



Keeping Children and Vulnerable Adult Students Safe at York College: What You Should Know

1. Introduction

Everyone working at York College has a role to play in safeguarding vulnerable students, i.e. students who are children*, or vulnerable adults.

**A 'child' is defined as anyone under the age of 18.*

Safeguarding means that we will ensure that our students who are under 18 or who are vulnerable adults are safe whilst in our care, and also that we will **take action** if we consider they are 'at risk'.

This document outlines your responsibilities to help keep these students safe at York College.

2. Statutory Guidance: Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

The above Guidance for Schools and Colleges (updated September 2022), sets out our obligations to help safeguard and promote the welfare of **children**. The principles outlined in the document apply equally to **vulnerable adult students**.

The Guidance provides that you are **required** to read **either**:

- Part 1 of KCSIE if you are in a **'regulated'** role i.e. one where you are responsible for teaching, training instructing, caring for or supervising children, or
- 'Annex A: Safeguarding information for school and college staff'. This is a condensed version of Part 1 of KCSIE and is for staff who do not work in a regulated role.

Both are attached to the end of this document. **You are required to read the one that is applicable to your role**. If you are in any doubt as to whether your role is regulated or not, please contact your line manager, or Human Resources (extension 382).

3. Key Points of Contact

York College has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is responsible for overseeing the College's safeguarding strategies. The College's **Designated Safeguarding Lead** is Ingrid Kellock, Director of Student Experience (**extension 251**).

Jenny Edwards (ext 471) is the College's specialist Safeguarding Officer (the **Designated Safeguarding Deputy**). In addition, we have a number of **Designated Safeguarding Persons** (DSPs). All are trained to deal with safeguarding issues and to take appropriate action to safeguard the welfare of any vulnerable student who is considered to be at risk.

So, there is support at hand, should you need any help. Please contact Ingrid, Jenny or a DSP for advice, guidance and support.

All of our key safeguarding contacts are shown here:

Jenny Edwards	Safeguarding Officer (Deputy Designated Safeguarding & Prevent Lead)	471
Ingrid Kellock	Director of Student Experience (Designated Safeguarding & Prevent Lead)	251
Gemma Thomas	Learning Support Manager	428
Sally Jackson	Head of Student Progress	145
Alex Godfrey	Student Progress Leader	145
Lynn Aikman	Student Progress Leader	135
Marie Neal-Smith	Director of Curriculum, Creative (Adult Lead)	214
Tilly Dickenson	ESOL Coordinator (16-19)	128
Lou Baker	Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator	333
Martin Halliday	Director of Young People's Learning (14-19 Lead)	861
Judith Lawson	Deputy / Head of Curriculum (Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences)	269
Lee Probert	Chief Executive and Principal	215

4. Child Protection Policy

The College's Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy (Child Protection Policy) sets out how we safeguard vulnerable students. The full policy is [here](#). Your obligations to help safeguard vulnerable students are summarised below:

Your Obligations Under the Child Protection Policy

It is your responsibility to take **appropriate action** if you have concerns about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult, or are worried about the nature of their relationship with a member of staff.

What is 'appropriate action'?

Appropriate action depends on the nature of the concern or disclosure:

- You have a concern about abuse or the neglect (see examples below) of a child or vulnerable adult:

Report your concern to a more senior member of staff, such as your Head of Curriculum Area, or one of the College's DSPs.

- You have a concern about the relationship between a member of staff and a child or vulnerable adult.

Report your concern to the **Chief Executive and Principal**.

What happens next?

Your manager, DSP, or the Chief Executive and Principal (who should be notified of any concerns about a relationship between a member of staff and a child or vulnerable adult), will consider what action to take. They might decide to refer the matter to the Local Authority and/or to the Police.

What if I am not satisfied that my concern has been properly acted upon?

If, after reporting your concern you consider that appropriate action has not been taken, or the situation does not appear to be improving, you have the **right** to refer the matter to the Local Authority directly, or to the Police. You also have the right to raise your concerns via the College's **Whistleblowing Policy** [here](#).

Indicators of abuse or neglect

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.

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.

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.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women also commit acts of sexual abuse, as do other children (see Child on Child abuse below)

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's / vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.

Child on Child abuse: Children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). Child on Child Abuse can happen both inside and outside of College and online. Please be aware that we have a separate Child on Child Abuse Policy [here](#).

Criminal exploitation: Where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a person into committing offences – often drug running for organised criminals (see also paras 37 to 38 Part 1).

Child sexual exploitation: Where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a person under 18 into any form of sexual activity. This can also occur online.

Domestic abuse: Children or vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): This 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. ***If a teacher 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.***

Mental Health: Mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Serious Violence: The indicators that a child might be at risk from or are involved with serious violent crime. These include increased absence from College, signs of assault or unexplained gifts.

Financial Abuse: a form of abuse using money to exert control over an individual. For example, forcibly taking money or withholding/controlling benefits or bank accounts to gain power or control over a person.

Radicalisation: This is 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. It can happen in many different ways - staff should be alert to changes in behaviour which could indicate that a student may be in need of help or protection.

Forced marriage: A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to a marriage and pressure or abuse is used. Forced marriage is a criminal offence.

If you have any concerns that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk in relation any of the above indicators, please report your concerns as per the procedure outlined above.

5. Staff Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected of all who work in the College – staff, volunteers, agency workers etc. The Code makes clear that relationships with students of an intimate or sexual nature, **are prohibited, regardless of the student's age**. This applies to **all staff**, not just those who have a direct working relationship to the student. Staff alleged to have engaged in such relationship will be subject to disciplinary investigation and if the allegation is substantiated, may be summarily dismissed without notice, for reason of gross misconduct.

Please also be aware that a relationship with a child **under the age of 18 could also be a criminal offence** (under the Sexual Offences Act 2003). Such behaviour may result in a referral to the Police and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Close personal relationships with vulnerable adult students are also prohibited and could be viewed as an abuse of a position of trust. Such relationships will also be subject to the College's Disciplinary Procedure and potential referral to the Police and the DBS.

The Code of Conduct is [here](#) and can also be accessed via the staff portal

6. Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

We strive to provide a positive learning and working environment. To this end we have Policies and Procedures to support positive behaviours, including the Student Disciplinary Policy [here](#). The aim is to ensure a high standard of student behaviour is maintained, to support the learning process and to promote acceptable conduct at all times.

7. What if a student discloses a disability to you?

If a student discloses that they have a disability, they are deemed by the law to have notified the College. When notified, the College has a legal responsibility to take reasonable adjustments to ensure that there are no barriers to them studying in the College. So if a student discloses a disability to you, you should:

- Take the student's name and contact details
- Determine the nature of their disability and hence their particular requirements
- Get their consent to you reporting the fact of their disability to your line manager (you cannot disclose such information without their consent*)
- If you have their consent, inform your line manager or supervisor at the earliest opportunity

* If the student withholds consent, make a note of the fact that a student has raised the issue with you, and report this fact to your line manager – but do not disclose the student's name.

If you have any queries about the contents of this document, or the accompanying extracts from the statutory guides, please speak to your manager, Ingrid Kellock (DSL), Jenny Edwards (Safeguarding Officer), a Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP), or Human Resources.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

As referenced in section 2 above, you should read one of the documents which are attached below:

- ***If you work in a 'regulated' role*** i.e. a role where you are responsible for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children, please read **Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) [September 2022]**.
- ***If you do not work in a 'regulated' role***, please read '**Annex A: Safeguarding information for school and college staff**'. This is a condensed version of Part 1 of KCSIE.

If you are in any doubt as to whether your role is regulated or not, please contact your line manager, or Human Resources (extension 382).

Keeping Children Safe In Education: September 2022

Part one: For Staff Working in ‘Regulated’ Roles

1. Schools and colleges and their staff are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children.
2. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone’s** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interest** of the child.
3. No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child’s needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, **everyone** who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.
4. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance 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.
5. Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

The role of school and college staff

6. 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.
7. **All** staff have responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
8. **All** staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any/’ point in a child’s life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.
9. **Any staff member** who has **any** concerns about a child’s welfare should follow the processes set out in paragraphs 51-67. Staff should expect to support social workers and other agencies following any referral.
10. **Every** school and college should have a designated safeguarding lead who will provide support to staff to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as local authority children’s social care.

11. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns.

12. The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers (which includes headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.⁵

What school and college staff need to know

13. **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 policy (which should amongst other things also include the policy and procedures to deal with child-on-child abuse)
- behaviour policy (which should include measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)⁶
- staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct) should amongst other things, include low- level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing
- 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).

Copies of policies and a copy of Part one (or Annex A, if appropriate) of this document should be provided to **all** staff at induction.

14. **All** staff should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction. The training should be regularly updated. In addition, **all** staff should receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

15. **All** staff should be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it.

16. **All** staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments⁷ under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

17. **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.

18. **All** staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting **any** form of abuse and/or neglect. Nor should a

victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

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

What school and college staff should look out for

Early help

20. **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 care or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a family member in prison, 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
- has returned home to their family from care
- is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child, and
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

Abuse and neglect

21. **All** staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect (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.

22. **All** school and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect 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 with one another.

23. **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.

24. **All** staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

25. **In all cases, if staff are unsure, they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy.**

Indicators of abuse and neglect

26. **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. 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.

27. **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.

28. **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.

29. **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.

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

Safeguarding issues

31. All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk. Below are some safeguarding issues all staff should be aware of. **Additional information on these safeguarding issues and information on other safeguarding issues is included in Annex B.**

Child-on-child abuse

32. 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 or college and online. **All** staff should be clear as to the school's or college'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.

33. All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their schools or colleges it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have **any** concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

34. It is essential that **all** staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below, that are abusive in nature. 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 forward to report it.

35. Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence,⁹ such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- 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
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos¹¹ (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting,¹² which typically involves taking a picture 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, and
- 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).

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

36. Both CSE and CCE 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 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. CSE and CCE 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.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

37. 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.

38. 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, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to. 39. It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

40. CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

41. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

42. CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited for example they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

Domestic Abuse

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

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

44. Whilst **all** staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific **legal duty on teachers**. If 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.

Mental Health

45. **All** staff should 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.

46. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education 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. Schools and colleges can access a range of advice to help them identify children in need of extra mental health support, this includes working with external agencies.

47. 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.

Serious violence

48. **All** staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school or college, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

Additional information and support

49. Departmental advice [What to Do if You Are Worried a Child is Being Abused - Advice for Practitioners](#) provides more information on understanding and identifying abuse and neglect. Examples of potential indicators of abuse and neglect are highlighted throughout the advice and will be particularly helpful for school and college staff. The [NSPCC](#) website also provides useful additional information on abuse and neglect and what to look out for.

50. **Annex B** contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. School and college leaders and those staff who work directly with children should read the annex.

What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about a child

51. Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of **‘it could happen here’** where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the **best** interests of the child.

52. If staff have **any concerns** about a child’s welfare, they should act on them **immediately**. See page 22 for a flow chart setting out the process for staff when they have concerns about a child.

53. If staff have a concern, they should follow their own organisation’s child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

54. Options will then include:

- managing any support for the child internally via the school’s or college’s own pastoral support processes
- undertaking an early help assessment,¹⁴ or
- making a referral to statutory services,¹⁵ for example as the child might be in need, is in need or suffering, or is likely to suffer harm.

55. The designated safeguarding lead or a deputy should always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local authority children’s social care. In these circumstances, any action taken should

be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

56. Staff should not assume a colleague, or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this is when problems first emerge, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care (such as a child in need or a child with a protection plan). [Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers](#) supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. This advice includes the seven golden rules for sharing information and considerations with regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

57. DPA and UK GDPR **do not** prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Fears about sharing information **must not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Early help assessment

58. If early help is appropriate, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to local authority children's social care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

Statutory children's social care assessments and services

59. **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.** Referrals should follow the local referral process.

60. Local authority children's social care assessments should consider where children are being harmed in contexts outside the home, so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm. Additional information is available here: [Contextual Safeguarding](#).

61. The online tool [Report Child Abuse to Your Local Council](#) directs to the relevant local authority children's social care contact number.

Children in need

62. A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to

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

Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm:

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

What will the local authority do?

64. Within one working day of a referral being made, a local authority social worker should acknowledge its receipt to the referrer and make a decision about the next steps and the type of response that is required. This will include determining whether:

- the child requires immediate protection and urgent action is required
- any services are required by the child and family and what type of services
- the child is in need and should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) provides details of the assessment process

- there is reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and whether enquiries must be made, and the child assessed under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Chapter one of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) provides details of the assessment process, and
- further specialist assessments are required to help the local authority to decide what further action to take.

65. The referrer should follow up if this information is not forthcoming.

66. If social workers decide to carry out a statutory assessment, staff should do everything they can to support that assessment (supported by the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as required).

67. If, after a referral, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the referrer should consider following local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.

Record keeping

68. **All** concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. This will also help if/when responding to any complaints about the way a case has been handled by the school or college. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.

Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

69. If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

Why is all of this important?

70. It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address safeguarding risks, prevent issues escalating and to promote children's welfare. Research and serious case reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action.¹⁶ Further information about serious case reviews can be found in Chapter four of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#). Examples of poor practice include:

- failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect
- poor record keeping
- failing to listen to the views of the child
- failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve
- not sharing information with the right people within and between agencies
- sharing information too slowly, and
- a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.

What school and college staff should do if they have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another staff member

71. Schools and colleges should have processes and procedures in place to manage **any** safeguarding allegation, or concern (no matter how small), about staff members (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors).

72. If staff have safeguarding concerns or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors) **posing a risk of harm to children**, then:

- this should be referred to the headteacher or principal
- where there are concerns/allegations about the headteacher or principal, this should be referred to the chair of governors, chair of the management committee or proprietor of an independent school, and
- in the event of concerns/allegations about the headteacher, where the headteacher is also the sole proprietor of an independent school, or a situation where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the headteacher, this should be reported directly to the local authority designated officer(s) (LADOs). Details of your local LADO should be easily accessible on your local authority's website.

73. If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers or contractors) that **does not** meet the harm threshold, then this should be shared in accordance with the school or college low-level concerns policy. Further details can be found in Part four of this guidance.

What school or college staff should do if they have concerns about safeguarding practices within the school or college

74. All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice

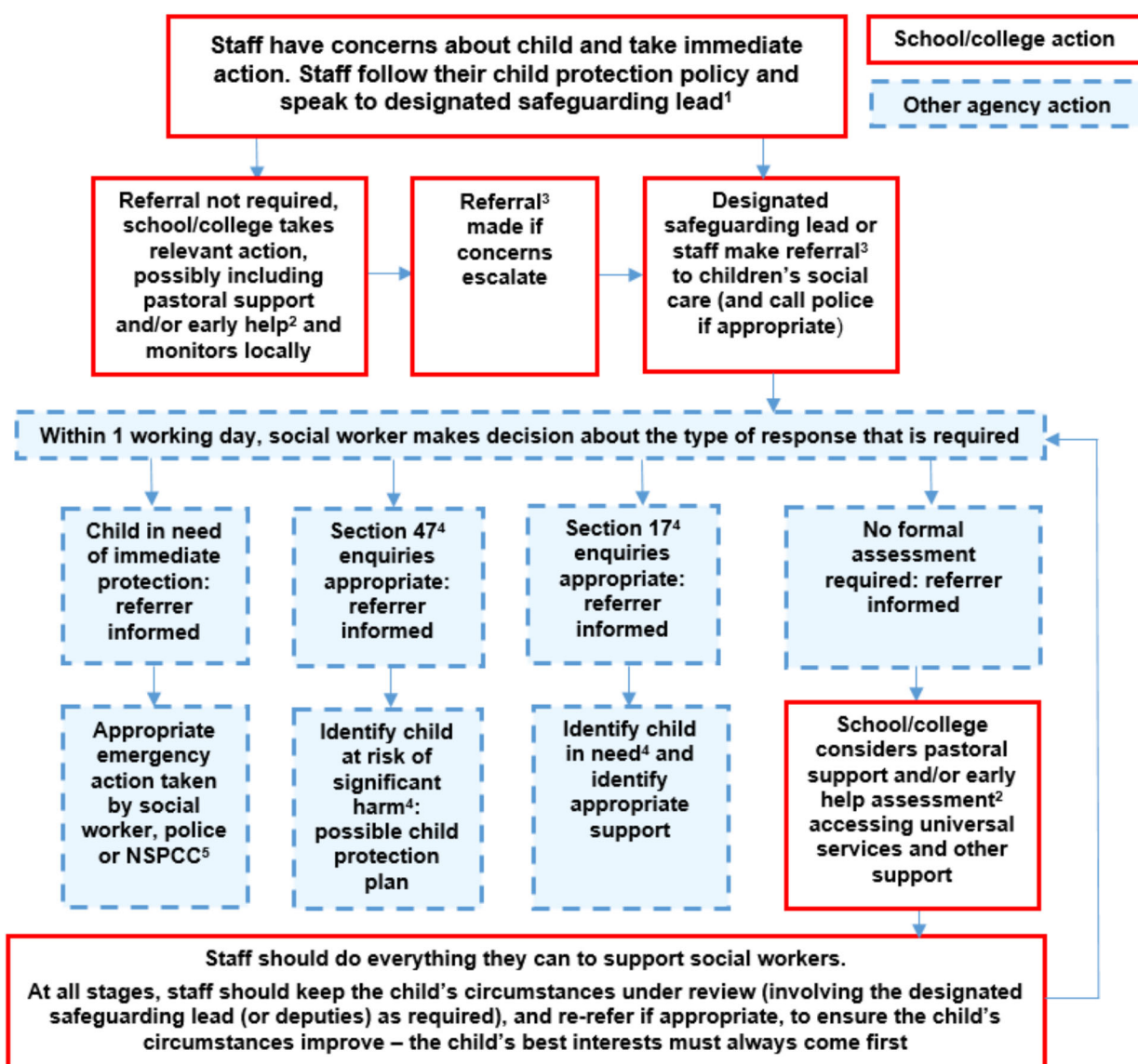
and potential failures in the school's or college's safeguarding regime and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

75. Appropriate whistleblowing procedures should be put in place for such concerns to be raised with the school's or college's senior leadership team.

76. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them:

- general guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: [Advice on Whistleblowing](#)
- the [NSPCC's what you can do to report abuse dedicated helpline](#) is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally, or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their school or college. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk.¹⁷

Actions where there are concerns about a child



Keeping Children Safe In Education: September 2022

Annex A: For staff who do not work in 'Regulated' activity

The following is a condensed version of Part one of Keeping children safe in education. It can be provided (instead of Part one) to those staff who do not directly work with children, if the governing body or proprietor think it will provide a better basis for those staff to promote the welfare of and safeguard children.

The role of school and college staff

558. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children has an important role to play.

559. 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. It is important all staff (including those who do not work directly with children) recognise the important role they play in protecting children.

What school and college staff need to know

560. For the purposes of safeguarding, a child is anyone under the age of 18. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing 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.

All staff should:

- Be aware of the systems in their school or college which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. As a minimum this Annex and the child protection policy should be shared with staff at induction
- Receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) which is regularly updated. In addition, all staff should receive safeguarding and child protection updates (including online safety) (for example, via emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to provide them with the skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively
- Know the identity of the designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) and how to contact them
- know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused or neglected. This includes understanding they should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone else about a report of abuse, as this is unlikely to be in the best interests of the child, and,

- should be able to reassure all victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

What school and college staff should look out for

Abuse and neglect

561. Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. **All** staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect, including exploitation, so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

562. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

Forms of abuse and neglect

563. **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. Children may be abused by other children or adults, in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.

564. **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse that may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

565. **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. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

566. **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. Females can also be abusers as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child-on-child abuse) in education and **all** staff should be aware of it and their school or colleges policy and procedures for dealing with it.

567. **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

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

568. **All** staff should be aware that child sexual and child criminal exploitation are forms of child abuse.

Safeguarding issues

569. **All** staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger.

Child-on-child abuse

570. **All** staff should be aware that children can abuse other children at any age (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). And that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

571. **All** staff should be clear as to the school or college's policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse. Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment

What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about a child

572. Staff working with children should maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the **best interest** of the child.

573. Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

574. If staff have **any concerns** about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. They should follow their school or college's child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). In the absence of the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) staff should speak to a member of the school or college's senior leadership team.

575. The designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will generally lead on next steps, including who else, if anyone, in the school or college should be informed and whether to pass a concern to local authority children's social care and/or the police. In some instances, staff may be expected to support the local authority children social care assessment process. If this is the case, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will support them.

Why is all of this important?

576. It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address safeguarding risks and prevent issues escalating and to promote children's welfare. Research and serious case reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective and immediate action. Examples of poor practice includes failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect.

What school and college staff should do if they have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another staff member who may pose a risk of harm to children

577. If staff have safeguarding concerns or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including supply staff, contractors, volunteers, and visitors) posing a risk of harm to children, they should speak to the headteacher or principal (unless it relates to them), in which case they should speak to another member of the school's or college's senior leadership team.

What school or college staff should do if they have concerns about safeguarding practices within the school or college

578. All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's or college's safeguarding regime and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

579. Appropriate whistleblowing procedures should be in place for concerns to be raised with the school's or college's senior leadership team.

580. Where staff feel unable to raise an issue with their employer or feel that their genuine safeguarding concerns are not being addressed [NSPCC whistleblowing advice line](#) is available. Staff can call 0800028 0285 – 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk. Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH.

(end)