

# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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## **Child Protection and Safeguarding Contacts**

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## **Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations (LADO) for London Borough of Tower Hamlets**

The LADO for contact is:  
Tel: 020 7364 0677 Email: [LADO@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

In the event of not being able to contact Melanie Benzie, then please contact the Child Protection Advice Line in the first instance on 020 7364 3444 or the Education Safeguarding Manager:  
**Sharifa Chowdhury:** [sharifa.chowdhury@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:sharifa.chowdhury@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

## **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **Introduction and Context**

#### **Purpose of the Policy**

Everyone working with children or young people has a responsibility to understand what safeguarding means and what their responsibilities are in relation to keeping children and young people safe.

The purpose of this policy is to provide all stakeholders with information about safeguarding children and young people, and to give guidance on the procedures to follow should there be any concerns that comes to your notice about the safety of a child or young person attending the school.

#### **Our Policy**

There are 6 main elements to our policy, which are described in the following sections:

- Roles and responsibilities for safeguarding.
- The types of abuse that are covered by the policy.
- The signs of abuse that staff and volunteers should look out for.
- Expectations of staff and volunteers with regard to safeguarding, and the procedures and processes that should be followed, including the support provided to children.
- How the academy will ensure that all staff and volunteers are appropriately trained and checked for their suitability to work within the academy.
- How the policy will be managed and have its delivery overseen.

Through implementation of this policy we will ensure that our school provides a safe environment for children to learn and develop.

#### **Our Responsibilities**

Mulberry Academy Shoreditch is committed to safeguarding children and young people and we expect everyone who works in our academy to share this commitment. This policy sets out how Mulberry Academy Shoreditch will deliver these responsibilities.

This policy should be read in conjunction with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2021), which is statutory guidance to be read and followed by academies and colleges, and alongside 'Working together to safeguard children' (Sept 2019), a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. All staff **must** read Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 – Part 1 as part of the Safeguarding INSET in September, prior to the school opening.

## Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2020\)](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#), and the [Governance Handbook](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our local safeguarding partners.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#), which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques
- Part 3 of the schedule to the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school
- [The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#), which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- [Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- [Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](#), which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism

The guidance **should** be read alongside:

- statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#);
- departmental advice [What to do if you are Worried a Child is Being Abused - Advice for Practitioners; and](#)
- [departmental advice Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges](#)

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

We will follow the procedures set out by Tower Hamlets Local Safeguarding Children Board:  
<http://www.childrenandfamiliestrust.co.uk/the-lscb/>

This statutory guidance should be read and followed by:

- our governing body of maintained schools (including maintained nursery schools) and colleges;
- the proprietor will be the academy trust;
- our senior leadership teams.

## **Our Principles**

We believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes social, physical and moral development of the individual child. We have a child centred and co-ordinated approach to safeguarding.

We recognise the importance of providing an environment within our school that will help children feel safe and respected.

We recognise the importance of enabling children to talk openly about anything that worries them and to feel confident that they will be listened to.

We will work with parents to build an understanding of the academy's responsibilities to ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.

Safeguarding arrangements in our school are underpinned by four key principles:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all staff, Trust Directors, Local Advisory Body members and volunteers should play their full part in keeping children safe; and
- A child centred approach: a clear understanding of the needs and views of children. This means that that everyone should consider, all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child
- 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.
- To work with our partners and all external agencies to support children at all times

## **Scope**

In line with the law, this policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years.

This policy applies to all members of staff in our academy, including all permanent, temporary and support staff, Trust Directors, Local Advisory Body members, volunteers, contractors and external service or activity providers.

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

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

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

## **Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Governing Body**

Our governing body should ensure they facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding.

Safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and this policy development. Ultimately, all systems, processes and policies should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

Where there is a safeguarding concern our governing body and school leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place, and they should be well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.

Our Governing body should ensure that all staff should undergo regular updated safeguarding training, including online safety. All children should be taught about safeguarding, including online safety. Safeguarding should be integrated, aligned and considered as part of curriculum planning.

Whilst considering the above training requirements, our governing body should have regard to the Teachers' Standards which set out the expectation that all teachers manage

behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe educational environment and requires teachers to have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils.

The Governing body should ensure that the child protection policy includes:

- procedures to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse;
- the systems in place (and they should be well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible) for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously;
- how allegations of peer on peer abuse will be recorded, investigated and dealt with;
- clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by peer on peer abuse will be supported;
- a recognition that even if there are no reported cases of peer on peer abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported;
- a statement which makes clear there should be a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, and it should never be passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children;
- recognition that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys’ perpetrators, but that all peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously; and
- the different forms peer on peer abuse can take, such as:
  - bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
  - physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; o sexual violence and sexual harassment. Part five of this guidance and Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges sets out how schools and colleges should respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment;
  - consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery):
  - 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;
  - upskirting (which is a criminal offence<sup>37</sup>), 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.

### **What school staff need to know**

All staff should be aware of systems within the school 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 peer on peer abuse;
- behaviour policy (which should include measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- 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)

Copies of policies and a copy of Part 1 should be provided for all staff at induction

### **What school staff should look out for**

Staff and volunteers working within the school need to be able to identify children who require early help. They should refer all concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or the SENCO or Attendance and Welfare Officer

These include a child who may be:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs
- is a young carer
- is at risk of being a victim of sexual violence
- is engaging in sexual activity
- is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic violence
- has returned home to their family from care and is a privately fostered child
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect



## **Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The DSL is responsible for ensuring staff are aware of their responsibilities as follows:

- Knowing who the Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Dan Collis** (in his absence, Jennie Montgomerie, the Deputy Head of School or Kendra Healy, the Safeguarding Officer).
- Raising any concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. **If at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to Tower Hamlets children's social care immediately. Anyone can make this referral by phoning 020 7364 5006.**
- Attending training as and when required.
- Being alert to the signs of abuse and their need to refer any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Maintaining an attitude of 'it could happen here'. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child.
- Knowing the school's procedures for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, and reporting any such concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Listening to, and seeking out, the views, wishes and feelings of students
- **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 and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.
- 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 abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Sharing information and working together to provide student with the help they need
- Referring to the Principal any concerns about another member of staff, or if the concerns are about the Principal, referring them to Mulberry Schools Trust.
- Raising concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime through the academy's Whistle Blowing Policy.

- Being aware of Tower Hamlets safeguarding procedures and ensuring the Tower Hamlets Local Safeguarding Children Board (THSCB) procedures are followed:  
<http://www.childrenandfamiliestrust.co.uk/the-lscb/>.
- Seeking early help where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one agency.

## **Types of Abuse**

### **Child Abuse**

Abuse is 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. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. There are four types of child abuse as defined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2021) as follows:

#### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse 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.

Most children will collect cuts and bruises and injuries, and these should always be interpreted in the context of the child's medical and social history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body, e.g. elbows, knees, shins, and are often on the front of the body. Some children, however, will have bruising that is more than likely inflicted rather than accidental. Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given, or visible on the 'soft' parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. cheeks, abdomen, back and buttocks. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern.

The physical signs of abuse may include:

- unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- multiple bruises – in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh
- cigarette burns
- human bite marks
- broken bones
- scalds, with upward splash marks
- multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts

- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather
- depression
- withdrawn behaviour
- running away from home

## **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children 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 the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), 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, though it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse can be difficult to identify as there are often no outward physical signs. Indications may be a developmental delay due to a failure to thrive and grow, however, children who appear well-cared for may nevertheless be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix or play with other children.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- being unable to play
- fear of making mistakes
- sudden speech disorders
- self-harm
- fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour
- developmental delay in terms of emotional progress

## **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact or 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children

All staff and volunteers should be aware that adults, who may be men, women or other children, who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages. Indications of sexual abuse may be physical or from the child's behaviour. In all cases, children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- pain or itching in the genital area
- bruising or bleeding near genital area
- sexually transmitted disease
- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- having nightmares
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level; sexual drawings or languages
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- substance or drug abuse
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

## **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may include a failure 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)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

- neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

It can be difficult to recognise neglect, however, its effects can be long term and damaging for children.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- being constantly dirty or 'smelly'
- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- losing weight, or being constantly underweight
- inappropriate or dirty clothing

Neglect may be indicated by changes in behaviour which may include:

- mentioning being left alone or unsupervised
- not having many friends
- complaining of being tired all the time
- not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments

## **Contextual Safeguarding**

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

In addition to physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect, the following are further risks to children and young people identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education and risks that staff need to be aware of and be vigilant about:

### **Child abduction and community safety incidents**

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff.

It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers.

### **Children and the court system**

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed.

### **Children missing in education**

Children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage.

### **Elective Home Education (EHE)**

Many home educated children have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience. We would expect the parents' decision to home educate to be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. However, this is not the case for all, and home education can mean some children are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs.

From September 2016 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended so that schools must inform their LA of all deletions from their admission register when a child is taken off roll

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, we will work other key professionals to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. Ideally, this would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker.

### **Children with family members in prison**

Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health.

### **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

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

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence, or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (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.

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 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.

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

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 e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people under the age of 18 receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship

where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs or groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim, which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of violence, coercion, intimidation or enticement, and includes unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including online bullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

Boys and young men and girls and young women can be victims of CSE. Key indicators of children being sexually exploited may include:

- going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- regularly missing education or not taking part in education
- displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- receiving unexplained gift or gifts from unknown sources
- associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- having multiple phones
- mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing
- seen at strange meeting places (hotels or known places of concern)
- having older boyfriends/girlfriends who are believed to be a risk to children
- self-harming/drug or alcohol misuse
- physical injuries (e.g. bruising suggestive of sexual assault)
- secretive behaviour

Staff should also be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation do not recognise themselves as such.

These include:

- **Inappropriate relationships** – Usually involves just one abuser who has inappropriate power – physical, emotional or financial – or control over a young person. The young person may believe they have a genuine friendship or loving relationship with their abuser.
- **Boyfriend/Girlfriend** – Abuser grooms the victim by striking up a normal relationship with them, giving them gifts and meeting in cafes or shopping centres. A seemingly consensual relationship develops but later turns abusive. Victims may be required to attend parties and sleep with multiple men and threatened with violence if they try to seek help.
- **Organised exploitation and trafficking** – Victims are trafficked through criminal networks, often between towns or cities, and forced or coerced into sex with multiple men. They may also be used to recruit new victims. This serious organised activity can involve the buying and selling of young people.



## **County lines**

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools (mainstream and special), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children’s homes and care homes.

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);
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs;
- are exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection;
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a ‘trap house or cuckooing’ or hotel room where there is drug activity;
- owe a ‘debt bond’ to their exploiters;
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

## **Modern slavery**

Child slavery occurs when a child is exploited for someone else’s gain. It can include child trafficking, child marriage and child domestic slavery.

## **Cybercrime**

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

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded;
- denial of Service (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources; and,
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

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

## **Domestic abuse**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected" (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. The government will issue statutory guidance to provide further information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including the impact on children.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of peer on peer abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

## **Grooming**

This is a process by which adults and other children, especially older children, use to establish control over a child with the ultimate purpose of exploiting them. The grooming can be for:

- Sexual exploitation
- Criminal exploitation
- Fundamentalism and terrorism.

The process of grooming for sexual exploitation involves:

- Targeting the victim – often someone who is vulnerable, lonely, emotionally needy, lacking in confidence or self-esteem
- Gaining the victim's trust – groomers are very patient and invest a great deal of time in gaining trust. They have the long-term gain in mind.
- Filling a need – making the victim feel better about themselves; giving attention and also gifts and presents.
- Isolating the victim – creating situations where the victim is alone with the groomer and, little by little, cutting the victim off from friends and family.
- Sexualising the relationship – this occurs where the groomer has created sufficient emotional dependency so that the victim does not resist/cannot resist.
- Maintaining control - this is possible because through the processes above, the victim no longer trusts anyone else and trusts the groomer above all, which enables the groomer to manipulate the victim and control them completely.

Grooming for criminal exploitation or into fundamentalism is not very different. These also involve careful targeting, gaining trust, isolating the victim, filling a need, providing propaganda to make the victim willing to commit crimes, includes desensitising them to violence, and maintaining control.

Those individuals involved in grooming children are adept at convincing adults around them, and

## **Homelessness**

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

## **Female Genital Mutilation**

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

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

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.

Risk factors for FGM include;

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

FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter out of academy to visit an 'at risk' country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include;

- difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
- spending long periods of time away from the classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems

- frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
- prolonged or repeated absences from academy, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations
- confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

The Serious Crime Act 2015 sets out a duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify the Police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out or preventing it from happening to a girl under 18.

### FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers, along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, 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 may face disciplinary sanctions.

It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils or students, 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. Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school's designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) and involve children's social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures.

## **Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence**

### **Prevention of Forced Marriage**

Schools are well placed to raise concerns and take action to prevent young people from being forced into marriage whilst on extended visits to their parents' home country or that of extended family. While the majority of extended holidays or visits to family overseas are for valid reasons, this guidance aims to raise awareness amongst education professionals of children at risk of forced marriage. Where staff have concerns or become aware that Forced Marriage or abuse may take place or is taking place, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy (DSL) will take action, as appropriate.

### **What is forced marriage?**

A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not or, in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities, cannot consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

This is not the same as an arranged marriage. In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

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

### **Honour based violence**

So-called honour based violence occurs in communities where the concepts of honour and shame are fundamentally bound up with the expected behaviour of families and individuals, particularly that of women. The term describes a form of domestic violence motivated by the notion of 'honour' and includes practices such as breast ironing. The victim can be subjected to long term low level physical abuse and bullying as 'punishment' for 'bringing dishonour on the family' and, in some extreme cases, may be killed.

Where staff have concerns or become aware that honour based violence or abuse may take place or is taking place, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy (DSL) who will take action, as appropriate.

### **Mental Health**

- 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.
- Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Consultants however, are well placed to observe children when visiting schools and learner centres and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.
- If consultants have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following the school's or centre's child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

## **Preventing Radicalisation**

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on specified authorities, including local authorities and childcare, education and other children's service providers, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism ("the Prevent Duty").

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

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

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

## **Recognising Extremism**

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

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

Interventions with individuals who have been highlighted as a concern may include:

- increased adult support, supervision and encouragement
- mentoring programmes
- signposting to positive activities in and out of academy
- behaviour support/anger management programmes

- attendance support
- counselling
- intensive family support or parenting programmes with a Preventing Violent Extremism element
- links with relevant voluntary or religious organisations for theological/education programmes
- support from the Safer Schools Police Officer or Prevent Team
- advice on online safety (for students and parents)
- referrals to targeted youth support, CAMHS or the Youth Crime Prevention Worker

Prevention work which is embedded into the curriculum and extracurricular activities includes:

- Work on community cohesion, tolerance and anti-violence addressed throughout the curriculum: promoting alternative positive narratives to counteract extremist ideologies.
- Open discussion and debate of issues and the law in a supportive environment
- Critical appraisal of sources/internet resilience/identifying propaganda – relevant for all subjects but especially when using the internet for research
- Programmes of study which highlight British Values
- Social and emotional aspects of learning
- Anti-bullying work including work with Stonewall to tackle homophobia.
- Learning for Life curriculum with focus on building positive relationships, free from violence (including focusing on reducing violence against women/domestic violence)
- Rewarding positive behaviour
- Pastoral and induction support
- Work on safety, risk and crime prevention
- Opportunities for channelling positive engagement e.g. charities/community work
- Positive activities such as Enrichment
- Ensuring consistent messages between home and the school

## **Peer on Peer Abuse**

The school has put in place safeguards to reduce the likelihood of peer on peer allegations. There is an established ethos of respect, friendship, courtesy and kindness and clear expectations and consequences for unacceptable behaviour, together with visible staff presence around the school.

**All** staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer 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 peer on peer abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports in our schools, 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 peer on peer abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).



It is essential that **all** staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually 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.

The school seeks to educate all students on healthy relationships through the curriculum however we recognise that, despite this, we need to be alert to peer on peer abuse. It is important to recognise that children do engage in sexual play and experimenting, which is usually age appropriate, and it is important not to criminalise behaviour that is a perfectly normal and healthy part of growing up. The presence of one or more of the following points in situations where there has been sexual activity between children should always trigger some concern:

- One of the children is significantly more dominant than the other
- One of the children is significantly more vulnerable than the other e.g. in terms of disability, confidence, physical strength
- There has been some use of threats, bribes or coercion to secure compliance or to maintain secrecy

Any allegation of peer on peer abuse must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy (DSL), and advice and guidance will be sought from Children’s Social Care where necessary. Where it is clear a crime has been committed, or there is a risk of a crime being committed, the Police will be contacted. The school will respond to unacceptable behaviour to prevent reoccurrence and work with external agencies where appropriate. For example, if a student’s behaviour negatively impacts on the safety and welfare of others then safeguards will be put in place to promote the well-being of the students affected.

## **Sexual violence and sexual harassment**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It can also occur online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school or college. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

It is essential that **all** victims are reassured 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 sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- challenging inappropriate behaviours;
- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and,
- challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

### **What is sexual violence and sexual harassment?**

#### Sexual violence

It is important that school and college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way and that it can happen both inside and outside of school/college. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003<sup>1</sup> as described below:

**Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

**Assault by Penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

**Sexual Assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (Schools should be aware that sexual

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assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent, or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)

### **Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent**

A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

### **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.

### **Sexual consent**

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- the age of consent is 16;
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

### **Sexual harassment**

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. 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.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and

- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.<sup>139</sup> It may include:
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos.

## **Sexting**

Sexting is inappropriate and unsafe behaviour which threatens the social, emotional and/or physical safety of students. Although sexting is typically voluntary at first, it raises many serious legal and social concerns, especially when the images are spread beyond the control of the sender. Sexting can result in humiliation, bullying and harassment of students. The school has a responsibility to prevent sexting and the dissemination of inappropriate or offensive material and to educate both students and staff about both the legal and social dangers of sexting.

## **Definition**

The term 'sexting' is derived from texting and refers to the sending of sexually provocative material (including photos, videos and sexually explicit text) from modern communication devices or applications, such as mobile phones, tablets, email, social networking sites and instant messaging services.

## **Legal Implications for Students**

Sexting may breach laws that prohibit the creation, distribution or possession of child pornography regardless of whether all parties involved consent to the images being taken and shared, or whether the images are sent to other minors, even minors of the same age.

By sending an explicit image, a young person is producing and distributing child abuse images and risks being prosecuted, even if the picture is taken and shared with their permission.

Sexting may also fall under 'sexual harassment' under the Commonwealth *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* or if more than one 'sext' is sent to a recipient this may also constitute unlawful stalking. It is also an offence under the Malicious Communications Act 1988.

Sexting may also be considered a form of cyberbullying when nude or sexually suggestive images are uploaded and shared on the internet and social media. This is especially the case where images are shared past the intended audience or when accompanied by nasty comments.

## **Upskirting**

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. '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 sex, can be a victim.

The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment

The initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important. How we, the school responds to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward. Schools and colleges not recognising, acknowledging or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and/or downplaying of some behaviours can actually lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour. It is essential that all victims are reassured 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 sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

If staff have a concern about a child or a child makes a report to them, they should follow the referral process. If staff are in any doubt as to what to do they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

All staff members are required to notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately upon becoming aware that sexting by a student is likely to have occurred. The allegation will first be investigated by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the parents of all students involved will be contacted.

### **Serious violence**

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, 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.

All staff should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these. Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.

**All** staff should be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

## How to Report Concerns

Clear procedures on reporting any concerns are given to all staff/volunteers in school. This is done as part of the staff induction training. All child protection and/or safeguarding concerns should be reported to Dan Collis, Designated Safeguarding Lead, immediately or Jennie Montgomerie, the deputy DSL or Kendra Healy, the Safeguarding Officer. Any concern should also be sent via the CP email address: [childprotection@mulberryacademyshoreditch.org](mailto:childprotection@mulberryacademyshoreditch.org) or CPOMS. The DSL (or a deputy) will be available during term time. A useful flowchart of actions to take where there are concerns about a child is also reflected in Appendix A (Keeping Children Safe in Education', September 2020).

## What to do if a child discloses any form of abuse to you

It is important to take the following action if a child decides they want to confide or disclose to you:

- Follow the school's protocol and avoid if possible being on your own with the child

If this is not possible

- Do not promise to keep it a secret – be clear that you will have to pass on the information
- Do listen to what they have to say
- Do not judge the child or show your own emotions i.e. do not show disgust; feelings of abhorrence or shock at what you are being told
- Do not give views about the allegations or the person about whom allegations are being made
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in speaking about what they are experiencing
- Reassure the child that whatever is happening to them is not their fault
- Take notes of what they say; if you are not able to write it down while they are disclosing, then do so as soon as possible after they have spoken to you
- Do not ask leading or probing questions or try to investigate it further yourself – this will be done by safeguarding professionals
- Any questions being asked should be to seek clarification only

## **Relationships with Pupils**

It is important to remain polite and respectful towards pupils but on no account to form friendships either in person or on social media. If pupils at the school or close relatives, such as a parent, request you to join their social media circle, although this will be unlikely, you must refrain from doing so.

To keep yourself safe from false allegations, ensure that you are never alone in a room or a lift with a pupil from the school. Never offer to give lifts or gifts, no matter how small, to a pupil.

In addition, if, in your role, you need to enter changing rooms or toilets, make sure that you knock and check that there is no-one inside. Wait till the rooms or toilets are vacated before entering.

Be a positive role model and professional in your behaviour towards other staff, pupils and visitors.

You should ensure that you do not make any physical contact with a child or young person at the school.

Do not take pictures or videos of pupils either deliberately or by accident.

## **Taking Action**

If at any time it is considered that a child has suffered harm or is likely to do so, a referral should be made to Tower Hamlets Duty Team on 020 7364 2972/2904/5601/5605 (out of hours telephone number, 020 7364 4079) or the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team on **101**. Call **999** if you are concerned a child needs immediate protection. If the child has an injury that requires medical attention, the child protection process will not delay the administration of first aid or emergency medical assistance.

## **Student Disclosures**

At Mulberry Academy Shoreditch we have a clear procedure for reporting concerns. If a student talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will need to let the student know that they must pass the information on. Staff members will allow them to speak freely and will not ask investigative questions.

The staff member will tell the student what will happen next. It is the duty of the member of staff to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead what has been discussed. The staff member will write up details of the conversation with the student as soon as possible via an email to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All safeguarding concerns should be recorded promptly and passed to Dan Collis or Jennie Montgomerie or Kendra Healy.

Staff should **not** wait until the following school day to report a concern. Information will be shared on a need to know basis only.

Issues or concerns will not be discussed with colleagues, friends or family.



## **Suspecting that a Student is at Risk of Harm**

It is not always easy to recognise that a child is being hurt or is at risk, so abuse is often undetected. There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a student may be at risk, but have no 'real' evidence. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the student opportunity to talk.

Staff should pass on these early concerns. Following an initial conversation with the student, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Dan Collis or Jennie Montgomerie, Deputy DSL or Kendra Healy, Safeguarding Offer.

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's **Anti-Bullying Policy** where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a student's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. The academy acknowledges that some children can be particularly vulnerable or may have an increased risk of abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare. To ensure that all of our students receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children that are considered to be vulnerable.

## **Notifying Parents/Carers**

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a student with their parents/carer. The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSL Safeguarding Lead will make contact with the parent/carer in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if the school believes that notifying parents/carers could increase the risk to the child, exacerbate the problem or compromise the safety of a staff member, advice will first be sought from Children's Social Care.

## **Referral to Children's Social Care and other Child Protection Agencies**

Concerns about a child's welfare should be referred to local authority children's social care. Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately. Referrals should follow the local referral process.

Children's social care assessments should consider where children are being harmed in contexts outside the home, so it is important that the school provides 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.

Staff will follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. The Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy DSL will make a referral to the relevant Children Social Care/Tower Hamlets MASH if it is believed that a student is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm.

At Mulberry Academy Shoreditch we also liaise with a wide variety of outside agencies. All initial referrals of requests should be shared with the DSL, Deputy DSL or the Safeguarding officer first.

The student (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

### **Private Fostering**

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18 if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, aunt or uncle' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence.

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or be involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

Schools have a mandatory duty to report to the local authority where they are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. Although schools have a duty to inform the local authority, there is no duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the academy. However, it should be clear to the school who has parental responsibility.

Academy staff should notify the designated safeguarding lead or deputy DSL when they become aware of private fostering arrangements. The designated safeguarding lead will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the LA. The academy itself has a duty to inform the local authority of the private fostering arrangements.

On admission to the school, we will take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child who is being registered.

## **Record keeping**

**All** concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. 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;
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

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

## **Storage and Handling of Records**

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the principles set out in the Data Protection Act 1988. Child protection records will be stored in a locked facility accessed only by the Principal and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Any electronic information will only be made available to relevant individuals. Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access. Sensitive information will not be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. If it is necessary to store child protection information on portable media such as a CD or flash drive, these items will also be password protected and kept in locked storage.

Child protection information will be stored separately from the student's academy file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. If such records need to be sent to a new school or college they will be sent separate from the student's file and under a confidential cover.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a student or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Principal or Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

## **Confidentiality and Sharing Information**

### **Information sharing**

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes. We, the school have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes.

As part of meeting a child's needs, it is important for governing bodies and proprietors to recognise the importance of information sharing between practitioners and local agencies. This should include ensuring arrangements are in place that set out clearly the processes and principles for sharing information within the school or college and with children's social care, the safeguarding partners, other organisations, agencies, and practitioners as required.

School staff should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to the local authority children's social care.

It is important that governing bodies and proprietors are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.

The Governing body should ensure relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share (and withhold) personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR. This includes:

- being confident of the processing conditions which allow them to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information, which is sensitive and personal, and should be treated as 'special category personal data'.
- understanding that 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner, but it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.
- for schools, not providing pupils' personal data where the serious harm test under the legislation is met. For example, in a situation where a child is in a refuge or another form of emergency accommodation, and the serious harms test is met, they must withhold providing the data in compliance with schools' obligations under the

Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR. Where in doubt schools should seek independent legal advice.

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

Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or the deputy DSL, the Principal or Mulberry Academy Trust (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a need to know basis.

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

### **Storage and Handling of Records**

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the principles set out in the Data Protection Act 1988. Child protection records will be stored in a locked facility accessed only by the Principal and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Any electronic information will only be made available to relevant individuals. Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access. Sensitive information will not be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. If it is necessary to store child protection information on portable media such as a CD or flash drive, these items will also be password protected and kept in locked storage.

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## Online Safety

We are thoroughly committed to improving student's e-safety awareness at Mulberry Academy Shoreditch. Our Acceptable Use Policy is signed up to by all students and staff and the school will apply appropriate filters and monitoring systems as deemed to be reasonable.

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes'.
- **conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **commerce** - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

## Remote learning

Where children are being asked to learn online at home the Department has provided advice to support schools and colleges do so safely: [safeguarding in schools colleges and other providers](#) and [safeguarding and remote education](#). As a school, we always do and will follow this advice.

If a student, parent/carer or member of staff has a concern relating to on line safety students are encouraged to report it. They can report it directly to Dan Collis, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy (DSL), at the school.

## Photography and Images

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

To protect students we will:

- At the time of admission to the school we will seek signed consent (photographs and personal images consent form) from parents/carers and students for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- Ensure students are appropriately dressed
- Encourage students to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them

Parents, carers or relatives may only take still or video images of students in the school organised activities with the prior consent of the academy. If parents do not wish their children to be photographed or filmed and express this view in writing, their rights will be respected.

### **Visitors and the Use of school Premises**

At Mulberry Academy Shoreditch we recognise the role that external agencies and speakers can play in enhancing the learning experiences of our students. Where we use external agencies and individuals this way, we will positively vet them to ensure that their messages are consistent with, and not in opposition to, the academy's values and ethos.

Our school will assess the suitability and effectiveness of input from external agencies or individuals to ensure that:

- any messages communicated to students are consistent with the ethos of the academy and do not marginalise any communities, groups or individuals
- any messages do not seek to glorify criminal activity or violent extremism or seek to radicalise students through extreme or narrow views of faith, religion or culture or other ideologies
- activities are properly embedded in the curriculum and clearly mapped to schemes of work to avoid contradictory messages or duplication
- activities are matched to the needs of students
- activities are carefully evaluated by the academy to ensure that they are effective

Any guest speakers or external agencies will be provided with a details of safeguarding within academy and how to contact our Designated Safeguarding Lead on arrival at the academy, and will be appropriately supervised at all times.

When an agreement is made to allow non-academy groups or organisations to use the academy premises, appropriate checks will be made before agreeing the contract. Usage will be monitored and, in the event of any behaviour not in-keeping with this policy, the academy will contact the Police and terminate the arrangement.

## **Safer Recruitment**

The school follows the legal requirements of what we '**must** do', what we should do and what is considered best practice and important information relating too

- the recruitment and selection process;
- pre-appointment and vetting checks, regulated activity and recording of information;
- other checks that may be necessary for staff, volunteers and others, including the responsibilities on schools and colleges for children in other settings; and
- how to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of children and the legal reporting duties on employers.

The school also follows the Mulberry Schools Trust policy on Safer Recruitment. This policy can be found on the Trust's website'.

## **Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers**

The school will ensure that Safer Recruitment practices are always followed. Every interview panel will have at least one member who has a current certificate in Safer Recruitment. We will check on the identity of the candidates, follow up references with referees and scrutinise applications for gaps in employment. We will ensure that safeguarding considerations are at the centre of each stage of the recruitment process.

We will ensure that agencies and third parties supplying staff provide us evidence that they have made the appropriate level of safeguarding checks on individuals working in our academy.

Every job description and person specification will have a clear statement about the safeguarding responsibilities of the post holder.

We will ensure that all staff involved in recruitment are aware of government guidance on safer recruitment and that its recommendations are followed.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. **The school will ensure the correct level of DBS certificate is sought and ensure a prohibition check is undertaken.**



The types of checks undertaken will be in accordance with the guidance given in the Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021) document.

Any offer of appointment made to a successful candidate (including one who has lived or worked abroad) will be conditional on satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks as required in the guidance given in the Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2019) document.

When an enhanced DBS certificate is required it will be obtained from the candidate before or as soon as is practicable after the persons appointed.

The academy will always ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete. References will be sought on all shortlisted candidates, including internal ones, before interview, so that any issues or concerns they raise can be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview.

The academy will keep a single central record in accordance with the regulations given in the Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021) document.

Recruitment and/or deployment checks will be undertaken, as stated in the Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021) document, for the following:

- Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK
- Agency or third party staff
- Trainee/staff teachers
- Volunteers
- Contractors

The school will carry out all relevant checks if it is concerned about an existing member of staff and **refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.**

### **Dealing with Allegations against Existing Staff and Volunteers who Work with Children**

We will prevent people who pose risks to children from working in our academy by ensuring that all individuals working in any capacity at our academy have been subjected to safeguarding checks in line with the statutory guidance **Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Academies and Schools, September 2021.**

At Mulberry Academy Shoreditch we recognise the possibility that adults working in the academy may harm children. Any concerns about the conduct of other adults in the academy should be taken to the Principal without delay (or where that is not possible to the designated safeguarding lead); any concerns about the Principal should go to Mulberry Academy Trust who can be contacted via the PA to the Principal.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not mandatory, nor is it

automatic but, in some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed the best way to ensure that children are protected. Allegations against staff should be reported to the Principal. Allegations against the Principal or the designated lead officer should be reported to Mulberry Academy Trust. Where any member of the school staff or any volunteer has concerns that a person has caused harm or poses a future risk of harm to vulnerable groups, including children they must take action in accordance with the academy Policy. Under its duty of care for its employees, the academy will ensure they provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide the employee with a named contact if they are suspended. The academy will ensure its obligation for confidentiality when an allegation has been made.

The school also follows the Mulberry Schools Trust policy on managing allegations.. This policy can be found on the Trust's website'.

### **Managing Situations and Exit Arrangements**

For the following issues:

- Resignation and 'settlements' agreements
- Record keeping
- References
- Timescales
- Oversight and monitoring
- Suspension
- Information sharing
- Following a criminal investigation or prosecution
- On conclusion of a case
- In respect of malicious or unsubstantiated allegations

The academy will ensure compliance with the guidance and regulations contained in the appropriate sections of the Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021) document.

### **Training for all Staff to Raise Awareness and Increase Understanding**

Every year all staff (including non-teaching and volunteers) must undertake the Child Protection and Safeguarding training. This is recorded and logged. All staff are informed clearly on how to report anything of concern to Dan Collis, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSL immediately.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will undergo relevant updated child protection training every two years.

All staff members of the school will undergo annual safeguarding and child protection training (whole school training) which is regularly updated. They will also receive regular updates via bulletin, email and staff briefings.

All staff members must read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021. They must also sign the staff handbook acknowledgement form confirming they have read this.

Staff members who miss the whole academy training will be required to undertake other relevant training arranged on an alternate day by the school.

We will ensure that staff members provided by other agencies and third parties, e.g. supply staff and contractors, have received appropriate information commensurate with their roles before starting work. They will be given the opportunity to take part in whole academy training if it takes place during their period of work for the school.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will provide an annual briefing to the school on any changes to child protection legislation and procedures and relevant learning from local and national serious case reviews.

The school will maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

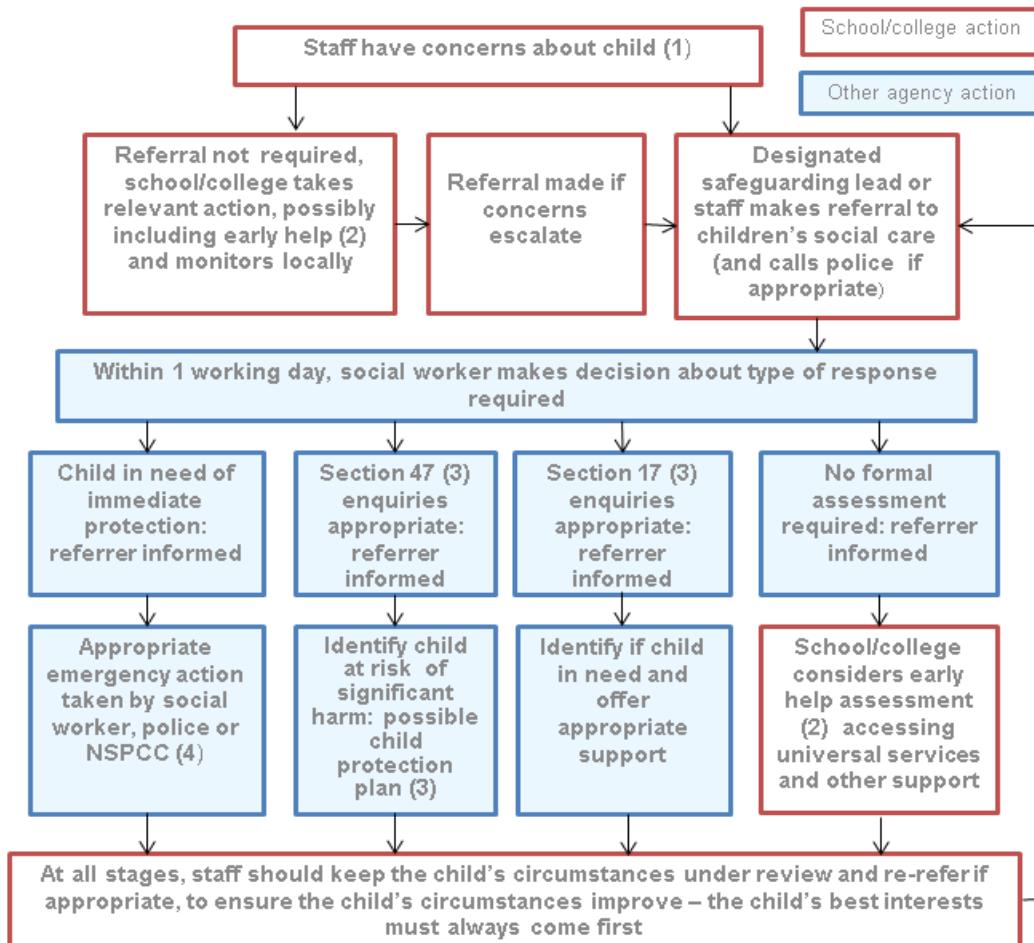
### **Management of the Policy**

The school will at all times adhere fully to the statutory guidance in place from the Department of Education issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent academy Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Education (Non-Maintained Special Academies) (England) Regulations 2011.

Currently **Keeping Children Safe in Education**: statutory guidance for academies and colleges (September 2021) and the departmental advice; **what to do if you are worried a child is being abused** – Advice for practitioners (September 2021). Nothing written in this policy overrides the academy's duties under such legislation.

Mulberry Academy Trust will oversee the policy, ensure its implementation and review its content on an annual basis.

## Actions where there are concerns about a child



1. In cases which also involve an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part four of this guidance.
2. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, an early help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Chapter one of [Working together to safeguard children](#) provides detailed guidance on the early help process.
3. Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. This can include s17 assessments of children in need and s47 assessments of children at risk of significant harm. Full details are in Chapter one of [Working together to safeguard children](#)
4. This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).