



Cherry Tree  
EDUCATION

# CHERRY TREE SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

DATE AGREED / REVIEWED: SEPTEMBER 2017, SEPTEMBER 2018,  
SEPTEMBER 2019, SEPTEMBER 2020, SEPTEMBER 2021, SEPTEMBER  
2022, SEPTEMBER 2023, SEPTEMBER 2024, SEPTEMBER 2025

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: SEPTEMBER 2026

HEADTEACHER SIGNATURE:

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR SIGNATURE:

ALL STAFF MUST HAVE ACCESS TO THIS POLICY, AND SIGN TO  
CONFIRM THAT THEY HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND WILL  
ADHERE TO ITS CONTENTS.

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## 1. Aims

The school aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding
- Staff are properly training in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues

## 2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) Education and training (welfare of children) Act 2021. We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- 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

## 3. Definitions

### **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:**

Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge

- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing impairment of children's physical and mental health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

**Child protection** is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

**Neglect** is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

**Sexting** (UKCIS guidance) (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) is the sharing of sexual imagery (photos or videos) by children

(UKCIS) have updated its non-statutory guidance on Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (YPSI), which is entitled '**Sharing nudes and semi-nudes**:'

In the latest advice for schools and colleges (UKCIS, 2020), this is defined as the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams online by young people under the age of 18. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline. Alternative terms used by children and young people may include 'dick pics' or 'pics'.

**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). (see online safety policy)

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

Cherry Tree are part of Operation Encompass, and the DSL has completed the relevant training. All staff and volunteers sign a domestic violence declaration on induction and annually.

[Operation Encompass is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse](#)

**Children** includes everyone under the age of 18.

The following 3 **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority (LA)
  - A clinical commissioning group for an area within the LA
  - The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area
- (refer to the Kent safeguarding children multi-agency partnership arrangements)

#### 4. Equality statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities
- Are young carers

- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and Management Committee members in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the 3 safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

### 5.1 All staff

All staff will read and understand part 1 of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and review this guidance at least annually.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy (DDSL), the behaviour policy, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- The early help process (sometimes known as the common assessment framework) and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM and radicalisation (CCE)

### 5.2 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The DSL is a member of the senior leadership team. Our DSL is Emma Brown 07745354498 and DDSL is Soo Finn 07710548733. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

When the DSL is absent, the DDSL will act as cover.

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so

- Contribute to the assessment of children
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly

The DSL will also keep the headteacher informed of any issues and liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate.

### 5.3 The Management Committee

The Management Committee will approve this policy at each review, ensure it complies with the law and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The Management Committee will appoint a member to monitor the safeguarding procedures

The Management Committee Chair will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher.

All Management Committee members will read Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1

All management committee members will complete safeguarding training.

All management committee members will complete online safety training and will ensure appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place.

### 5.4 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
- Communicating this policy to parents / carers when their child joins the school and via the school website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate

## 6. Confidentiality

Although we all have a duty to follow the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR, these must NOT prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding
- Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children
- If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if 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
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- The government's [information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#) includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information

- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy)

## 7. Recognising abuse and taking action

Staff, volunteers and Management Committee members must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue.

Please note – in this and subsequent sections, you should take any references to the DSL to mean “the DSL (or deputy DSL)”.

### 7.1 If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger

Make a referral to children’s social care and/or the police **immediately** if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger. **Anyone can make a referral.**

Tell the DSL (see section 5.2) as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

<https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

### 7.2 If a child makes a disclosure to you

If a child discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child’s own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it
- Sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to children’s social care and/or the police directly (see 7.1), and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so

### 7.3 If you discover that FGM has taken place or a pupil is at risk of FGM

The Department for Education’s Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs”.

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as ‘female genital cutting’, ‘circumcision’ or ‘initiation’.

Possible indicators that a pupil has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a pupil may be at risk, are set out in appendix 4.

**Any teacher** who discovers (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have been specifically told not to do so, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children’s social care as appropriate.

**Any other member of staff** who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils.

**Any member of staff** who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

#### **7.4 If you have concerns about a child's welfare and or mental health (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger)**

Figure 1 on page 8 illustrates the procedure to follow if you have any concerns about a child's welfare, which includes concerns about their mental health.

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

Due to the complexities of pupils at Cherry Tree, all pupils are observed and discussed on a daily basis both at the daily briefing and de-brief. If there are any immediate concerns prior to the de-brief they must be referred immediately to the DSL. Pupil's absences are monitored, and contact is made either in person or on the phone if any concerns. Any concerns are discussed with and actioned by the DSL and where appropriate other professionals are contacted.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL or DDSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000.

Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see section 7.1). Share any action taken with the DSL as soon as possible.

#### **Early help**

If early help is appropriate, the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner.

The DSL will keep the case under constant review and the school will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

#### **Referral**

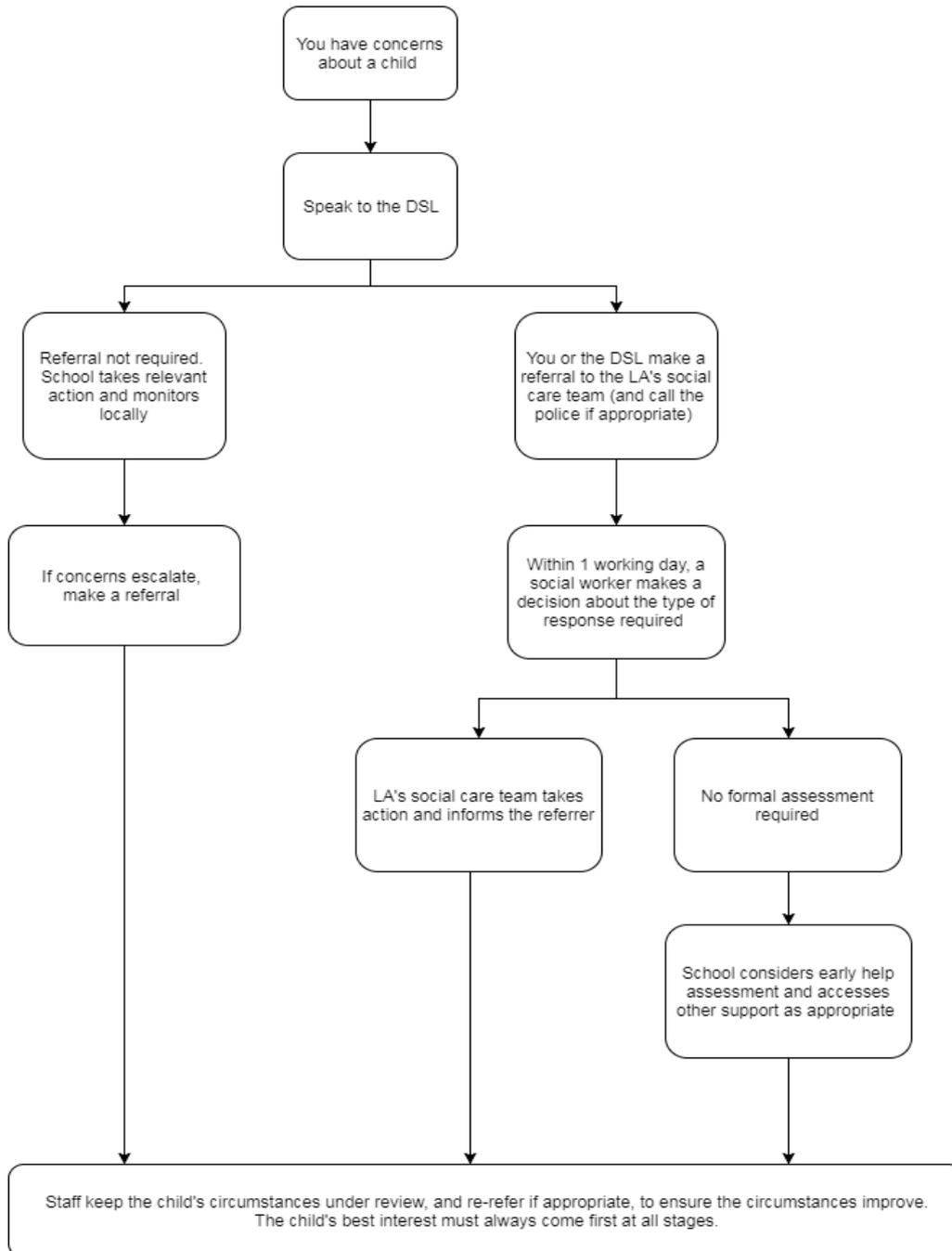
If it is appropriate to refer the case to local authority children's social care or the police, the DSL will make the referral or support you to do so.

If you make a referral directly (see section 7.1), you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The local authority will make a decision within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the local authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the child's situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or person who made the referral must follow local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

***Figure 1: procedure if you have concerns about a child's welfare (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger)***



### 7.5 If you have concerns about extremism

If a child is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL or DDSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from local authority children’s social care. Make a referral to local authority children’s social care directly, if appropriate (see ‘Referral’ above).

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and seek consent if appropriate and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include Channel, the government’s programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children’s social care team.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which school staff and Management Committee members can call to raise concerns about extremism with

respect to a pupil. You can also email [counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk). Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

If you make a referral directly (see section 7.1), you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

### **7.6 Concerns about a staff member or volunteer (this also includes supply staff, commissioned staff or organisations or individuals using school premises).**

If you have concerns about a member of staff, volunteer or an adult working with children or an allegation is made about a member of staff, volunteer or an adult working with children posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the headteacher. If the concerns/allegations are about the headteacher, speak to the chair of the Management Committee.

The headteacher/chair of Management Committee will then follow the procedures set out in appendix 3, if appropriate.

If the concerns/allegations are about the headteacher, speak to the Management Committee chair or the area designated officer at the local authority (LADO)

### **7.7 Allegations of abuse made against other pupils (child-on-child abuse)**

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”.

We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school’s behaviour policy and can be sanctions given by teachers but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (taking and distributing nude and semi nude images including sexting) (CCE)

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

- You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it
- The DSL will contact the local authority children’s social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made, the perpetrator(s) and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed
- The DSL will contact the children and young person’s mental health services (CYPMHS), if appropriate

We will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:

- Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensuring our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour. Sexual harassment, violence, online abuse and consent
- Ensuring pupils know they can talk to staff confidentially by making them aware of this on their induction
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand that a child harming another child could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy

## **7.8 Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images or videos)**

### **Your responsibilities when responding to an incident**

If you are made aware of an incident involving sexting (also known as ‘youth produced sexual imagery’), you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must **not**:

- View, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it. If you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL’s responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved

You should explain that you need to report the incident and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

### **Initial review meeting**

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to pupil(s)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children’s social care
- If it is necessary to view the imagery in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, imagery should not be viewed)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the imagery has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the pupils involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the pupils involved (in most cases parents/carers should be involved)

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police, LADO and/or children’s social care if:

- The incident involves an adult
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)
- What the DSL knows about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the imagery is under 13
- The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police, LADO or children's social care.

### **Further review by the DSL**

If at the initial review stage a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review.

They will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate) to establish the facts and assess the risks.

If at any point in the process there is a concern that a pupil has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately. LADO

### **Informing parents / carers and social workers**

The DSL will inform parents / carers and social workers at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the pupil at risk of harm.

### **Referring to the police**

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done by calling 101.

### **Recording incidents**

All sexting '**Sharing nudes and semi-nudes**: incidents and the decisions made in responding to them will be recorded. The record-keeping arrangements set out in section 12 of this policy also apply to recording incidents of sexting.

### **Curriculum coverage**

Pupils are taught about the issues surrounding sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images or videos) as part of our PSD and RSE education and computing programmes. Teaching covers the following in relation to sexting:

- What it is
- How it is most likely to be encountered
- The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive
- Issues of legality
- The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation

Pupils also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

- Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
- The receipt of such images

This policy on sexting is also shared with pupils so they are aware of the processes the school will follow in the event of an incident.

## **8. Notifying parents / carers**

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents/carers. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents/carers about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents/carers would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children's social care team before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents/carers of all the children involved.

## **9. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities**

We recognise that pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- Pupils being more prone to peer group isolation than other pupils
- The potential for pupils with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

## **10. Mobile phones, cameras and internet use**

Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present. Staff members' personal phones will remain in their bags or cupboards during contact time with pupils.

Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras.

We will follow the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 when taking and storing photos and recordings for use in the school.

Pupils at Cherry Tree are not permitted to have a phone, camera or smart device on them in school time.

Pupils using the internet are monitored in the classroom by teachers and we use custodio which is a tracking and monitoring system for each laptop. I-pads are not connected to the internet.

### **AI**

We recognise that AI tools can produce content that is illegal, dangerous, or inappropriate. Any AI-generated content that is abusive, intimate, or bullying in nature will be treated with the same severity as physical bullying or abuse, following our established safeguarding reporting procedures, however we will not use AI tools at Cherry Tree until staff have received adequate training which will be scheduled for September 2026

(see online safety policy)

## **11.Children potentially at a greater risk of harm**

### **11.1 Children who need a social worker**

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

### **11.2 Children requiring mental health support**

Cherry tree has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and well being of their pupils. 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.

Due to the complexities of pupils at Cherry Tree, all pupils are observed and discussed on a daily basis both at the daily briefing and de-brief. If there are any immediate concerns prior to the de-brief staff must referred their concerns immediately to the DSL.

Any concerns are discussed with and actioned by the DSL and where appropriate other professionals are contacted. The DSL will look to gain consent if appropriate.

### **11.3 Looked after children and previously looked after children**

All staff at Cherry Tree need to have the skills and knowledge, via up-to-date training, to keep looked after children safe. The DSL have access to all pupil information relating to their looked after legal status and care arrangements.

All previously looked after children potentially remain vulnerable and all staff are supported to have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe.

## **12. Complaints and concerns about school safeguarding policies**

### **12.1 Complaints against staff**

Complaints against staff that are likely to require a child protection investigation will be handled in accordance with our procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against staff (see appendix 3).

### **12.2 Other complaints**

Please see separate complaints policy

### **12.3 Whistle-blowing**

Please see separate whistle blowing policy

## **13. Record-keeping**

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Non-confidential records will be easily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have left the school.

If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded promptly and securely, and separately from the main pupil file. In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services

are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

In addition:

- Appendix 2 sets out our policy on record-keeping specifically with respect to recruitment and pre-employment checks
- Appendix 3 sets out our policy on record-keeping with respect to allegations of abuse made against staff

## **14. Training**

### **14.1 All staff**

All staff members will undertake safeguarding, child protection and online safety training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect. This training will be regularly updated and will be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners.

All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings) as required, but at least annually.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

### **14.2 The DSL and DDSL**

The DSL and DDSL will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years and online safety annually.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments and the use of AI).

They will also undertake Prevent awareness training.

### **14.3 Management Committee**

All Management Committee members receive training about safeguarding and online safety, to make sure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities. At least one member will be DSL trained so they are able to monitor the schools safeguarding procedures.

As the chair of Management Committee may be required to act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose.

### **14.4 Recruitment – interview panels**

At least one person conducting any interview for a post at the school will have undertaken safer recruitment training. We will inform shortlisted candidates that we might conduct an online search as part of due diligence checks in the recruitment process. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

### **14.5 Staff who have contact with pupils and families**

All staff who have contact with children and families will have supervisions which will provide them with support, coaching and training, promote the interests of children and allow for confidential discussions of sensitive issues.

## **15.Covid -19**

Cherry Tree pupils are all vulnerable and their well-being is at the heart of what we do. During advised school closures, or where a pupil is unable to attend due to Covid-19, Cherry Tree Safeguarding and child protection procedures remain the same but with other added measures e.g. daily contact / visits. This is detailed in the school's Covid-19 Contingency plan and the Daily Home Contact logs. All parents and carers are informed of the specific Cherry Tree control measures and procedures. The in-depth risk assessment, control measures, Covid-19 contingency plan and daily home contact logs are kept in the school office, and are all working documents subject to review and change.

## **16. Links with other policies and plans**

This policy links to the following policies, procedures and plans:

- Behaviour
- Staff Policy and Procedures
- Complaints
- Health and safety
- Attendance
- Online safety
- Equality and Diversity
- First aid
- Curriculum
- Whistle Blowing
- Cherry Tree Emergency Plan
- Cherry Tree Lockdown Procedure
- Children Missing from Education
- Working together to improve school attendance

**This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher  
and or Management Committee Chair.**

## Appendix 1: types of abuse

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

**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.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse may involve:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- 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 also with the use of AI (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 (also known as child-on-child abuse)

**Sexual violence:**

- Rape, when someone intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with their penis, without the other person's consent.
- Assault by penetration, when a person penetrates another person's vagina or anus with any part of the body other than a penis, or by using an object, without the person's consent.
- Sexual Assault, Sexual assault happens when someone touches another person in a sexual manner without their consent. Or when someone makes another person take part in a sexual activity with them without that person's consent. It includes unwanted kissing and sexual touching.
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, (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

**Sexual harassment:** 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school/college. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment 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.

**Harmful sexualised behaviour,** Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour displayed by children and young people which is harmful or abusive<sup>1</sup>.

Child-on-child sexual abuse is a form of HSB where sexual abuse takes place between children of a similar age or stage of development.

Problematic sexual behaviour (PSB) is developmentally inappropriate or socially unexpected sexualised behaviour which doesn't have an overt element of victimisation or abuse.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **Appendix 2: safer recruitment and DBS checks – policy and procedures**

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the school's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

### **New staff**

When appointing new staff, we will:

Best practice to check birth certificates, check Education and training act 2021) Clarification about s128 checks

- Verify their identity
- Obtain an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate
- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK, including (where relevant) any teacher sanctions or restrictions imposed by a European Economic Area professional regulating authority, and criminal records checks or their equivalent
- Check that candidates taking up a management position are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the secretary of state

We will ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete.

- We will seek references on all short-listed candidates, including internal candidates, before interview. We will inform shortlisted candidates that we might conduct an online search as part of due diligence checks in the recruitment process. We will scrutinise these and resolve any concerns before confirming appointments. The references requested will ask specific questions about the suitability of the applicant to work with children.

**Regulated activity** means a person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; or
- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not

### **Existing staff**

If we have concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children, we will carry out all the relevant checks as if the individual was a new member of staff. We will also do this if an individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is.

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:

- We believe the individual has engaged in relevant conduct; or
- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or there is reason to believe the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009; or
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

### **Agency and third-party staff**

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

### **Contractors.**

All contractors are supervised and are not left unattended. However, Cherry Tree will carry out an enhanced DBS check for contractors that need to work in the premises during school hours that need to be left alone.

For the contractors that are working out of school hours are never left alone and ID is checked on arrival

### **Volunteers**

We will:

- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity

### **Management Committee members**

All members will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.

They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity.

All members will also have the following checks:

- A section 128 check (to check prohibition on participation in management under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008).
- Identity
- Right to work in the UK
- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK

### **Adults who supervise pupils on work experience**

When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm.

We will also consider whether it is necessary for barred list checks to be carried out on the individuals who supervise a pupil under 16 on work experience. This will depend on the specific circumstances of the work experience, including the nature of the supervision, the frequency of the activity being supervised, and whether the work is regulated activity.

### Appendix 3: allegations of abuse made against staff

This section of this policy applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff or volunteer (this includes supply staff and commissioned staff) has:

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

It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the school. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

We will deal with any allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

#### Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved

Suspension will not be the default position and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents/carers have been consulted

#### Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

#### Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the headteacher (or Management Committee chair where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation) – the ‘case manager’ – will take the following steps:

- Immediately discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children’s social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)

- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate
- Cherry Tree does NOT employ supply staff or have organisations or individuals using the school premises. However, where a person is self-employed or commissioned by us and our disciplinary procedures do not fully apply we will follow the safeguarding procedures and the DSL will contact the LADO immediately to determine a suitable process in managing the allegation, and advice on the individual procedure and outcomes necessary.
- **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details
- **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
- **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate.
- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice
- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence)
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual, which includes staff, volunteers, supply staff or commissioned staff facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

If the school is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the Headteacher / Management Committee chair will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

## Timescales

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious will be resolved within 1 week
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, we will institute appropriate action within 3 working days
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, we will hold this within 15 working days

## **Specific actions**

### **Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution**

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

### **Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated**

A referral will be made to the DBS if an allegation is substantiated and it is thought that the individual has or may have engaged in conduct that has harmed or is likely to harm a child, or that they might pose a risk to harm a child.

### **Individuals returning to work after suspension**

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

### **Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations**

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the headteacher, or other appropriate person in the case of an allegation against the headteacher, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil(s) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a pupil.

## **Confidentiality**

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the local authority's designated officer, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child / children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

## **Record-keeping**

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case. Such records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved

- Notes of any action taken and decisions reached (and justification for these, as stated above)

If an allegation or concern is not found to have been malicious, the school will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file, and provide a copy to the individual.

Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will preserve these for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

The records of any allegation that is found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file.

## **References**

When providing employer references, we will not refer to any allegation that has been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any history of allegations where all such allegations have been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious.

## **Learning lessons**

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, we will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

#### **Appendix 4: specific safeguarding issues**

Consistency of all procedures across the school is paramount especially because of the vulnerability of the pupils at Cherry Tree across all areas including 'county Lines'. It is important that staff are vigilant at all times within school so that any concerns / changes are discussed daily at the de-brief so that any areas of concern are raised early, but also when pupils are leaving the premises. The following extra safeguarding

- At the end of the day no pupils are to leave the building until they are called by a staff member so that they can ensure the pupil is going home with the right person / in the right car.
- Any new staff from pupil's care homes must produce ID when picking up a pupil. If no ID is provided or you have any doubts, a call must be made to the pupils home so that identity of the person collecting can be verified before letting the pupil go.
- To ensure a pupil has not been coerced into a situation it is important NOT to take the word of a pupil that the staff member is who they say they are – it is our responsibility to check.

#### **Children missing from education**

A child going missing from education, particularly repeatedly can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. Also recognising and responding to absence for prolonged periods and/or on repeated occasions, can help prevent the risk of a child going missing from education. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, county lines, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Are absent from school
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who go missing from education (see missing from Education Policy), particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow child protection procedures. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

## **Child criminal exploitation**

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is where a criminal or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity:

- in exchange for something the victim needs or wants
- for financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator
- through violence or the threat of violence

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact. It can also occur through the use of technology. CCE can include children being forced to work in drug factories and coerced into moving drugs or money across the country, forced to shoplift or pickpocket or to threaten other young people. Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education

## **Child sexual exploitation**

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

This can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults, but does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam.

Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

Indicators of sexual exploitation can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and/or alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time, or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education, or not taking part in education

## **Domestic abuse**

The cross-Government definition of domestic violence is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial and emotional. 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. Exposure to 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.

Cherry Tree are part of Operation Encompass, and the DSL has completed the relevant training. All staff and volunteers sign a domestic violence declaration on induction and annually.

Operation Encompass is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse

## **Homelessness**

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare.

The DSL and DDSL will be aware of contact details and referral routes into the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures).

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to children's social care.

## **So-called 'honour-based' abuse (including FGM and forced marriage)**

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All forms of HBA are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

## **FGM**

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM.

Section 7.3 of this policy sets out the procedures to be followed if a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out or suspects that a pupil is at risk of FGM.

Indicators that FGM has already occurred include:

- A pupil confiding in a professional that FGM has taken place
- A mother/family member disclosing that FGM has been carried out
- A family/pupil already being known to social services in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
  - Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
  - Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)

- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
- Having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
- Avoiding physical exercise or missing PE
- Being repeatedly absent from school, or absent for a prolonged period
- Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
- Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
- Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Potential signs that a pupil may be at risk of FGM include:

- The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider)
- FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin
- A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out
- A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues
- A girl:
  - Having a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM
  - Having limited level of integration within UK society
  - Confiding to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman"
  - Talking about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents stating that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period
  - Requesting help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM
  - Talking about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion)
  - Being unexpectedly absent from school
  - Having sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

### **Forced marriage**

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. It is a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. This applies to non-binding, unofficial marriages as well as legal marriages. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the 'one chance' rule, i.e. we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or [fmufco.gov.uk](mailto:fmufco.gov.uk)
- Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

### **County lines**

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal lines'. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of the victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as plugging where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network. One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, the DSL should be informed immediately and a safeguarding referral should be considered.

### **Preventing radicalisation**

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place through Qustodio and equip our pupils to stay safe online at school and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour.

The government website [Educate Against Hate](#) and charity [NSPCC](#) say that signs that a pupil is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends

- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.

If staff are concerned about a pupil being radicalised they must discuss their concerns immediately with the DSL. If appropriate, a Prevent and a Safeguarding referral will be made (see appendix 7). The prevent referral must be sent to Channel, which is a voluntary support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. An individual will be required to provide their consent before any support delivered through the programme is provided.

Staff should **always** take action if they are worried.

### **Checking the identity and suitability of visitors**

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and will be informed that no photos / videos are permitted to be taken in the school.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are expected to sign the signing in book and wear a visitor's badge when appropriate.

Visitors to the school who need to visit for a professional purpose will be asked to show photo ID and their names will be matched to named professionals expected at meetings arranged by professional agencies / Local Authorities.

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise pupils or staff.

### **Non-collection of children**

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we will:

Contact parents / carers and if no response:

Contact social workers / emergency contacts on the pupil referral form

In the event of no response from any of the emergency contacts after an hour contact the duty team of the pupil's local authority to seek further advice.

## **Appendix 5 – Safeguarding and Child Protection contacts**

DSL Emma Brown (School Operations Manager) 07745354498

DDSL Susan Finn (Headteacher) 07710548733

Jo Berry (Management Committee Chair DSL trained) [joanne.berry@cherrytreeeducation.co.uk](mailto:joanne.berry@cherrytreeeducation.co.uk)

Jo can be contacted via the School Office on 01843 290131

The school's points of contact for children who are the focus of concern are as follows:

[www.kscmp.org.uk](http://www.kscmp.org.uk)

Kent safeguarding children's multi-agency partnership 03000 421126

National domestic abuse helpline: 08082000247 (24 hour helpline)

Education Safeguarding Team 03000 418503

Integrated Front Door – 03000 411111

Thanet – 03000 423157

Dover – 03000 423154

Out of Hours – 03000 419191

Online protection – 03000 415797

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (Kent) – 101 and quote operation willow**

Local Area Designated Officer LADO for Kent: IN office hours 03000 410888

Out of hours 03000419191

Local Area Designated Officer LADO for Brighton & Hove: IN office hours 01273 295643

Out of hours 01273 290400

Local Area Designated Officer LADO for Essex: IN office hours 03330 139797

Out of hours 0845 6061212

Local Area Designated Officer LADO for Surrey In office hours 03001231650

Out of hours 01483517898 (Duty team)

Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team Kent – 03000 419191

Police Emergency - 999 - Kent Police Non-Emergency – 101

OFSTED Safeguarding Children 08456 404046 (Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm)

[Whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:Whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)

Department for Education dedicated helpline for staff and Management Committee members:

020 7340 7264 and [counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk)

Disclosure and Barring Service:

PO Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA Tel: 01325 953795

**Appendix 6 – Cherry Tree Safeguarding Form**  
**SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT / CONCERN FORM**

<b>Pupil Name</b>		<b>Date of Birth and Year Group</b>	
<b>Name and position of person completing form (please print)</b>			
<b>Date and Time of Incident or concern:</b>			
<b>Incident / concern (who what where when)</b>			
<b>Any other relevant information (witnesses, immediate action taken)</b>			
<b>Please state name and position of person who you informed:</b> <b>Please state time and date you informed them:</b>			
<b>Action Taken</b>			
<b>Signature</b>		<b>Date form completed:</b>	

**RECORD OF ACTION must be completed by DSL / DDSL**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>DETAILS OF ACTIONS AND RESPONSES that only relate to this specific incident or concern (PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY)</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>

## Appendix 7 – Cherry Tree Prevent Referral Form

### Cherry Tree School

<b>PREVENT REFERRAL FORM</b>			
<b>Name:</b>			
<b>Alternative names:</b>			
<b>Date of birth:</b>		<b>Gender:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>			
<b>Nationality:</b>		<b>Ethnicity:</b>	
<b>Language:</b>		<b>Religion:</b>	
<b>Family or carer details:</b>			
<b>Referring agency details</b>			
<b>Referral author and contact details</b>			
<b>Agency:</b>			
<b>Date of referral:</b>			
<b>Referral factors</b>			
<b>Faith / ideology issues</b>	<i>(e.g. concerning comments relating to faith or ideology, association with extremists)</i>		
<b>Social mobility issues</b>	<i>(e.g. Poverty, lack of social activity, isolation, lack of education or employment, immigration issues)</i>		
<b>Physical or mental issues</b>	<i>(e.g. disability, learning difficulties, mental health concerns)</i>		
<b>Risk or harm factors</b>	<i>(e.g. threat posed by family member (i.e. DV issues), victim of hate crime or personal attack)</i>		
<b>Criminal activity or association</b>	<i>(e.g. involved in criminal activity, associating with known criminals)</i>		

<b>Summary reason for referral</b>
Outline main reasons for referral
<b>Existing agency involvement</b>
Outline any agency involvement already in place (that you are aware of) e.g. Early Help/Preventative Services (CAF), MAPPAs, Safeguarding, YOS
<b>Any other relevant information</b>

When completed email to [channel@kent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:channel@kent.pnn.police.uk)