2025-2026

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APPENDIX A:
The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

1 MANAGING REFERRALS:

1.1 Refer all safeguarding cases, including Early Help, to the **Integrated Front Door (IFD)** and to the Police if a crime may have been committed. (IFD@wirral.gov.uk)

1.2 Identify any safeguarding issues relating to individual children, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

1.3 Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff members on matters of child protection and safeguarding, including Contextual Safeguarding.

1.4 Escalate inter-agency concerns and disagreements about a child's wellbeing. Further information can be found here: https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/10-2-multi-agency-escalation-procedure/

1.5 Have responsibility to ensure there is at least one key adult for 'Operation Encompass*' and the point of contact for Child Exploitation. *Guiding principles of the scheme are here https://www.operationencompass.org/school-participation An annual information letter to be sent to parents. All downloadable documents are here: OE - Resources for Schools . A generic safeguarding email address has been set up to ensure continuity. A key worker completes the online Key Adult Training annually. Further information on Wirral Operation Encompass can be found through this link https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/operation-encompass-information-for-schools/

1.6 To ensure that the Local Authority are notified if children are persistently absent or https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education Including children who are 'absent' from education, particularly on repeat occasions or for prolonged periods. Or those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education'.

2 RECORD KEEPING:

2.1 Keep written (or online) records of Safeguarding and welfare concerns and ensure a stand-alone file is created as necessary for children with safeguarding concerns

2.2 Schools should have at least two emergency contacts for every child in the school in case of emergencies, and in case there are welfare concerns at the home.

2.3 Maintain a chronology of significant incidents for each child with safeguarding concerns, including a record of decisions made and the reasons for those decisions.

2.4 Ensure such records are kept confidentially and securely and separate from the child's educational record.

2.5 Where children leave the school or college, the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child arrives. The designated safeguarding lead should ensure secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. For schools, this should be transferred separately from the main pupil file. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCO's) or the named persons with oversight for special educational needs and disability (SEND) in a college, are aware as required.

3 INTER-AGENCY WORKING AND INFORMATION SHARING:

3.1 Co-operate and comply with Children's Social Care for enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

3.2 Advocate that the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe; and this includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf

3.3 Complete reports and attend, or ensure other relevant staff members attend, child protection conferences, core group meetings and other multi-agency meetings, as required.

3.4 Liaise with other agencies working with the child, share information as appropriate and contribute to assessments.

3.5 The school's information sharing policy is located in the CPOMS Library and refers to confidentiality in line with 'Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services' (DfE, 2018).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66320b06c084007696fca731/Info_sharing_advice_content_May_2024.pdf

4 TRAINING:

4.1 Undertake appropriate annual training, **(updated every two years for DSL's)**, in order to

- be able to recognise signs of abuse and how to respond to them, including special circumstances such as child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, fabricated or induced illness
- understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, e.g. WSCP thresholds of need, preventative education and the local offer
- have a working knowledge of how the local authority conducts initial and review child protection (CP) case conferences and contribute effectively to these; and
- be alert to the specific needs of children in need (as specified in section 17 of the Children Act 1989), those with special educational needs, pregnant teenagers, young carers, those who are privately fostered, vulnerable to exploitation, racialisation and subject to listening or hearing to Domestic Abuse

4.2 Ensure each member of staff has read and understands the school's Child Protection - Safeguarding policy and procedures, including providing induction on these matters to new staff members. Induction and training must include the school's behaviour policy and the school's procedures for managing children who are Missing in Education , or 'unexplainable and
or/persistent absences from education', as well as the staff code of conduct, and the child protection policy, dealing with disclosures and managing allegations processes.

4.3 Organise face-to-face whole-school Safeguarding training for all staff members at least **every three years**. Ensure staff members who miss the training receive it by other means, e.g. by joining another school's training. The DSL must provide all staff members with safeguarding updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. The Link to access safeguarding training via Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) is: https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/safeguarding-training-for-schools/

4.4 All staff should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include the:

- Child Protection & Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct)
- Safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; and
- Role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

Best practice would also see staff and leaders reading https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2 as it contains examples of the different types of safeguarding issues.

4.5 Ensure the school allocates time and resources every year for relevant staff members to attend training and receive continuous professional development opportunities.

4.6 Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any action the school takes to protect them.

4.7 Maintain accurate records of staff recruitment, induction, ongoing training and continual professional development (CPD) relating to safeguarding.

WSCP School / College / Educational establishment training courses can be found here:

https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/schools/

5 AWARENESS RAISING:

5.1 Ensure the school's or college's child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately.

5.2 Ensure the school's or college's Child Protection & Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this.

5.3 Ensure the Child Protection & Safeguarding policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school or college in this; and

5.4 Link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements. https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/

6 QUALITY ASSURANCE:

6.1 Monitor the implementation of and compliance with policy and procedures, including periodic audits of Safeguarding and welfare concerns files (at a minimum once a year).

6.2 Complete an audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements at frequencies specified by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership. Schools complete the 175-audit page here: https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/section-11-175-audit/

6.3 Provide regular reports, to the governing body detailing changes and reviews to policy, training undertaken by staff members and the number of children with child protection plans and other relevant data.

6.4 Take lead responsibility for remedying any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in Safeguarding arrangements.

7 SUPERVISION AND REFLECTION:

7.1 Working to ensure children and young people are protected from harm requires sound professionals judgements to be made. It is demanding work that can be distressing and stressful. It is therefore essential that staff involved in this work have access to advice and a robust process of reflection/ supervision to help them reflect upon and review their work.

7.2 The school will have a framework for providing an opportunity to staff who are working directly with vulnerable young people, particularly those who are being managed on a child protection, child in need or team around the family plan, to have regular access to an appropriate manager to talk through and reflect on their involvement with the child's case. A guidance document published by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership for undertaking safeguarding reflection is published on the WSCP website and can be accessed here:

https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/

APPENDIX B:
Safeguarding Procedure

1 DEFINITIONS:

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

1.2 **Children** are any people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday; a 16-year-old, whether living independently, in further education, in the armed forces or in hospital, is a child and is entitled to the same protection and services as anyone younger. KCSIE now applies to providers of post 16 education as set out Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021

1.3 **Child protection** is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and refers to activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, or significant harm is suggested.

1.4 **Early help** means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life.

1.5 **Harm** is ill treatment or impairment of health and development, including impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

1.6 **Safeguarding children** is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined as:

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

School and college staff are particularly important, as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

All staff must be aware safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults, harassment and sexting. Staff should be clear as to the school or college's policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse; and on how the risk of child-on-child abuse is being minimised, how suspected abuse will be recorded and investigated; as well as how the victims and perpetrators will be supported. More support

can be found: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people

It is important that schools record incidents across the whole spectrum of sexual violence, sexual harassment, and harmful sexualised behaviours so that they can understand the scale of the problem in their own schools and make appropriate plans to reduce it. For more guidance go to https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

All such incidents should be immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or equivalent and managed in line with your setting's child protection policies. Victims of harm should be supported by the school's pastoral system.

A bespoke helpline for children and young people who've experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals that need support and guidance. If you are concerned about something, you can contact the NSPCC helpline Report Abuse in Education on 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk

1.7 **Significant harm** is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in the family in the best interests of the child. Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 states 'where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.'

1.8 Early help - Any child may benefit from Early Help , but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care,
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child.

2 CATEGORIES OF ABUSE:

2.1 **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

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

2.2 **Neglect**: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers);
- or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Educational neglect is also considered: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/neglect/

Neglect is the most common reason for a child to be the subject of a child Protection Plan in the UK and research from the NSPCC tells us that 1 in 7 secondary school age children and 1 in 20 children under 11 in the UK have been neglected at some point. To help combat neglect of children the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership has developed and published its multi-agency Neglect Strategy (June 2023): Cherish – Wirral's Neglect Strategy

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

2.4 **Sexual abuse:** involves 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. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in

education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

3. Mental Health:

1.1 All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation

1.2 Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one

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

1.4 If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing

The department has published advice and guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying , and Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools (which may also be useful for colleges). In addition, Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing . Its resources include social media, forming positive relationships, smoking and alcohol. See https://campaignresources.dhsc.gov.uk/campaigns/school-zone/ for links to all materials and lesson plans.

There are three thresholds for and types of referral that need to be considered:

Is this a child with additional needs; where their health, development or achievement may be adversely affected?

- Age-appropriate progress is not being made and the causes are unclear or
- The support of more than one agency is needed to meet the child or young person's needs.

If this is a child with additional needs discuss the issues with the Early Help Assessment (EHAT) trained practitioner in your school, the child and parents. You will need to obtain parental consent for an EHAT to be completed.

Is this a child in need matter? Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 says:

- they are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, without the provision of services by a local authority.
- their health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired without the provision of such services.
- they are SEND (and as such can face additional safeguarding challenges).

If this is a child in need, discuss the issues with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and parents. Obtain their consent for referral.

Is this a child protection matter? Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 says:

- children at risk or who are suffering significant harm.
- children suffering the effects of significant harm
- serious health problems.

More on the thresholds can be found here:
https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/multi-agency-thresholds/

If this is a child protection matter, this should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and will need to be referred to the Integrated Front Door by the school as soon as possible.

https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/concerned-about-a-child/

APPENDIX C: FURTHER INFORMATION

A full series of '7-minute briefings' have been designed to inform and engage staff in understanding a wide range of safeguarding concerns. A selection can be found at the end of this document. There are new briefing being added, so to access the full range of briefings click here: https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/7-minute-briefings/

1 **Female Genital Mutilation -** Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/harmful-practices/

1.1 **Indicators -** There is a range of potential indicators that a girl may be at risk of FGM. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation

The FGM resource pack for agencies can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack

1.2 **Actions -** If staff have a concern they should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social

care. Mandatory reporting commenced in October 2015. These procedures remain when dealing with concerns regarding the potential for FGM to take place. Where a teacher discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18, there is a statutory duty upon that individual to report it to the police.

1.3 Mandatory Reporting Duty

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) will place a statutory duty upon **teachers, along with social workers and healthcare professionals, to report to the police** where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

The Mandatory reporting duty commenced in October 2015. Teachers must report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school's designated safeguarding lead and involve the Integrated Front Door as appropriate.

1.4 Harmful practices is an umbrella term for many practices that take place as a result of belief systems. There are many different practices worldwide, examples include child marriage, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, breast flattening, child abuse linked to faith or belief and so-called 'honour'-based abuse.

All these practices in isolation are physically and/or emotionally abusive, however, their continued adoption in society means that they stop being seen as abusive and start to be seen as acceptable, even a rite of passage, therefore losing the label of abuse.

2 Fabricated or Induced Illness / Perplexing Presentation:

2.1 Staff must be aware of the risk of children being abused through fabricated or induced illness (FII). There are three main ways of the carer fabricating or inducing illness in a child. These are not mutually exclusive and include:

- fabrication of signs and symptoms. This may include fabrication of past medical history;
- fabrication of signs and symptoms and falsification of hospital charts and records, and specimens of bodily fluids. This may also include falsification of letters and documents;
- induction of illness by a variety of means.

2.2 Where this is identified and considered a risk a referral will be made to **The Integrated Front Door (IFD)** for support and guidance. School may involve other agencies in making their assessments. That could include school nurse, community paediatrician, occupational therapists for example. For more on Perplexing presentations go to https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/7-Minute-Briefing-Perplexing-Presentations-and-FII.pdf

3 Gang and Youth / Serious Violence:

3.1 Children and Young People who become involved in Gangs are at risk of violent crime and as a result of this involvement are deemed vulnerable. Agencies and professionals have a responsibility to safeguard these children and young people and to prevent further harm both to the young person and their potential victims. Risks associated with Gang activity include access to weapons (including firearms), retaliatory violence and territorial violence with other gangs, knife crime, sexual violence and substance misuse

3.2 **Indicators may be (age in brackets):**

- Troublesome (7-9; 10-12) / High daring (10-12) / Positive attitude towards delinquency (10-12) / Previously committed offences (7-9) / Involved in anti-social behaviour (10-12)
- Substance use (7-9) / Aggression (7-9) / Running away and truancy (7-9; 10-12) / Marijuana use (10- 12) / Marijuana availability (10-12) / Disrupted family (7- 9; 10-12) / Poor supervision (10-12)
- Low academic achievement in primary school (10- 12) / Learning disability (10-12) / Peers involved in crime and/or anti-social behaviour (7-9; 10-12)
- Children and young people in the neighbourhood involved in crime and/or anti-social behaviour (10-12)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy

WSCP - Children affected by gang and serious violence

3.3 Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need 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 as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are
children who:

- **go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their home;**
- **have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime);**

4 'Child Abuse Linked to Faith and Belief':

4.1 Our policy recognises the 'National Action Plan to Tackle Abuse linked to faith or belief' which describes this abuse as:

> 'not about challenging people's beliefs, but where beliefs lead to abuse that must not be tolerated. This includes belief in witchcraft, spirit possession, demons or the devil, the evil eye or djinns, dakini, kindoki, ritual or muti murders and use of fear of the supernatural to make children comply with being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation. The beliefs which are not confined to one faith, nationality or ethnic community.'

4.2 When this type of abuse is suspected staff will make a referral will make a referral to Wirral Integrated Front Door (IFD – 0151 606 2008) for support and guidance. School may request the advice and support of MEAS service in making their assessments.
For more information: https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/6-29-children-affected-gang-activity-youth-violence/

Savera UK are a Liverpool based charity which specifically targets Harmful Practices including FGM, Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage. https://www.saverauk.co.uk/

5 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking:

5.1 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It is designed to combat modern slavery in the UK and consolidates previous offences relating to trafficking and slavery. https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/modern-slavery-bill The definition of human trafficking is:

(a) "Trafficking of persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat of or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in sub-paragraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used.

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in sub-paragraph (a) of this article. "Child" shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

5.2 Children trafficked into the country may be registered at a school for a term or longer, before being moved to another part of the UK or abroad. This pattern of registration and de-registration may be an indicator that a child has been trafficked. It has been identified as a particular concern in schools which are situated near ports of entry, but practitioners should be alert to this possibility in all schools. However, practitioners should always bear in mind that not all children who go missing from education have been victims of trafficking. For example, there may be instances of children from communities that move around – Gypsy, Roma, traveller or migrant families – who collectively go missing from school.

5.3 If a member of the school staff suspects that a child may have been trafficked they should act immediately to inform the senior member of staff with designated responsibility for child protection and ensure that police or local authority children's social care are contacted immediately. The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support. To access support, click here

6 Risks Associated with Parent/Carer Mental Health:

6.1 The majority of Parents who suffer mental ill-health are able to care for and safeguard their children and/or unborn child. Some parents, however, will be unable to meet the needs and ensure the safety of their children. The school will follow the guidance outlined in 'working with parents with mental health problems and their children (Think child, think parent, think family: a guide to parental mental health and child welfare).

6.2 Our approach is to recognise; seek support; instil preventive factors and monitor. The Integrated Front Door can provide links and support with Wirral Adult Social Care if required. Designated teacher should seek support through TAF with family support but escalate to the

Integrated Front Door if they are concerned that the child involved is being placed at immediate risk of harm. The offer includes mental health support services: https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/what-is-early-help/

6.3 **Homelessness -** Homelessness or the risk of it poses a serious threat to a child's welfare. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and their deputies must know how to contact and refer to the Local Housing Authority to act early on concerns. Risk indicators include:

- Debt or rent arrears
- Domestic abuse
- Anti-social behaviour
- Eviction or threat of eviction

Referrals to housing services should follow local procedures but must not replace referrals to Children's Social Care where a child is at risk of harm.

Under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, councils must assess needs, create housing plans, and support those at risk. Early intervention is key. While most cases involve families, 16- and 17-year-olds may be homeless independently. In such cases, Children's Social Care is the lead agency, and DSLs must ensure appropriate referrals are made. See statutory guidance for more details.

7 Drugs and Alcohol:

Children can be at risk of drugs and alcohol directly and indirectly. They may be at direct risk of having access to these substances (see guidance on gangs) or indirectly because they affect family life at home through use by parents/carers, siblings, child-minders etc. Risks associated with drugs and alcohol and built into the year 5-6 curriculum. We work with our partners and Wirral LA to provide curriculum advice and guidance in this area. To access the most up to date Wirral School Drugs Policy click - https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/school-drug-policy/

More details can be found at: https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/substance-misuse/

8 Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriages:

8.1 Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage refers to a collection of practices used to control behaviour within families to protect perceived cultural or religious beliefs and honour. Violence can occur when offenders perceive that a relative has shamed the family or community by breaking their 'code of honour'. Honour Based Violence cuts across all cultures and communities: Turkish, Kurdish, Afghani, South Asian, African, Middle Eastern, South and Eastern European for example. This is not an exhaustive list. Where a culture is heavily male dominated, HBV may exist.

8.2 'A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some vulnerable adults, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.' The age to marry has been raised to the age of 18. (Feb 2023) It is now a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their 18th Birthday, even if violence, threats, or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

For more information see;

http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/when-things-go-wrong/forced-marriage/

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-right-to-choose-government-guidance-on-forced-marriage

https://karmanirvana.org.uk

9 Managing Allegations against staff:

9.1 The Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations (**LADO) must be told of allegations against adults working with children and young people within 24 hours.** Chairs of Governors should refer to this guidance if there is an allegation against the headteacher. This includes all cases that meet the harms threshold where a person is alleged to have:

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

The last bullet point above includes behaviour that may have happened outside of school or college, that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children, this is known as transferable risk. Where appropriate an assessment of transferable risk to children with whom the person works should be undertaken. If in doubt seek advice from the local authority designated officer (LADO).

9.2 There are two levels of allegation/concern:

1. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold (see definition above)
2. Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to in the guidance as 'low level concerns' (KCSIE 2025)

Governing bodies and proprietors should have policies and processes to deal with concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold. Concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

It is important that schools and colleges have appropriate policies and processes in place to manage and record any such concerns and take appropriate action to safeguard children.

'Low Level Concerns' - Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical.

A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

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

Such concerns such always be recorded and reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified

9.3 The Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations (LADO) in Wirral is **Kevin Dykes**

- **email any referral and /or consultation form to:** safeguardingunit@wirral.gov.uk and kerrywilliams@wirral.gov.uk

If judged appropriate during the initial contact with the LADO, an Allegations Referral Form must be completed by the senior manager in full and forwarded to the LADO via email within 24 hours.
LADO referral form, flowcharts and information can be accessed here:
https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/lado-allegations/

The LADO procedure does not replace safeguarding procedures and the **Integrated Front Door** (IFD@wirral.gov.uk) must be contacted if you have a safeguarding concern about a child. If you require advice about your agency's response to an allegation, please contact your HR provider.

The LADO can only provide advice and guidance regarding allegations in relation to a person in a position of trust. Any general safeguarding enquiries or concerns should be reported to Wirral Integrated Front Door on 0151 606 2008 or 0151 677 6557 out of hours.

10 Preventing Radicalisation:

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of schools' wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. During the process of radicalisation, it is possible to intervene to prevent 'susceptible' people being radicalised.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people. As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. School staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include making a referral to the Channel programme

10.1 **Prevent** - From 1 July 2015 all schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 ('The CTSA 2015') Schools must have regard to statutory PREVENT GUIDANCE issued under section 29 of the CTSA 2015 and the Contest strategy. Paragraphs 57-76 of the Prevent guidance are concerned specifically with schools'

responsibility to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This duty is known as the Prevent duty. It applies to a wide range of public-facing bodies.

The statutory Prevent guidance summarises the requirements on schools in terms of four general themes:

- risk assessment
- working in partnership
- staff training
- IT policies

Schools are expected to **assess the risk** of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. This means being able to demonstrate both a general understanding of the risks affecting children and young people in the area and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and what to do to support them. Schools and colleges should have clear procedures in place for protecting children at risk of radicalisation. **It is not necessary for schools and colleges to have distinct policies on implementing the Prevent duty**. The Prevent duty builds on **existing local partnership arrangements**. For example, governing bodies and proprietors of all schools should ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs).

The Single Point Contact for Wirral is Andrea Bignall, Andrea.Mears@merseyside.police.uk. All assessments are to be carried out via Integrated Front Door. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales.

The Prevent guidance refers to the importance of Prevent **awareness training** to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Individual schools are best placed to assess the training needs of staff in the light of their assessment of the risk to pupils at the school of being drawn into terrorism. *As a minimum, however, schools should ensure that the designated safeguarding lead undertakes Prevent awareness training and is able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.* *https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/7-minute-briefings/*

Schools must ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when **accessing the internet** in schools. Schools should ensure that suitable filtering is in place. It is also important that schools teach pupils about online safety more generally. Further information and guidance is available on the WSCP website: https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/radicalisation-and-extremism/

The Department for Education has also published advice for schools on the Prevent duty and is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts other sources of advice and support. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-prevent-duty-safeguarding-learners-vulnerable-to-radicalisation

10.2 Channel

School staff should understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel team. Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be susceptible to

radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

Section 36 of the CTSA 2015 places a duty on local authorities to ensure Channel panels are in place. The panel must be chaired by the local authority and include the police for the relevant local authority area. Following a referral the panel will assess the extent to which identified individuals are susceptible to being drawn into terrorism, and, where considered appropriate and necessary consent is obtained, arrange for support to be provided to those individuals. Section 38 of the CTSA 2015 requires partners of Channel panels to co-operate with the panel in the carrying out of its functions and with the police in providing information about a referred individual. Schools and colleges are required to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education and, as partners, are required to cooperate with local Channel panels. Channel guidance can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-and-prevent-multi-agency-panel-pmap-guidance More on Channel and Prevent Process - Wirral

11 Child Missing Education: All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area, or those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education'.

11.1 A child going Missing in Education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School and college staff should follow the school's or college's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, or those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education', particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

11.2 Schools should put in place appropriate Child Protection & Safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education', on repeat occasions or for prolonged periods. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers. An appropriated response is needed when a child has poor attendance or is regularly missing education, or those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education'. Missing in Education

11.3 **All** schools must inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- have been certified by an appropriate medical practitioner as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;

- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- have been permanently excluded.

11.4 The local authority must be notified when a school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. **Schools should contact the Admissions section: Tel: 0151 666 4600.** This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register. It is essential that schools comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, or those 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education', follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

12 Child Sexual Exploitation & Child Exploitation (CE):

12.1 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) - CSE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation (see below), understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school/college, inside and outside of home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

All school and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

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. The department provide: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners A full list of indicators can be found here: https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/child-exploitation/

12.2 **Child Criminal Exploitation:** While there is still no legal definition of 'Child Criminal Exploitation' or CCE, it is increasingly being recognised as a major factor behind crime in communities across Merseyside and the UK, while also simultaneously victimising vulnerable young people and leaving them at risk of harm. A simple definition of CCE is: CCE often occurs without the victim being aware that they are being exploited and involves young people being encouraged, cajoled or threatened to carry out crime for the benefit of others. In return they

are offered friendship or peer acceptance, but also cigarettes, drugs (especially cannabis), alcohol or even food and accommodation.

12.3 County lines is a term used to describe gangs, groups or drug networks that supply drugs from urban to suburban areas across the country, including market and coastal towns, using dedicated mobile phone lines or 'deal lines'. They exploit children and vulnerable adults to move the drugs and money to and from the urban area, and to store the drugs in local markets. They will often use intimidation, violence and weapons, including knives, corrosives and firearms. County lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons; and the response to tackle it involves the police, the National Crime Agency, a wide range of Government departments, local government agencies and voluntary and community sector organisations. County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities. Further information and PAN Merseyside CE / CCE Documentation can be found here: https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/child-exploitation/

12.4 **Child Sexual Exploitation & Child Criminal Exploitation:** Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females and children or adults.

The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual, and it should be noted exploitation. As well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

Further information and documentation can be found here:
https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/child-exploitation/

13 Sexual harassment, violence, violence against women and girls (VAWG) harmful sexual behaviours (inc. child on child abuse and 'upskirting')

13.1 Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence refers to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, including rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.

13.2 It is important that schools and colleges are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school/college. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child, sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

13.3 Staff must challenge any form of derogatory and sexualised language or behaviour. Staff should be vigilant to sexualised/aggressive touching/grabbing. DfE guidance situates sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour in the context of developing a whole-school safeguarding culture, where sexual misconduct is seen as unacceptable, and not 'banter' or an inevitable part of growing up. Advice about tackling and reporting sexual harassment in schools and colleges can be found in KCSIE 2024 The Wirral Youth Justice Service have developed a multi-agency HSB identification tool to help professionals determine and assess the level of sexual behaviours being displayed by a child.

The tool, and included guidance sets out, for different age ranges what are expected and normal behaviours, what are inappropriate or concerning, and what are likely to be harmful. For each level of behaviour the tool provides clear advice about how to respond.
Click here for the Wirral Identification Tool

It should be recognised that these issues are likely to occur, and so schools should have procedures in place to deal with them. Groups at particular risk include girls, students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, those who are gender questioning,, Transgender+ (LGBT+), or are perceived by peers to be LGBT+, and pupils with SEND. We recognise that these children can be targeted by other children, so it is vital your school provide a safe space for these children to speak out and share their concerns with members of staff. Pupils are protected from 'upskirting', bullying, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviour, racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination Staff have familiarity with the https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance#public-sector-equality-duty/

The Wirral Domestic Abuse Alliance and the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership have published the Wirral Tackling Violence against women and girls strategy

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) refers to a range of crimes, with the common theme that they disproportionately affect women and girls. This strategy has been developed to help professionals identify, prevent and respond to all gender-based violence.

The strategy includes a comprehensive local delivery plan, and with its emphasis on prevention and education involves closer work with schools and colleges. This can be viewed here: VAWG Strategy

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) - it is never a child's responsibility to prevent abuse, protect themselves or make the abuse stop. By better understanding child sexual abuse, having conversations and highlighting concerns, we can play a role in protecting children. We will use the CSA Response Pathway to respond to concerns of child sexual abuse at key points: from first concerns and early help safeguarding through to child protection and criminal justice responses.

13.4 Our school acknowledges the need to treat everyone equally, with fairness, dignity and respect. Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged, and children are supported to understand how to treat others with respect. We also have a statutory duty to report and record any of the above incidents. Schools must record incidents across the whole spectrum of sexual violence, sexual harassment, and harmful sexualised behaviours so that they can understand the scale of the problem in their own schools and make appropriate plans to reduce it.

All such incidents should be immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or equivalent and managed in line with your setting's child protection policies. Victims of harm should

be supported by the school's pastoral system and, and their wishes and feelings considered and that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them.

13.5 The appropriate safeguarding lead person should be familiar with the full guidance from the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS), Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people

Upskirting - 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim. The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019.

What is consent? Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g.to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. Further information about consent can be found here: https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-informed/about-sexual-violence/sexual-consent/

Sexual consent
• a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
• the age of consent is 16;

14 Digital Safety, Remote Learning & Filtering and Monitoring:

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation- technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm. An effective approach to online safety empowers a school or college to protect and educate the whole school or college community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate any incident where appropriate.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into three areas of risk:

- content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material
- contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users
- conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm

There is a Digital Safety policy, which covers the use of mobile phones, cameras and other digital recording devices e.g., i-Pads. For online safety, there is within the policy support about children accessing the internet whilst they're at school using data on their phones (3G or 4G networks). The policy reinforces the importance of online safety, including making parents aware of what your school ask children to do online (e.g. sites they need to visit or who they'll be interacting with online) Governing bodies and proprietors are doing all that they

reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the risks from the school's or college's IT system and ensure the school or college has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness.

For online safety, there is recognition in this guidance that most children are using data on their phones, on the 3G or the 4G network. In schools, this means that not only must staff think about filtering and monitoring within the school's infrastructure, but they also need to have a policy about children accessing the internet whilst they're at school.

14.1 Filtering and monitoring

Governing bodies and proprietors should be doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school's or college's IT system. As part of this process, governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their school or college has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place.

Whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, governing bodies and proprietors should consider the age range of their pupils, the number of pupils, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs vs risks. Additional support documents can be found here: https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/procedures/6-6-e-safety-safeguarding-children-young-people-using-digital-interactive-technology/

The appropriateness of any filters and monitoring systems are a matter for individual schools and colleges and will be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty. The UK Safer Internet Centre has published guidance as to what "appropriate" filtering and monitoring might look like: https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/teachers-and-school-staff/appropriate-filtering-and-monitoring There is guidance below designed to help parents and carers to keep their children as safe as possible when online: https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/online-safety-guidance-parents/ Use of AI imagery will be monitored in line with the Child Protection-Safeguarding Policy (Computer systems and software that are able to perform tasks that ordinarily require human intelligence, such as decision-making and the creation of images).

All staff are to understand their role in the published standards for 'Filtering and Monitoring'. and DSLs are expected to have the 'lead responsibility'. The standards can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/filtering-and-monitoring-standards-for-schools-and-colleges. Further support on digital safety, filtering and monitoring can be found here:

Filtering and Monitoring has been added to the full staff CPD programme and governing body/trustees will be supported to understand their role in Filtering and Monitoring. DSL's will have 'lead responsibility' for Filtering and Monitoring and this forms part of their job description.

14.2 The policy for remote learning that demonstrates on understanding of how to follow Child Protection (safeguarding) procedures when planning remote education strategies and teaching remotely. The school maintains the capability to provide remote education when it

is not possible for some or all of their pupils to attend in person. All IT policies are located in the CPOMS Digital Library.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-remote-education-guidance-for-schools

15 Pre-Appointment Checks and Safer Recruitment:

15.1 Any offer of appointment made to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, must be conditional on satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks.

15.2 When appointing new staff, schools and colleges must:

- Verify a candidate's identity. Identification checking guidelines can be found on the GOV.UK website; For details of changes to the guidelines from April 2025 click here.
- obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity);
- Evidence of current address for identity – when using Route One for identity check, schools no longer need to obtain or verify address information, however every DBS application form still requires a full 5-year address history. Three documents confirming name and date of birth are sufficient (for example, a biometric passport, photocard driving licence, and a birth certificate).
- Schools are expected ID to confirm the applicant's identity, which includes being satisfied that their address history is accurate and consistent with other information (e.g. employment history, references).
- In cases where documents don't confirm the current address, schools will still need to verify it through other appropriate means.
- School is clear on who can verify identity (as relatives, friends, or household members cannot act as ID checkers), and verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role;
- verify the person's right to work in the UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, follow advice on the GOV.UK website;
- if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks the school or college consider appropriate and verify professional qualifications, as appropriate.
- carry out prohibition check for all staff with QTS
- complete a risk assessment for each volunteers to decide whether they need to do an enhanced DBS check or not. (Please note:, even if it is decided an enhanced DBS is to be requested, if the volunteer is not in regulated activity, then you're not legally allowed to do a barred list check).
- Carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates as part of due diligence (and informing them of this prior to any searches) to help identify any issues that are publicly available online The Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021 extended safeguarding provisions to providers of post 16 Education: 16-19 Academies, Special Post-16 institutions and Independent Training Providers.

15.2 The school or college safer recruitment policy should focus on ensuring potential applicants are given the right messages about the school and college's commitment to recruit suitable people. The DBS Identity Checking Guidelines (April 2025) refer to retaining identity check records and documents used to evidence identity for the duration of a person's employment, plus six years. This aligns with the data retention schedule advocated by the Government and can be found here. ***Further safer recruitment guidance can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)***

15 Single Central Record:

15.3 Schools and colleges must keep a single central record. The single central record must cover the following people:

- all staff (including supply staff, and teacher trainees on salaried routes) who work at the school: in colleges, this means those providing education to children; and
- The information that must be recorded in respect of staff members (including teacher trainees on salaried route) is whether the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which each check was completed/certificate obtained:
- an identity check / a barred list check / an enhanced DBS check/certificate / a prohibition from teaching check;
- further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK; this would include recording checks for those EEA teacher sanctions and restrictions
- a check of professional qualifications; and a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.

15.4 For supply staff, schools should also include whether written confirmation that the employment business supplying the member of supply staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates, whether any enhanced DBS check certificate has been provided in respect of the member of supply staff, and the date that confirmation was received.

15.5 Staff leavers - The details of an individual should be removed from the single central record once they no longer work at the school or college.

15.6 Maintained school governors - Governors in maintained schools are required to have an enhanced criminal records certificate from the DBS. It is the responsibility of the governing body to apply for the certificate for any of their governors who does not already have one. Governance is not a regulated activity and so they do not need a barred list check unless, in addition to their governance duties, they also engage in regulated activity.

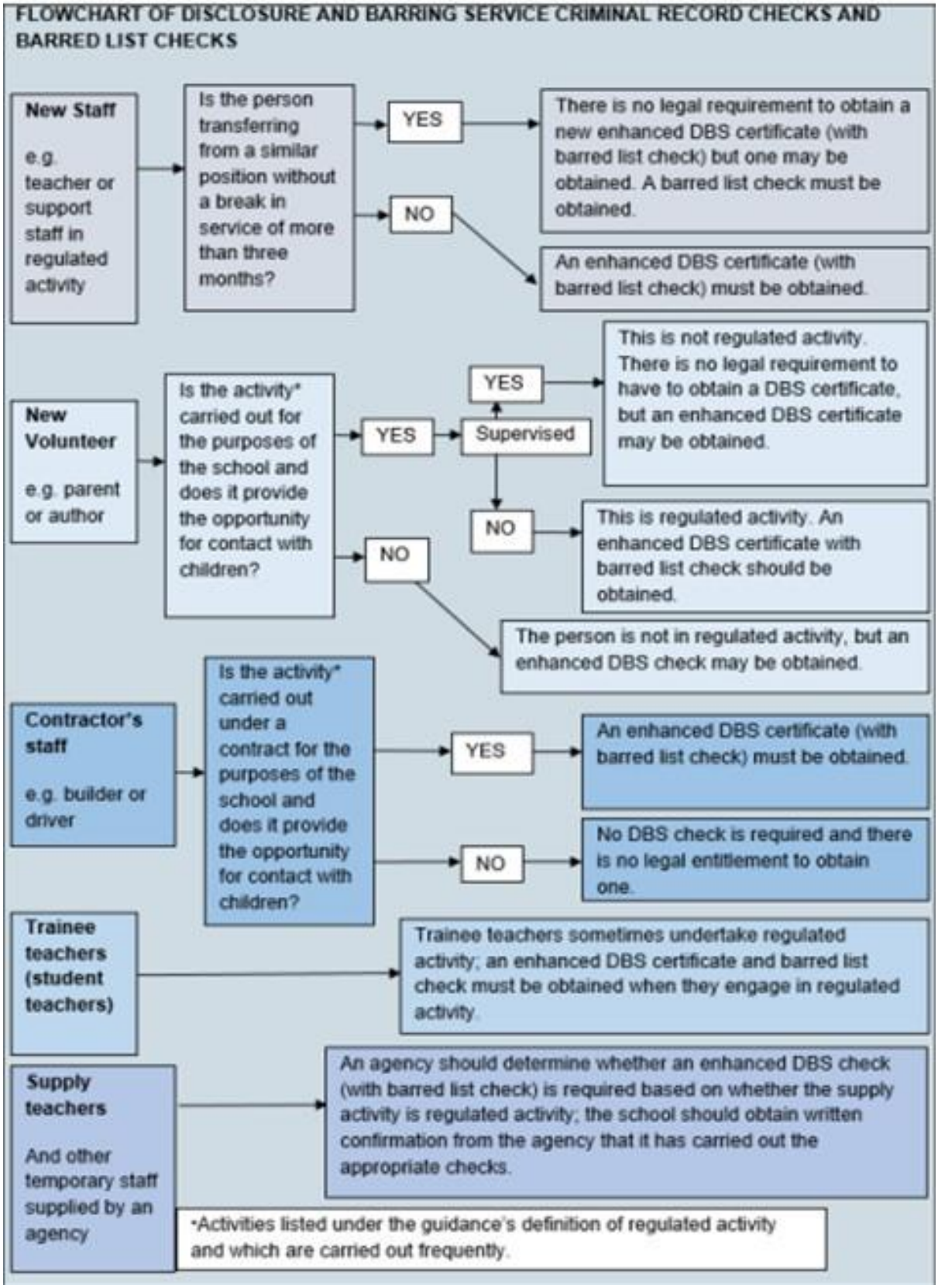
15.7 The SCR shall be updated in the light of any further legislation.

15.8 Where school premises are used for non-school activities, those providers are expected to meet the guidance in https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-safeguarding-children-in-out-of-school-settings

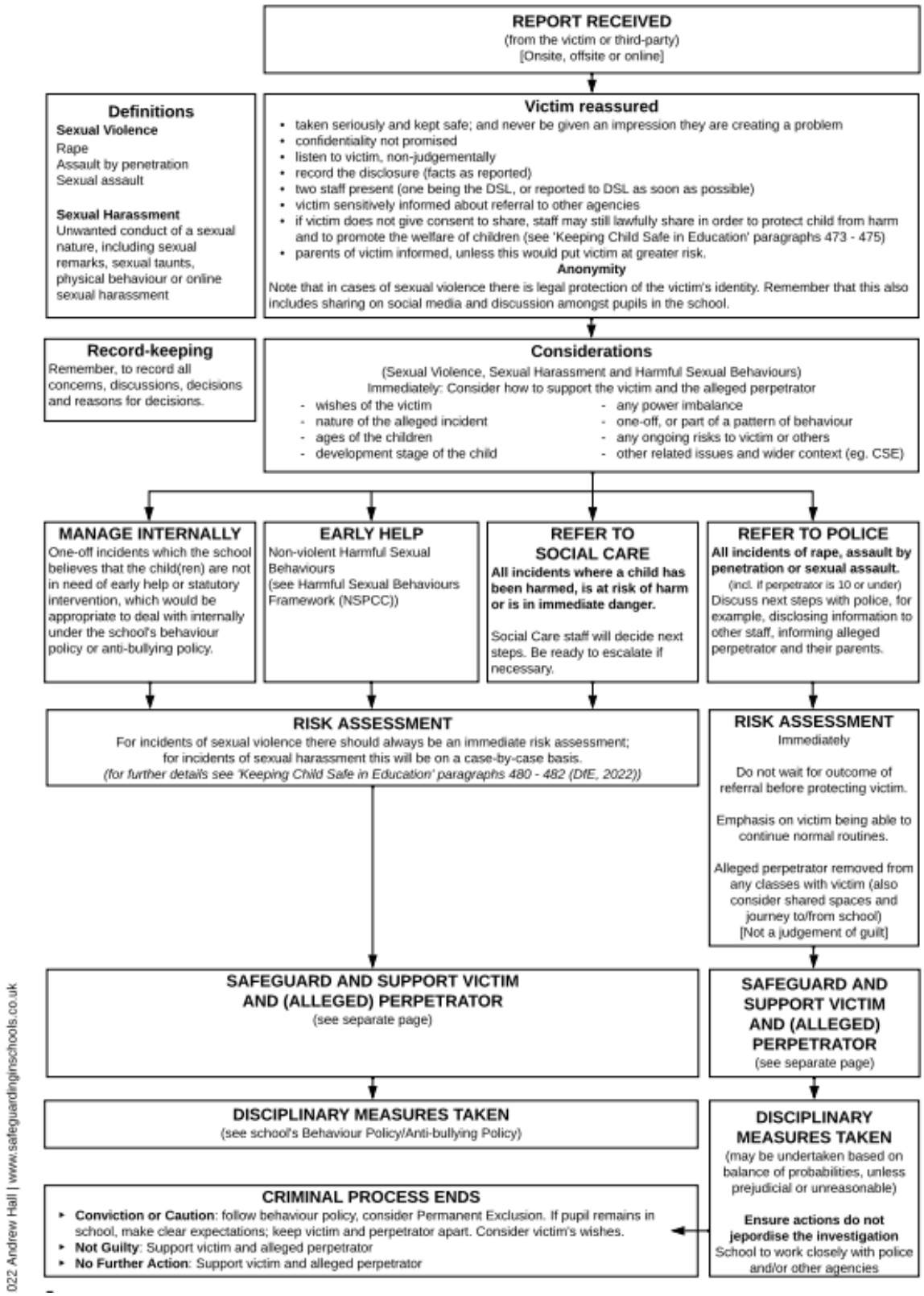
Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership

Actions to take when there are safeguarding concerns about a child

https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/concerned-about-a-child/


FLOWCHART OF DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS AND BARRED LIST CHECKS
New Staff
e.g. teacher or support staff in regulated activity
Is the person transferring from a similar position without a break in service of more than three months?
YES
There is no legal requirement to obtain a new enhanced DBS certificate (with barred list check) but one may be obtained. A barred list check must be obtained.
NO
An enhanced DBS certificate (with barred list check) must be obtained.
New Volunteer
e.g. parent or author
Is the activity* carried out for the purposes of the school and does it provide the opportunity for contact with children?
YES
Supervised
YES
This is not regulated activity. There is no legal requirement to have to obtain a DBS certificate, but an enhanced DBS certificate may be obtained.
NO
This is regulated activity. An enhanced DBS certificate with barred list check should be obtained.
NO
The person is not in regulated activity, but an enhanced DBS check may be obtained.
Contractor's staff
e.g. builder or driver
Is the activity* carried out under a contract for the purposes of the school and does it provide the opportunity for contact with children?
YES
An enhanced DBS certificate (with barred list check) must be obtained.
NO
No DBS check is required and there is no legal entitlement to obtain one.
Trainee teachers (student teachers)
Trainee teachers sometimes undertake regulated activity; an enhanced DBS certificate and barred list check must be obtained when they engage in regulated activity.
Supply teachers
And other temporary staff supplied by an agency
An agency should determine whether an enhanced DBS check (with barred list check) is required based on whether the supply activity is regulated activity; the school should obtain written confirmation from the agency that it has carried out the appropriate checks.
*Activities listed under the guidance's definition of regulated activity and which are carried out frequently.

*PART FIVE: CHILD-ON-CHILD SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT



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LADO FLOWCHART

STAGE ONE

WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN 2018 REQUIRES EMPLOYERS TO INFORM LADO WITHIN ONE WORKING DAY OF BECOMING AWARE OF AN ALLEGATION.

IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD IS AT RISK OF IMMEDIATE HARM CONTACT IFD AND / OR MERSEYSIDE POLICE VIA 101

EMPLOYER TO COMPLETE LADO CONSULTATION FORM AND SEND TO safeguardingunit@wirral.gov.uk LINK TO WIRRAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP WHERE LADO INFORMATION AND FORMS ARE AVAILABLE.

https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/lado-allegations/

LADO WILL LIAISE WITH EMPLOYER AND POLICE AND MAKE A DECISION ON WHETHER THE CONCERNS MEET THE THRESHOLD FOR FORMAL LADO INVESTIGATION.

IF THRESHHOLD IS NOT MET CONSULTATION WILL BE CLOSED AT THIS STAGE.LADO WILL RECORD DECISION ON CONSULTATION FORM AND RETURN TO EMPLOYER

IF THRESHOLD IS MET EMPLOYER WILL BE REQUESTED TO COMPLETE LADO REFERRAL FORM

STAGE TWO

LADO WILL CONVENE A LADO MANAGEMENT OF ALLEGATIONS MEETING WITHIN FIVE WORKING DAYS

AT THIS MEETING THE PLAN OF INVESTIGATION WILL BE AGREED TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ANY POLICE INVESTIGATION AND SAFEGUARDING ACTIONS WILL BE CONFIRMED.

TIMEFRAME WILL BE AGREED AND SUPPORT TO THE EMPLOYEE WILL BE CONFIRMED.

EMPLOYER TO UPDATE LADO DURING INVESTIGATION.

EMPLOYER TO INVOKE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES IF APPROPRIATE.

STAGE THREE.

LADO CLOSURE MEETING HELD AND WILL INVOLVE ALL APPROPRIATE PROFESSIONALS WHERE THE EMPLOYER WILL PRESENT THEIR FINDINGS/ACTIONS.

OUTCOME TO THE LADO PROCESS AGREED BY ALL PROFESSIONALS.

SUBSTANTIATED - There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation that a child has been harmed or there is a risk of harm.

UNFOUNDED - There is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.
It might indicate that the person making the allegation misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what they saw. Alternatively, they may not have been aware of all the circumstances.
The chair of the meeting / discussion should make a record of the agreed outcome and forward this to the employer

UNSUBSTANTIATED - There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence

MALICIOUS - There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive. The police should be asked to consider what action may be appropriate in these circumstances

FALSE ALLEGATIONS - There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
There is no evidence to suggest that there was a deliberate intention to deceive.
False allegations may be an indicator of abuse elsewhere which requires further exploration. If an allegation is demonstrably false, the employer, in consultation with the LADO, should refer the matter to local authority children's social care to determine whether the child is in need of services, or might have been abused by someone else.

CLOSURE MEETING WILL AGREE ON DBS REFERRAL IF APPROPRIATE AND CLOSURE LETTER TO EMPLOYEE.

https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/professionals/lado-allegations/

2025-2026