse. They should **NEVER** make the victim feel as if they are creating a problem by reporting their concern and **should not** be made to feel ashamed for making their concern known.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to the following, and it should be noted that there can be considerable overlap between these different types of child-on-child abuse.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may include biting, hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. This form of abuse may also include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse. There may be reasons why a child physically harms another, and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour (including whether it happened accidentally) before considering the action or sanction to be taken. Any physical incidents will be taken extremely seriously and will be dealt with in accordance with Sherdley Primary's Anti-Bullying and Positive Behaviour Policies.

Bullying

This includes cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying. It could also include initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

The term 'prejudice-related bullying' refers to a range of hurtful behaviour (physical, emotional or both) which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which relates to prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society. In particular, prejudices are to do with disabilities and special educational needs, ethnicity, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, gender identity and sexual identity. Any form of prejudiced behaviour will be taken extremely seriously and dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policy.

Sexual Violence KCSIE 2026, Part 5

It can include rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (which may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse) it may include consensual or non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos, could involve causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.

Sexual Harassment

This could be sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.

This may include abuse within an intimate personal relationship between children.

Risk Assessments

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

Impact on any siblings

It is important to understand intrafamilial harms and identify any necessary support for siblings following incidents of sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Upskirting is included in this category, which typically involves taking pictures under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

This part of the policy refers to how staff at Sherdley **should respond to all signs, reports and concerns** of childon-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of school, and/or online. All staff working at Sherdley are advised to maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'**, and this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face-toface (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

At Sherdley, we have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. It is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. It will never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “a part of growing up” or “boys being boys.”

At Sherdley we will **always** challenge physical behaviour, which may potentially be criminal in nature, such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting skirts. We will **never** dismiss or tolerate such behaviours, and all staff should be vigilant in ensuring that we do not normalise such types of behaviour.

We appreciate that children who are the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment, wherever it happens, may find the experience stressful and distressing. It could adversely affect their educational attainment, and this could be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator/s attend the same school.

Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be taken seriously, staff should be mindful that it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment, and it is more likely that it will be perpetrated by boys. Also, children with SEND are three times more likely to be abused than their peers.

All victims will be reassured that they are taken seriously, that they will be supported and kept safe.

Sexual Violence

This section of the policy refers to child-on-child sexual violence and in relation to sexual violence, we refer to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Sexual violence includes:

- Rape
- Assault by penetration
- Sexual assault – which involves intentionally touching another without consent. There is a wide range of behaviour covered under this heading. A single act of kissing or touching someone sexually without consent may still constitute sexual assault.
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent – this could include forcing another person to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party

In all of the above, the concept of consent is crucial.

Consent is having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent can be given to one type of activity but not another (known as conditional consent) and can be withdrawn at any time.

Children under the age of 13 can never consent to any form of sexual activity. The age of consent for sexual activity is 16. Any sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

Sexual harassment

This section of the policy refers to ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school, and in relation to child-on-child sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is likely to violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Sexual harassment can include, but is not restricted to:

- Sexual comments, such as telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
- Sexual jokes or taunting
- Physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes – it is important to consider when this behaviour may cross the line into sexual violence
- Displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- Upskirting (this is a criminal offence)
- Online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence and may include : consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images

and/or videos; sharing of unwanted explicit content; sexualised online bullying; unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; sexual exploitation, coercion and threats; coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they're not comfortable with online

Sexual harassment (as set out above) can create a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

Harmful sexual behaviour

We recognise that children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected too inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent.

Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. The term "harmful sexual behaviour" is a useful 'umbrella' and we use this term within Sherdley when making judgements based on individual cases.
Not all sexual behaviour displayed by children or young people is harmful. Showing some sexualised behaviours can be healthy and a normal part of child and adolescent development. The NSPCC guidance on healthy and harmful sexual behaviour can be found in Appendix 3.

Decisions on whether sexualised behaviour is potentially harmful should be made with reference to the NSPCC framework and the Brook Traffic Light Tool (which DSL and DDSLs at Sherdley have access to via recent training):

https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/category/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool

Professionals should also consult and utilise the **St Helens Policy, Procedures and Practice Guidance for Children and Young People (aged under 18) who display Harmful Sexual Behaviour'.**

Sexualised behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, more than 2 years older than the other, or if one is pre-pubescent and the other not.

We recognise that children displaying harmful sexualised behaviour may have experienced their own trauma or abuse and will be offered appropriate support.

Due to the concerning and sensitive nature around suspected Harmful Sexual Behaviour from a child or young person, as well as the need to keep the victim safe, advice will be sought from external agencies including Local Authority Children's Social Care. School will also work with families where appropriate, and directly with both the perpetrator and the victim (separately) to ensure that all children are kept safe and the harmful behaviour ceases. If the harmful behaviour continues, it may be necessary to take further action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the victim. This is in line with Sherdley Primary's Positive Behaviour Policy.

When victims make a report, it is vital that we explain the purpose of the law, which is in place to protect children rather than criminalise them, and to do this in a manner which avoids alarming or distressing the victim.

Staff receiving a report should never promise confidentiality as it is highly likely that guidance will need to be sought from others in order to address the incident. There is also a need to consider the implications of a case progressing through the criminal justice system and support, in so far as we are able to, anonymity. It is also important to consider the place of social media in facilitating the spread of rumours and exposing victims' identity.

A risk assessment should therefore be made, specific to a report of sexual violence. It will consider the victim, especially their protection and support; whether there have been other victims; the alleged perpetrator/s; all the other children (and if appropriate adults and staff) at the school; the time and location of the incident and any action required to make the location safer.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The statutory definition of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be found in the guidance document Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners (DfE 2017):

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

Indicators of child sexual exploitation may include:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation;
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks;
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work;
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late;
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls;
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections;
- Evidence of/suspicions of physical or sexual assault;
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups;
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers);
- Frequenting areas known for sex work;
- Concerning use of internet or other social media;
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

Potential vulnerabilities include:

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues.

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic abuse or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example);
- Recent bereavement or loss;
- Social isolation or social difficulties;
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality;
- Economic vulnerability;
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status;
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited;
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work;
- Having a physical or learning disability;
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories); and
- Sexual identity.

More information can be found in:

Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners (DfE 2017)

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Information about Child Criminal Exploitation can be found in KCSIE (2026) paragraphs 34 - 40 and Annex B pages 150 -151.

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

They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

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; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

It should be noted that CSE often overlaps with Child Criminal Exploitation, and perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse.

As with Child Criminal Exploitation, CSE is a form of abuse that occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and /or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence, which may include sexual threats.

How do we manage suspected cases of Child Sexual Exploitation, Sherdley Primary will follow **Pan-Merseyside Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Protocol** which is available on the St. Helens Safeguarding Children partnerships' website**:**

https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/assets/1/pan_merseyside_multi_agency_ce_protocol_march_2018.pdf

If CSE is suspected, the practitioner should complete a CE1 form (available on the St. Helens Safeguarding Children partnerships' website) and email it through to adultandchildrenteam@sthelens.gov.uk.

The CE1 form will be screened at a multi-agency 'Morning Meeting' where partners from People's Services, Health, Social Care, Police and Catch 22 will assess each case.

Catch 22 are a dedicated service currently commissioned within St. Helens to support children and young people as well as professionals in all aspects centring on Child Sexual Exploitation. More information, advice and guidance can be found on their website:

https://www.catch-22.org.uk/services/st-helens-missing-child-sexual-exploitation-service/

As with Child Sexual Exploitation, CCE is a form of abuse that occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and /or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence, which may include sexual threats.

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others.

As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals. They should be treated as victims despite the harm they may have caused, due to the fact that they have been coerced and forced into these activities.

The victim may be exploited even if the activity appears consensual (i.e. moving drugs, or the proceeds of drugs from one place to another).

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. Indicators may not be the same, and it is important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be a higher risk of sexual exploitation, especially for girls.

County Lines

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK – no specific distance or travel is required, and the actual crossing of a geographical boundary is not necessary. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. See KSCIE 2026 p151-152

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county line gangs can manufacture drug debt which needs to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for CSE and CCE detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Additional factors to consider would be:

- Children going missing and subsequently found in areas away from their home
- Children who have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (i.e. knife crime)
- Children who are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a ‘trap house or cuckooing’ or hotel rooms where there is drug activity.
- Children being exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’; where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection.

Cuckooing

Urban gangs establish a base in the market location, often by taking over homes of local vulnerable adults by force and/or coercion, in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing'. Urban gangs then use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money.

Children who are vague about places they frequent should be considered vulnerable based on the consideration of possible CCE, CSE including county lines activities

Trafficking

A person commits an offence if the person arranges or facilitated the travel of another person to exploit them. **It is irrelevant whether the exploited person, adult or child, consents to the travel.** A person may, in particular, arrange or facilitate another person's travel by recruiting, transporting or transferring, harbouring or receiving them, or transferring or exchanging control over them. 'Travel' means arriving in, or entering, any country; departing from any country and travelling within any country.

The same process for Child Sexual Exploitation should be followed for suspected or confirmed cases of Child Criminal Exploitation.

Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

Any concern should utilise the National Referral Mechanism (further details can be found using the link

(www.gov.uk)

Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed ONLY using a computer).

Cyber dependent crimes include:

- Unauthorised access to computers (illegal hacking)
- Denial of service attacks, or 'booting'
- Making, supplying or obtaining malware and viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence.

Children with particular skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

The Cyber Choices programme is a nationwide programme, supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency which aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing or being drawn into low level cyber-dependent offences and divert their skills to more positive use.

Honour Based Abuse

Honour Based Abuse is a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community. Although it is often perceived to be linked to religion, this is not a religious practice and is a form of child abuse when the victim is under the age of 18. However, any form of Honour Based Abuse, despite the age of the victim, is illegal. Honour based abuse can include, but is not exclusive to the following:

- Forced abortion and hymen repair
- Abduction and imprisonment
- Forced marriage
- 'Honour' suicide
- 'Honour' Violence

- ‘Honour’ coercion

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in the UK.

FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that the majority of cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

Risk factors for FGM include:

- low level of integration into UK society
- mother or a sister who has undergone FGM
- girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- a visiting female elder from the country of origin
- being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- talk about a ‘special’ procedure to become a woman

Symptoms of FGM

FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter out-of-school to visit an ‘at-risk’ country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM. Staff should not assume that FGM only happens outside the UK.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

- difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable.
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating. spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems.
- frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- prolonged or repeated absences from school or college, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (for example, withdrawal or depression) on the girl’s return
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.
- confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Key points:

- It is NOT a religious practice
- FGM occurs mostly to girls aged 5-8 years old; but up to around 15 • It has been a criminal offence in the United Kingdom since 1985.
- It has been an offence since 2003 to take girls abroad
- Criminal penalties include up to 14 years in prison

Reasons for this cultural practice include:

- Cultural identity – an initiation into womanhood
- Gender identity – moving from a girl to a woman – enhancing femininity
- Sexual control – reduce the woman’s desire for sex
- Hygiene/cleanliness – unmutilated women are regarded as unclean

Risk factors include:

- Low level integration into UK society
- Mother or sister who has undergone FGM
- Girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- A visiting female elder from the country of origin
- Being taken on a long holiday to the family's country of origin
- Talk about a 'special' event or procedure to 'become a woman'

High risk time

This procedure often takes place in the summer, as the recovery period for FGM can be 6 to 9 weeks. Schools should be alert to the possibility of FGM as a reason why a girl in a high-risk group is absent from school or where the family request a holiday or 'authorised absence' for just before or just after the summer school holidays.

Although it is difficult to identify girls before FGM takes place, where girls from these high-risk groups return from a long period of absence with symptoms of FGM, the police and social care must be informed immediately.

Process to identify pupils at risk of FGM

Sherdley Primary looks to unify the cultural backgrounds of pupils, risk factors and possible symptoms to form a process to effectively identify pupils who may be at risk of FGM. Sherdley Primary will always work with additional agencies such as the Police, Social Care and Children's Services in order to prevent any harm from being caused to any pupil who may be at risk of Female Genital Mutilation.

Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers.The Srious Crime Act 2015 sets out duty on a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.

Under Section 5B(11)(a) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, "teacher" means, in relation to England, a person within section 141A(1) of the Education Act 2002 (persons employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools and other institutions in England.

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Post FGM symptoms include:

- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- Spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet
- Unusual behaviour after a lengthy absence
- Reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations
- Asking for help, but may not be explicit about the problem, due to embarrassment or fear.

Longer term problems include:

- Difficulties urinating or incontinence
- Frequent or chronic vaginal, pelvic or urinary infections
- Menstrual problems
- Kidney damage and possible failure
- Cysts and abscesses
- Pain when having sex
- Infertility
- Complications during pregnancy and childbirth
- Emotional and mental health problems

It is mandatory for any cases for FGM to be reported directly to the Police. All staff, visitors and people who come into contact with children at Sherdley Primary must adhere to this.

Forced Marriage

There is a clear difference between 'forced marriage' and 'arranged marriage'. Arranged marriages have worked well in society for many years. An arranged marriage is when families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Since February 2023, the age of consent for marriage in England is 18. The Marriage and Civil Partnership Act 2022 means 16 and 17 year olds may not marry or enter civil partnership, even with parental consent.

A forced marriage is when one or both parties do not consent to the marriage, and people are forced into marriage against their will. Forced marriage is an abuse of human rights. Both physical and emotional abuse may be used to coerce people into the marriage.

It is an offence, under the Marriage and Civil Partnership Act to cause a child under the age of 18 to enter into a marriage under any circumstances.

Potential warning signs or indicators that a child is at risk of Forced Marriage:

- Absence and persistent absence
- Request for extended leave of absence and failure to return from visits to country of origin
- Fear about forthcoming holidays
- Surveillance by siblings or cousins at school
- Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality
- Poor exam results
- Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility
- Removal from a day centre of a person with a physical or learning disability
- Not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities
- Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger
- Prevented from going on to further/higher education

Sherdley Primary acknowledges that persistent absence from school or requests for leave of absence can be an indicator of a potential safeguarding risk. The issues surrounding Forced Marriage link directly to the school Attendance Policy; any absences from school will be followed up in accordance with this policy. This is to ensure that we make every effort to know a child's whereabouts and make sure they are safe to the best of our ability.

What to do if you have a concern regarding Forced Marriage?

Forced Marriage is an offence and if this is happening to a child under the age of 18 it is considered to be child abuse. If you suspect that a child or young person is being forced to marry then you must share your concerns with the Designated Senior Lead (DSL) who will make appropriate contact with Children's Social Care and/or the Police. The Forced Marriage Unit can be contacted for advice and help in making this referral, either by phone on **020 7008 0151** or by email on **fmu@fco.gov.uk**.

Radicalisation and Extremism

Sherdley Primary has a duty under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to prevent children and young people from being radicalised.

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

Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy (2010) as:

"Vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas".

Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:

The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:

- Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;
- Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;
- Encourage other serious criminal activity to seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts; or
- Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK

Terrorism

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'.

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

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat MUST be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

We use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet.

Staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

We are committed to ensuring that our pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching the school's core values alongside the fundamental British Values supports quality teaching and learning, whilst making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society.

Recognising Extremism

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes
- glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.)
- secretive behaviour online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views

- advocating violence towards others

Indicators of vulnerability include:

- **Identity crisis** – the pupil is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society
- **Personal crisis** – the pupil may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low selfesteem; they may have disassociated from their existing friendship groups and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging.
- **Personal circumstances** – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting a pupil's country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy.
- **Unmet aspirations** – the pupil may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life.
- **Experiences of criminality** – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment and poor resettlement/reintegration.
- **Special Educational Needs** – the pupil may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with other, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motives of others.

(This is not an exhaustive list, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purpose of violent extremism).
Sherdley Primary's work reflects the Government's PREVENT strategy in their approach to radicalisation and extremism. Elements of the PREVENT strategy relating to school and education are covered in annual Safeguarding training for all staff, and the PREVENT training module is undertaken as a refresher update at least every 3 years

If a concern is raised about a child or young person being radicalised or being exposed to extremism, the DSL/DDSL will complete a **Prevent Referral and Assessment Form** which is available on the St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

- The single point of contact for PREVENT in school is Mrs Katie Bennett – Deputy Headteacher and DSL, or in her absence either Mrs Jill Stroud or Mrs Catherine Eccleston, who are the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Missing Children and Young People

Going missing is a dangerous activity and puts a child or young person at immediate risk. This section reflects the guidance set out in **St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership's Missing Children Procedure**, which is available on the St. Helens Safeguarding Partnership website.

This information is also in line with the Government guidance - **Children who run away or go missing from home or care (2014).**

There is a national definition of what constitutes a missing person (including a child):

"Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another".

In St Helens, anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.

The immediate risks associated with going missing include:

- No means of support or legitimate income – leading to high risk activities;
- Involvement in criminal activities including gang crime
- Victim of abuse
- Victim of crime, for example through sexual assault and exploitation or through gang activities
- Risk of trafficking
- Alcohol/substance misuse

- Deterioration of physical and mental health • Missing out of school and education
- Increased vulnerability.

Longer term risks include:

- Long term drug dependency / alcohol dependency
- Crime
- Homelessness
- Disengagement from education
- Child sexual exploitation
- Poor physical and/or mental health.

The police should always be notified immediately when a child or young person goes missing, regardless of what setting they go missing from.

Preventing children and young people from going missing

Any missing episode is potentially serious; one run away is one too many. Therefore prevention work relating to children going missing is of paramount importance. The prevention of children and young people going missing required an integrated multi-agency approach to vulnerable children and young people. Prevention strategies need to include the prevention of children going missing from home and care and will include:

- Awareness and training for all professionals;
- Awareness and safety sessions for young people via curriculum opportunities;
- Multi-agency assessment procedures, including Early Help, should include the risk indicators for running away;
- Consistent implementation of this protocol across all agencies;
- Monitoring and reporting is missing from home, care and education incidents;
- Support to parents and carers;
- Every individual has a duty to inform the authorities if a child is missing.
- Effective interventions are best achieved by partnership working, information sharing, problem-solving and performance management.

Missing from care

Looked after children can also be 'absent' in that they are away from their placement, their whereabouts are known, but they should not be there. If a child is categorised by Merseyside Police as 'absent', the person calling the police will be asked if there are safeguarding concerns or risks, to inform the Police response. Professional should contact the Police if there is a change of circumstances that would increase risk level or if the person returns.

Merseyside Police Missing Persons Policy states that **"All children aged 12 years and under will be categorised as 'missing' and not categorised as 'absent' under any circumstances".**

If Merseyside Police have a CSE or CCE flag recorded on their systems, or have any intelligence that a child is at risk of CSE or CCE, they must automatically be recorded as 'missing' and never 'absent'.

With regard to children who are Looked After by another Local Authority and placed within the Merseyside boundary, they remain the responsibility of the placing Local Authority.

Regardless of how long a child has been missing, upon their return an Independent Return Interview should be offered to all children and young people who have been missing from home

Further information regarding children and young people who go missing from home, or children and young people who go missing who are already open to children's social care, can be found in the **St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership's Missing Children Procedure**

Private Fostering Arrangement – P.F.A

A private fostering arrangement is one made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (or under 18 if the child has a disability) by someone who is not a close relative, in their own home, for 28 days or more. A close relative is defined as a parent, step-parent, grandparent, sibling, uncle or aunt (by blood or marriage), and includes half-siblings and stepparents. It does not include cousins, greataunts/uncles, or great-grandparents.

Private foster carers may include extended family members (e.g. cousins), family friends, the parents of a friend, or someone previously unknown to the child's family. While many privately fostered children are well cared for, they are considered a potentially vulnerable group and must be monitored by the local authority to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Examples of private fostering arrangements include:

- Children sent to the UK from overseas for education or healthcare
- Teenagers living with a friend's family due to family breakdown or conflict
- Children staying with another family due to bereavement, parental separation, or unsociable working hours
- Overseas students living with host families during term time or holidays

Parents and private foster carers have a legal duty to notify the local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement begins. Failure to do so is a criminal offence.

Education and other professionals have a statutory duty to inform the Local Authority and Children's Social Care if they become aware of a private fostering arrangement and believe it has not been, or will not be, reported by the parent or carer. If a member of staff suspects or becomes aware of such an arrangement, they must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will ensure the appropriate referral is made.

Cyber bullying

Cyberbullying includes the use of phones and computers/electronic devices to harass, threaten or intimidate someone and it can include; instant messaging; email; chat rooms; voice notes or social networking sites such a Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. It may constitute a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Outside of the immediate support children or young people may require in these instances, Sherdley Primary may have no choice but to involve the police to investigate certain situations. Many incidents may occur outside of school hours; however we understand that any situations around cyber-bullying will have an impact on the child's wellbeing at school, especially if the perpetrator(s) also attends. Sherdley Primary works hard to provide a PSHE, SMSC, Computing and safeguarding curriculum that encompasses online safety and helps our pupils deal with any concerns they may have.

In cases of sharing nudes and semi-nudes (previously sexting), government guidelines will be consulted and implemented. The website is as follows:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759007/6_2939_SP_NCA_Sexting_In_Schools_FINAL_Update_Jan17.pdf

Further information around sharing nudes and semi-nudes (previously sexting)can be found in the next section of this policy.

Initiation / Hazing

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

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

humiliation, embarrassment, abuse and harassment. Although it is not subjective to males, it should be noted that boys may be more at risk of such forms of abuse.

Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both young people who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and must include:

- Imbalance of power – young people who bully use their power, such a physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity, to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition – bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen again.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Responses

All disclosures, claims or allegations of child-on-child abuse will be investigated immediately and as thoroughly as possible. It will be important to gain accounts from all those involved, including the victim, perpetrator and any witnesses. Previous records of incidents will be looked at to determine whether there are any patterns of behaviour and the persistency of the issue. Once the evidence has been collated, a judgement and outcome will be decided based on the information and evidence gathered. The response will be dependent upon the nature and severity of the incident. However, Sherdley Primary has set responses to manage and support both the victim and the perpetrator.

For the young person who has been harmed:

The appropriate support required depends on the individual young person. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one-to-one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends, in which case it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future.

If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/ relationships with other young people or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on cyber bullying, relationship abuse etc. It may be that through the continued curriculum of PSHE that certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently, subsequently developing children's understanding of these topics.

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

For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour:

In this circumstance it is important to find out why the young person has behaved in a harmful manner. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary. Particular support from identified services may be necessary through Early Help and the young person may require additional support from family members.

If there is any form of ongoing criminal investigation it may be that the young person cannot be educated onsite until the investigation has concluded. In such circumstances, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education whilst off site. Even following the conclusion of any investigation, the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi-agency response to ensure that the needs of

the young person and the risks towards others are measured proportionately by all of those agencies involved including the young person and their parents/carers. This may mean additional supervision of the young person or protective strategies if they feel at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

After care

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

Minimising the risk

As with all forms of abuse, preventative measure should be taken to avoid any peer on peer abuse occurring. This includes the following:

- Ensuring that safeguarding is taught as part of the curriculum across all key stages and year groups
- That any lower level incidents of bullying etc. are dealt with immediately and effectively in order to ensure they do not escalate
- That children who have vulnerability indicators of either being a victim or a perpetrator are identified early and subsequently supported.
- That vulnerability indicators are clearly identified and recognised, such as mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, learning difficulties and disabilities, and previous abuse suffered.
- That all staff have training on Anti-Bullying, provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance, which is updated regularly
- That school is a safe and caring environment where children and young people feel confident to express their concerns at the earliest stages.

Record keeping

It is important that school staff keep accurate and comprehensive records of any bullying or child-on-child abuse incidents that take place. This is important for the following reasons:

- To hold evidence of incidents so their frequency, nature and severity can be assessed to determine the appropriate action
- To spot trends and to see whether there are particular issues that seem to be more prevalent within the school and therefore need specific intervention
- To providing supporting documentation for any investigation including criminal investigations
- To ensure compliance with child protection procedures
- To provide evidence of outcome of any incidents to ensure they have been dealt with effectively
- To ensure effective monitoring procedures.
- To ensure accurate data can be shared with, and challenged by, the Governing Body.

Child-on-child abuse can be and is as damaging as any form of abuse. All incidents will be taken extremely seriously and dealt with in the same approach as other allegations of abuse. Child-on-child abuse should never be tolerated under any circumstance and should not be passed off as ‘banter’, ‘just having a laugh’ or ‘part of growing up’. All children have the right to feel safe with their peers and should be protected accordingly. Any incidents of bullying will be dealt with in line with the school’s Positive Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding and responding to young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. For many young people, their relationships extend beyond their family such as within their neighbourhoods, in their schools and online. These relationships can unfortunately sometimes feature violence and abuse.

Parents and carers can have little influence over these contexts and therefore can have little impact on a young person’s experiences of extra-familial abuse. This abuse subsequently undermines the parent-child relationship, which is in itself, a protective factor for most children and young people.

KCSIE (2026),

‘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 abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.’

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice for education settings working with children and young people.‘**’**

Updated March 2024 **Definition:**

This advice uses the term ‘sharing nudes and semi-nudes’ to mean 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.

Many children have access to technology and devices such as tablets and mobile phones. It is our responsibility as parents, carers and educators to ensure that children are kept safe online and that they aware of risks.

Making, possessing and distributing any imagery of someone under 18 which is ‘indecent’ is illegal. This includes imagery of yourself if you are under 18.

It will never be out intention to criminalise children and young people, but rather to protect them and prevent any harm coming to them. Any incident involving youth produced sexual imagery will be responded to in accordance with ‘Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice for education settings working with children and young people **’** guidance. Any incidents of sharing nudes or semi nudes will be judged on a case by case basis; that is that advice will be sought from Children’s Social Care, the child’s history and vulnerability indicators will be factored in, as well as the nature of the incident. Response and intervention could range from school based intervention work or other early help initiatives to a completion of a referral to social care.

Children under 13 are given extra protection from sexual abuse under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This law makes it clear that sexual activity with a child under 13 is never acceptable, and that children of this age can never legally give consent to engage in sexual activity**.** Any situation involving children under 13 and youth produced sexual imagery must be taken seriously as potentially being indicative of a wider safeguarding or child protection concern or as being problematic sexual behaviour.

No adult in school will view any indecent images or material. Any evidence of sexting or disclosures will be immediately referred to the Police and/or Children’s Social Care. It is not up to school to investigate this further and any investigations will be conducted accordingly by the Police and Children’s Social Care.

Responding to Incidents Involving Nudes and Semi-Nudes

In line with paragraph 487 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026*, our school follows the guidance provided by the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) in *Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people* (March 2024). We also adhere to the latest recommendations from the National Crime Agency (NCA), CEOP, and the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) regarding *Child sexual abuse material generated by artificial intelligence* (June 2026).

Any incident involving the sharing of nudes or semi-nudes, whether consensual or non-consensual, is treated as a safeguarding concern. These cases are managed sensitively and proportionately, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) taking responsibility for assessing the risk, supporting the child or young person involved, and determining whether a referral to children’s social care or the police is necessary. Staff are trained to respond appropriately and understand the importance of not viewing or forwarding such images.

We ensure that clear reporting procedures are in place and that pupils know how to seek help. Our approach prioritises the wellbeing of the child, avoids criminalising young people unnecessarily, and ensures that any AIgenerated content is recognised and dealt with in accordance with national guidance.

Upskirting

Upskirting typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks in order to obtain sexual gratification or to cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence and anyone, of any gender, can be a victim. The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12th April 2019.

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

(a) physical or sexual abuse;

(b) violent or threatening behaviour;

(c) controlling or coercive behaviour;

(d) economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and

(e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.

People are 'personally connected' when they are, or have been married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. If the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives.

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

(The definition can be found here: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021 /17/part/1/enacted)

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

The National Domestic Abuse helpline can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children.

Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, the police and/or schools should make a referral to local authority children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare. Operation Encompass provides an advice and helpline service for all staff members from educational settings who may be concerned about children who have experienced domestic abuse. The helpline is available 8am to 1pm, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990 (charged at local rate).]

See Operation Encompass website: https://www.operationencompass.org/

Sherdley Primary adheres to 'The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR which 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.'

Appendix 3 – NSPCC Healthy and Harmful Sexual Behaviour

The stages of normal sexual behavior

There are 4 phases of childhood sexual development. Just like every other part of growing up, some children mature sooner or later than others. Children with developmental delays may not stick to these age guides. If a parent or carer is worried about anything they can speak to a health professional about it.

Below are some examples of **healthy and age-appropriate** sexual behavior :

Infancy from 0 to 4 years Even at this stage, sexual behaviour is beginning to emerge through actions like: • Kissing and hugging • Showing curiosity about private parts • Talking about private body parts and using words like poo, willy and bum • Playing “house” or “doctors and nurses” type games with other children • Touching, rubbing or showing off their genitals or masturbating as a comforting habit
Young children from 5 to 9 years As children get a little older, they become more aware of the need for privacy while also • Kissing and hugging • Showing curiosity about private parts but respecting privacy • Talking about body parts and sometimes showing them off • Trying to shock by using words like poo, willy and bum • Using swear and sex words they have heard other people say • Playing “house” or “doctors and nurses” type games with other children • Touching, rubbing or showing others their private parts
Pre-adolescents from 10 to 12 years Children are getting more curious about sex and sexual behaviour through: • Kissing, hugging and ‘dating’ other children • Being interested in other people’s body parts, relationships and sexuality • Using sexual language and talking about sex with friends • Looking for sexual pictures or online porn • Masturbating in private and experimenting sexually with the same age group
Adolescents from 13 to 16 years As puberty kicks in, sexual behaviour becomes more private with; • Kissing, hugging, dating and forming longer-lasting relationships • Being interested in and asking questions about body parts, relationships and sexuality • Using sexual language and talking about sex with friends • Looking for sexual pictures and online porn • Masturbating in private and experimenting sexually with the same age group

How to react to sexualised behaviour

Learning about sex and sexual behaviour is a normal part of a child’s development. It will help them as they grow up and as they start to make decisions about relationships. By knowing what is ‘normal’ at each particular stage you can be ready for what to expect, even though it might seem a little uncomfortable at times.

The way you respond is important.

If you are too disapproving or imply that sex shouldn't be spoken about then your child may be less likely to come to you with any questions or worries they may have.

Of course, this won't be easy for everyone, especially if your child's behaviour seems shocking or morally wrong to you. Try to keep calm. Your body language and tone can make a difference. The way you react can affect how comfortable your child will feel about talking to you about these things in the future.

APPENDIX 4 – INFORMATION SHARING

The school may, from time to time, be required to share personal information about its staff or pupils with other organisations, mainly the LA, other schools and educational bodies, and potentially children's services. **[Sherdley Data Protection Policy, 2024]**

In all cases where information is shared and stored, Sherdley Primary School will endeavor to ensure that the information is:

- Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to individuals
- Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes; further processing for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes shall not be considered to be incompatible with the initial purposes
- Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed
- Accurate and, where necessary, kept up-to-date; every reasonable step must be taken to ensure that personal data that is inaccurate, having regard to the purposes for which it is processed, is erased or rectified without delay

In line with Local Authority recommendations, information to be shared at Core Gr0oups/FAMs/LAC reviews or Child Protection conferences should be shared with parents beforehand.

Additional copies are always destroyed.

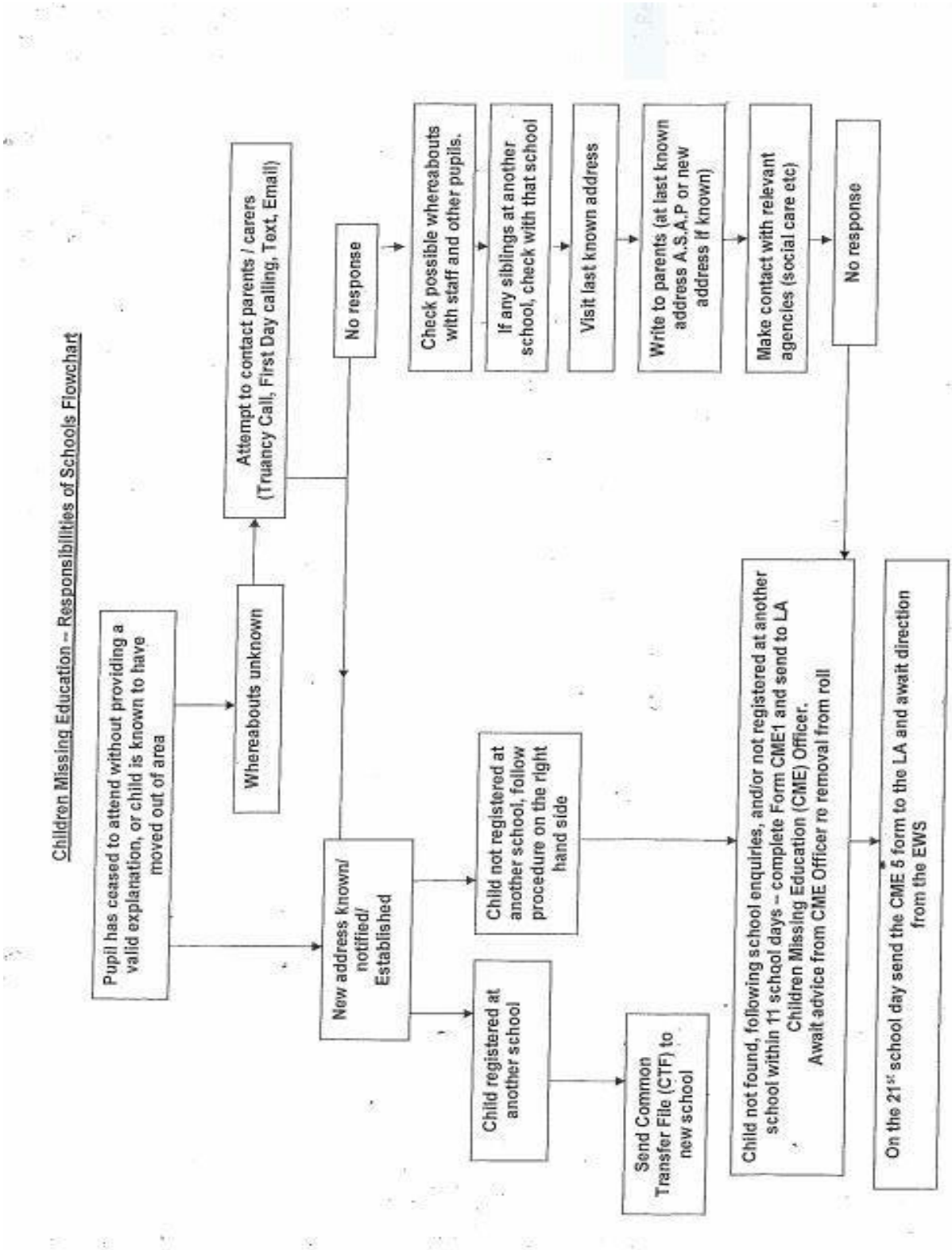
APPENDIX 5 - Graduated Approach Stages for Behaviour / SEND / Safeguarding Concerns

In order to ensure that any and all concerns are responded to efficiently, a graduated approach has been implemented at Sherdley Primary School. The following 5 stages describe how we will look into and deal with any concerns. All concerns should be responded to in a timely manner and recorded on the school's CPOMS system.

Stage 1 – Class Teachers	
Class teacher to record any concerns on CPOMS (actions to be also added) and follow up agreed actions. If unresolved, this must be passed onto relevant staff in Stage 2 immediately.	Include the following: • The incident / class teachers' action /LSAs action • Talk to the child / talk to parents & record outcomes • Agree timescales and record • Possible resolution and outcomes / next steps • If unresolved move to Stage 2
Stage 2 – Phase Leaders EY – Mrs Roberts / KS1 – Mrs Fleming / Lower KS2 – Mr Hughes / Upper KS2 – Miss James	
Escalation to Key Stage Leader (or another KS Leader if stage 2 was a leader). If unresolved, this must be passed onto relevant staff in Stage 3 immediately.	• Contact parents and discuss the previous stage • Arrange follow-up meeting or phone call • Record resolution and outcomes • If a SEND concern, escalate to Mrs. Stroud • If unresolved move to Stage 3
Stage 3 – Deputy Head Mrs Bennett Assistant Headteachers – Mrs Stroud/SENCO, Mr Davies	
If behaviour is SEND related, please contact Mrs Stroud. For Safeguarding and/or multiple concerns escalate to Mrs Bennett. If unresolved, this must be passed onto relevant staff in Stage 4 immediately.	• Review previous stages • Communicate with parents and arrange a meeting to discuss • Arrange follow-up meeting or phone call • Record resolution and outcomes • If unresolved move to Stage 4
Stage 4 – Headteacher – Mr Gawne	
Escalation to Headteacher – Mr Gawne	• Review previous stages • Meet with parents and discuss • Record next steps • Arrange follow-up meeting or phone call • Record resolution and outcomes • If unresolved provide parents with a copy of the school's Concerns and Complaints Policy and move to Stage 5
Stage 5 - Governors	
Implement the Concerns and Complaints Policy	• Parents to complete a concerns and complaints form that will then require the policy to be implemented

***NB* - At any point in the above stages should there be a risk of significant harm a Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed immediately.**

APPENDIX 6 – CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION – RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOLS FLOWCHART



APPENDIX 7

NEGLECT AND ANTI-BULLYING SCHOOL POLICY APPENDIX 2024

[PRODUCED AND CIRCULATED BY HEATHER ADDISON OF THE ST HELENS SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING TEAM WITH RECOMMENDATION FOR ALL SCHOOLS TO ADOPT/ADD TO EXISTING SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOLLOWING THE OUTCOME AND FINDINGS OF A SERIOUS CASE REVIEW LINKED TO A YOUNG PERSON IN ST HELENS]

Introduction

For all children, learning about relationships and making friends is a key part of their development. Conflict resolution, problem solving and maintaining friendships is all part of this journey. However, unfortunately for some children, they find themselves being the victim of bullying, whether this is face to face or online.

Bullying is a complex yet real issue. As with any displayed behaviour, it is important we understand what the child or young person is trying to communicate to us. Bullying is always unacceptable, and should never be tolerated, however by addressing underlying causes, we stand a better chance of making sustainable changes and ensuring our children have happy and healthy relationships.

Context and Rationale

This appendix has been created for schools following key learning from St Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership. Neglect is a prevalent issue across St Helens and remains a key priority area for the Partnership.

Neglect can have devastating consequences on a child's life, including on their relationships. If a child has not been nurtured or had the love and care that all children deserve, they can find themselves at risk of being bullied, or displaying bullying behaviours themselves.

Victims

Neglect may increase the risk of a child becoming a victim of bullying. This could be because :

- The child looks unkempt (i.e. unclean including unclean odour, poor dental hygiene, inappropriate clothing)
- A neglected child may (but not always) come from a low-income family and therefore may not be able to keep up with social pressures of having certain clothing/items
- The young person may not have been shown love, care or warmth. This may mean that they were not shown the appropriate way to interact with other people, making it harder for them to do so in day to day life
- A child who is neglected may have low self-esteem or anxiety which may make them vulnerable to being bullied
- A child who is severely neglected may develop additional learning or physical needs, as the brain has not developed properly. Children with special educational needs and disabilities can be at an increased risk of being bullied.
- A child who is tired or hungry may behave differently, as their basic needs have not been met, and this will affect how they can function

Children who display bullying behaviours

Neglect may also increase the risk of a child displaying bullying behaviours to their peers. This could be because :

A child who is severely neglected may develop additional learning or physical need, as the brain has not developed properly. This could include social, emotional and communication difficulties which may impact on friendships

- A child who has experienced neglect may lack the social skills to make friends. They may also have witnessed domestic abuse which can also distort their view on what a healthy relationship looks like
- In addition, the consequential feeling of loneliness may cause them to present themselves as a more dominant force to other children
- A child who has been neglected can feel anxious and out of control; they may therefore exert power over others to bring back the feeling of control
- For any child who experiences abuse, including neglect, they may find themselves in 'survival mode'. The trauma they experience may place them in a state of heightened awareness (fight or flight) that can cause them to display instinctive irrational reactions, rather than the regulated response we often guide our children to make

Opposing views

There may be situations where there are opposing views as to whether a child is a victim or the one displaying the bullying behaviours. In these situations it is important to not lose sight of the potential root causes of the behaviour. All incidents should be investigated thoroughly, and an impartial, evidence-based conclusion decided. However, it may be that following the outcome of the investigation, both the victim and the child displaying the bullying behaviours will need support.

'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.'