



# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

September 2021  
Updated November 2021

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

September 2021

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body on 6th October 2021

It is due for review in July 2022

|   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| <b>Acting Head Teacher:</b> <i>C Hutchinson</i> | <b>Date:</b> 6.10.2021 |
| <b>Chair of Governors:</b> <i>G. Bone</i>       | <b>Date:</b> 6.10.2021 |

Contacts

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD : Mrs. C. Hutchinson 0191 4202588  
[chutchinson@toneravenue.s-tyneside.sch.uk](mailto:chutchinson@toneravenue.s-tyneside.sch.uk)

DEPUTY DESIGNATED LEAD : Mrs G. Hughes 0191 4202588  
[ghughes@toneravenue.s-tyneside.sch.uk](mailto:ghughes@toneravenue.s-tyneside.sch.uk)

GOVERNOR FOR SAFEGUARDING : Mr G Mansbridge 0191 4202588  
[George.Mansbridge@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:George.Mansbridge@southtyneside.gov.uk)

SENIOR EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER /  
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN: Mr. R. Saunders 0191 4246332  
[russ.saunders@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:russ.saunders@southtyneside.gov.uk)

SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH DUTY TEAM : 0191 4245010  
[ISIT-referrals@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:ISIT-referrals@southtyneside.gov.uk)

SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH EMERGENCY  
DUTY TEAM: 0191 4564473

CHILDREN'S STANDARDS UNIT AND LADO  
FOR ALLEGATIONS MANAGEMENT: Janet Newton 0191 424 6302

DESIGNATED OFFICER FOR PREVENT:  
MR. G. LITTLEWOOD 0191 4247935  
[graeme.littlewood@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:graeme.littlewood@southtyneside.gov.uk)

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD BUSINESS MGR  
(CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION); MRS. J. NOLAN 0191 424 6513  
[Jacqueline.Nolan@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:Jacqueline.Nolan@southtyneside.gov.uk)

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD BUSINESS SUPPORT:**

**MRS . L. HODGSON**

**0191 424 6513**

[lynn.hodson@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:lynn.hodson@southtyneside.gov.uk)

**NORTH AND SOUTH OF TYNE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIPS PROCEDURES MANUAL:**

<https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/>

## **Contents:**

|               |                                   |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Page 5</i> | Introduction                      |
| <i>Page 6</i> | Links to other relevant documents |
| <i>Page 8</i> | The Role of the School            |
| <i>Page 9</i> | The Role of the Governing Body    |

### **Systems and Procedures:**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <i>Page 9</i>  | Definitions of Abuse and Neglect                            |
| <i>Pages 9</i> | Indicators of Possible Abuse, Peer on Peer abuse            |
| <i>Page 10</i> | Serious Violence  |
| <i>Page 13</i> | Indicators of CSE, Radicalisation                           |
| <i>Page 14</i> | FGM and County Lines  |
| <i>Page 15</i> | Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities |
| <i>Page 15</i> | SRE, Early Help, Concerns of a General Nature               |
| <i>Page 15</i> | Private Fostering,  |
| <i>Page 16</i> | Looked After Children, Visitors in School                   |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <a href="#">Page 17</a> | What to do if there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare |
| <a href="#">Page 18</a> | Consulting about a concern   |
| <a href="#">Page 18</a> | Immediate Action   |
| <a href="#">Page 18</a> | Making a referral  |
| <a href="#">Page 19</a> | Confidentiality  |
| <a href="#">Page 20</a> | Allegations against Staff or Volunteers                            |
| <a href="#">Page 20</a> | Allegations management / LADO                                      |
| <a href="#">Page 21</a> | Whistle Blowing  |
| <a href="#">Page 23</a> | Code of Behaviour  |
| <a href="#">Page 23</a> | Working with Children  |
| <a href="#">Page 23</a> | The use of reasonable force  |
| <a href="#">Page 24</a> | Safer Recruitment and Selection                                    |
| <a href="#">Page 25</a> | Complaints   |

## **Appendices**

### **Introduction**

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Governors and users of Toner Avenue School and anyone carrying out any work for us or using our premises.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding is defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children [updated December 2020] (p5)* as:

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

It is our duty to have arrangements about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children introduced by section 175 of the *Education Act 2002* which came into force on 1 June 2004.

At Toner Avenue we are committed to ensuring that children are safe and protected from all forms of abuse and neglect. The welfare of our children is paramount.

All children, without exception, have the right to protection from abuse regardless of their gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. We believe that no child or group of children should be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs. We endeavour to put the child at the centre of the procedures and systems outlined in this policy.

We recognise our responsibility to respond appropriately and, with respect to children and young people, to work with other agencies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those groups with whom we have contact and to have clear guidelines for our procedures.

This policy outlines the systems and procedures in place to ensure that:

- children are protected from possible harmful situations through our commitment to safe recruitment, selection and vetting
- staff are able to identify causes for concern about a child's welfare and take appropriate action to keep them safe
- we contribute to effective partnership working between all those involved in providing services for children and young people.
- children are protected from the risk of radicalisation whether from within their family or from outside influences.

This policy is available to all staff, parents and visitors at all times. It is shared with staff annually and is shared as part of the induction process for new staff or volunteers to ensure they are familiar with the guidelines and understand their responsibilities.

As part of this review or induction, staff are also required to read the following relevant documents:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021) [Parts 1 & 5] and Annex B, E and F.
- School behaviour policy

- School Sex and Relationships Policy

An electronic copy is available on the school website and a copy is also saved on the school's internal network.

All staff are required to sign to confirm they have received, read, understand and agree to the policy and related documents. (See Google Form)

As part of this induction process and annual review it is important that all members of staff, volunteers, Governors etc. understand that all concerns and allegations must be taken seriously and be responded to appropriately as outlined in this policy. **ALL STAFF MUST HAVE A 'IT CAN' HAPPEN HERE ATTITUDE. ABUSE IS ABUSE AND SHOULD NEVER BE TOLERATED OR PASSED OFF AS 'BANTER', 'JUST HAVING A LAUGH' OR 'PART OF GROWING UP'**

All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect. Knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect and specific safeguarding issues such as criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

Similarly, parents must understand that we have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare as set out in this policy. This policy is available to parents through via our website and parents may request a copy at any time.

The policy does not stand-alone and needs to be seen as part of an holistic approach to keeping children safe. The policy needs to be read in conjunction with other related policies and documents as listed below. Staff are made aware of these documents and how to access them.

| School Policies and Documents  | Government and Local Authority Documents   |
|--|--|
| Acceptable Use Policies (Staff and Pupils)<br>Attendance Policy<br>Anti-Bullying Policy<br>Behaviour Policy<br>Dealing with Racist Incidents Policy<br>Drug and Solvent Abuse Policy<br>Recruitment Policy<br>Health and Safety Policy<br>Sex and Relationships Education Policy | Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018<br><a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729914/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children-2018.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729914/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children-2018.pdf</a> (amended Dec 2020)<br><br>The Prevent Duty (June 2015)<br><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729914/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children-2018.pdf">https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729914/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children-2018.pdf</a> |

Special Educational and Disability Policy  
Educational Visit Policy  
Home School Agreement  
KCSIE / Kidsafe

<ata/file/439598/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf>

Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/417943/Prevent\\_Duty\\_Guidance\\_England\\_Wales.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417943/Prevent_Duty_Guidance_England_Wales.pdf)

Keeping Children Safe in Education ( Statutory from September 2021)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/999348/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/999348/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2021.pdf)

**NORTH AND SOUTH OF TYNE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIPS PROCEDURES MANUAL:**  
<https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/>

Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/512906/Multi\\_Agency\\_Statutory\\_Guidance\\_on\\_FGM\\_-\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/512906/Multi_Agency_Statutory_Guidance_on_FGM_-_FINAL.pdf)

Kidsafe

<https://www.kidsafeuk.co.uk/>

Public Health England - keeping young people safe and well.

<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2017/06/22/learning-more-about-what-keeps-young-people-safe-and-well/>

Multi-agency statutory guidance on child sexual exploitation



|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/the-sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool">https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/the-sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool</a></p> <p>NSPCC - Protecting disabled children from abuse.<br/> <a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/right-safe-disabled-children-abuse-report.pdf">https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/right-safe-disabled-children-abuse-report.pdf</a></p> <p>Additional safeguarding resources<br/> <a href="http://ictinschools.org/e-safeguarding-conference-2017/">http://ictinschools.org/e-safeguarding-conference-2017/</a></p> <p>County Lines: Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults.<br/> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines</a><br/> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collect/county-lines-criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults">https://www.gov.uk/government/collect/county-lines-criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults</a></p> |
|--|--|

The policy is reviewed on an annual basis although it will be updated as and when legislation changes.

**The role of the school**

We recognise that for our pupils, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult helps to prevent abuse. At Toner Avenue, we will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where pupils feel safe and secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure that pupils know that there are adults within the school who they can

- approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PHSE to allow them to explore sensitive or controversial issues and equipping them with the knowledge and skills to, “understand and manage difficult situations, to recognise and manage risk, make safer choices and recognise when pressure from others threatens their personal safety and wellbeing.” (*The Prevent Duty, June 2015*). At Toner Avenue, we deliver the Kidsafe programme across the school.
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities to learn skills to ensure they are safe when online including the ability to develop critical thinking skills around power of influence, particularly on-line and through social media
- Include in the curriculum material which will help pupils develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, providing a safe environment for debating controversial issues and helping pupils to understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making within the context of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the promotion of fundamental British Values.
- Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from partner agencies.
- Ensure that all staff are adequately trained in all areas of Child Protection and that there is a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mrs Claire Hutchinson) and a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mrs G Hughes)** who can provide advice and support to members of staff as required. **(0191 4202588)**. The designated lead (and deputy) will be responsible for managing referrals, working with other agencies and undergoing appropriate training to ensure they have the knowledge and understanding to undertake the role. The designated person will also ensure that information is shared with other professionals as required, including when children leave our school.
- Ensure that any visiting speakers are suitable and appropriately supervised.

### **The role of the Governing Body**

Governing bodies are accountable for ensuring their establishment has effective policies and procedures in place. They should ensure they facilitate a whole school or college approach to safeguarding. This means ensuring safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. Ultimately, all systems, processes and policies should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

Governing bodies should ensure that:

- The school has a children protection policy and procedures in place that are in accordance with local authority guidance
- The school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers that work with children
- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers that comply with guidance from the Local Authority
- A senior member of the school's leadership team is designated to take lead

responsibility for dealing with child protection issues, providing support and advice to other staff, liaising with the Local Authority and working with other agencies

- There is a named Governor for safeguarding – **Mr George Mansbridge - 0191 4202588**
- In addition to basic child protection training, the designated person undertakes training in inter-agency working that is provided by, or to the standards agreed by, the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and refresher training at two yearly intervals to keep their knowledge and skills up to date.
- All other staff who work with children undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out responsibilities for child protection effectively and that this is kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals
- All policies and procedures are reviewed annually.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, governing bodies and 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, 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

Records of Staff Training will be held in the Safeguarding Training File.

## **SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES**

The systems and procedures provide clear step-by-step guidance on what to do in different circumstances and clearly identify roles and responsibilities.

All staff are aware of, and have access to the Safeguarding Partnerships Procedures Manual online for reference.

### **NORTH AND SOUTH OF TYNE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIPS PROCEDURES MANUAL:**

<https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/>

All schools must keep and maintain a Single Central Record of recruitment and vetting checks. This record should also include all others who have been chosen to work in regular contact with children.

Where reasonably possible, we aim to ensure that we have at least 2 contacts for each child in case of emergencies. This will ensure that we are always able to contact parents in case of emergencies.

### **What is 'abuse'?**

'Abuse and neglect' is a generic term encompassing all ill treatment of children, including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the child's health or development. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing in education and sexting all put children in danger.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a vulnerable person. Somebody may abuse a child by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in the family or an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. An adult or adults or another child may abuse them. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

### **Peer on Peer abuse**

Staff should also bear in mind that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This can take place inside and outside of school 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 it.

This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and / or encourages physical abuse).
- Sexual activity without consent, sexual violence and sexual harassment (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and / or encourages sexual violence).
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between pupils
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- Initiation / hazing type of violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)
- Up skirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their buttocks or genitals to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

Children can also abuse their peers online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around group chats and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not wish to receive such content.

Where there is a concern that peer on peer abuse taking place (or has potential to take place), staff should seek advice immediately from the designated safeguarding lead and make appropriate records, following the guidance stated below. The designated lead will share information with parents and or liaise with external agencies as appropriate

### **Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary school. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or a group of children. 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. At Toner Avenue we maintain an attitude that it “could happen here” and take all reports seriously. Downplaying behaviours can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour and we therefore have a zero tolerance approach.

Any disclosure, no matter how long ago the event happened, will be dealt with sensitively and in line with other disclosures as detailed in this policy. Staff are aware that children may not find it easy to tell them verbally about their abuse. Any person making a disclosure will be taken seriously and staff will reassure the person that they will be supported. This applies to ALL disclosures, including those that involve abuse that has occurred online.

### ***Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment.***

- Take all disclosures seriously, including those made on someone else's behalf.
- Where the report includes an online element, it is important that staff do not view or forward illegal images of a child. It may be more appropriate to confiscate any devices to preserve evidence and hand them to the police for inspection.
- As with all safeguarding disclosures, listen carefully, reflecting back and use the child's own language. Leading questions must not be asked however children can be prompted with open questions (where, when, what) can be used if appropriate. It is important to note that whilst leading questions should be avoided, staff can ask children if they have been harmed and what the nature of that harm was.
- A written record must be made. Best practice is that a thorough summary be written up immediately after the disclosure. Written records must use the child's language and be signed, dated and time logged.
- The designated safeguarding lead must be informed immediately.

## **Risk Assessment**

Following a report of sexual violence, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Risk assessments will be considered on a case by case basis.

The risk and needs assessment will consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support
- Whether there may have been other victims
- The alleged perpetrator(s) and
- All the other children (and if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s) or from future harms.

Risk assessments will be recorded and will be kept under review and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will work with other agencies (Social Care, Police...) as required.

Where reports of rape or penetration are made, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from the classroom until the facts are established. Careful consideration will also be made as to how to keep the alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance from victim. These actions will be taken to protect the best interests of both parties and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator(s).

Depending on the nature of the report, one of the four main scenarios (outlined on p107 KCSIE 2021) will be considered. These are:

Managing internally

Early Help

Referral to children's social care

Reporting to the police.

Support for the victims of sexual abuse can be found on page 113 of KCSIE 2021.

It is also important to note that the alleged perpetrator will also require support. Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) can be a symptom of their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and materials. Page 118 of KCSIE 2021 has links to guides that can help children who are displaying HSB.

## **Serious Violence**

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.

Indicators 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,
  - 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. See CCE below.

*Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018* sets out definitions and examples of the four broad categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse (including Child Sexual Exploitation and sexting as detailed above)
- Neglect

These categories overlap and an abused person does frequently suffer more than one type of abuse, (e.g. a child may be suffering physical and emotional abuse). The definitions below encompass all groups covered by this policy. Children can also be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across within their day-to-day lives. These threats can include, (along with the four categories above), exploitation by criminal and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism, leading to radicalisation. (Working Together 2018)

### 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 (KCSIE 2021).

### 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 in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capacity, as well as over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interactions. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. 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 (KCSIE 2021).

### Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Sexual abuse can take place on line and technology can be used to facilitate off line abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as peer-on-peer abuse) in education and ALL staff should be aware of it and of their school's policy and procedures for dealing with it. (KCSIE 2021).

### Neglect

Neglect involves 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 and 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 and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs (KCSIE 2021).

***N.B. Children need to be protected even when it appears that they are not aware that the physical abuse, or sexual activity that they are involved in or witness, or the neglect they experience, is harmful to them.***



In addition to the four categories above, it is important to remember that our children are also susceptible to being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology.

## **Signs of Possible Abuse**

When considering whether there is evidence to suggest a child has been abused, there are a number of possible indicators (listed below). However, there may be other explanations, so it is important not to jump to conclusions but rather seek advice from Children's Services or the Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit. There may also be no signs or symptoms; this does not mean that a report of abuse is false.

All staff must have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug and / or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and / or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

### Indicators of Possible Physical Abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur to the body in places, which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Neglect – under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc. that do not have an accidental explanation\*
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse\*
- Changes in routine or presentation

### Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Any allegations made by a person concerning sexual abuse
- Person with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia\*
- Bed wetting and soiling

### Indicators of Possible Emotional Abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy – also depression/aggression, extreme anxiety
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration

- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults, carers or family
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

**\* These signs may also indicate the possibility that a child is self-harming**

### Indicators of Possible Child Sexual Exploitation

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.

Signs to be aware of include:

- going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late
- regularly missing school or not taking part in education
- 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
- mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing
- drug and alcohol misuse
- displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour.

### Indicators of Possible Radicalisation

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

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

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision, cutting or sunna.

Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM. However, FGM is child abuse. **There is a mandatory duty on teachers to report disclosures about a female under 18.**

A girl or woman who's had FGM may:

- have difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet
- have unusual behaviour after an absence from school or college
- be particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations
- ask for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

### **County Lines: Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults (Child Criminal Exploitation – CCE)**

The term 'County Lines' refers to urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas, as well as market and coastal towns, by using dedicated mobile phone lines or 'deal lines'. Gangs use children and vulnerable people to move drugs or money to these areas. Once caught up in county lines, exploited individuals are at risk of extreme physical and / or sexual violence, gang recriminations and trafficking. Children are sometimes forced or manipulated into working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. Children (and their families) can be threatened and coerced or entrapped into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons or begin to carry a weapon 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. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they consented to.

A person who is involved in county lines activity might show some of these signs:

- Persistently going missing from school or home, or being found out-of-area.
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes or mobile phones.
- Excessive receipt of texts or phone calls.
- Relationships with controlling, older individuals or gang associations.
- Parental concerns, and leaving home or care without explanation
- Suspicion of self-harm, physical assault or unexplained injuries.
- Significant decline in school performance and changes in emotional well-being.

**Vulnerability is heightened by:**

- Having prior experience of neglect, physical and / or sexual abuse.
- Lack of safe home environment, now or in the past (Domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality).
- Social isolation or social difficulties
- Economic vulnerability
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status
- Connections with other people involved in gangs.
- Having a physical or learning disability
- Having mental health or substance misuse issues
- Being in care
- Being excluded from mainstream education.
- 

**Key Points:**

- Children as young as 12 (youngest recorded case), 15 – 16 year olds are most common age.
- Males and females are exploited in equal numbers.
- White British children (gangs perceive they are more likely to evade police detection).
- Class A drug users can be targeted so that gangs can take over their homes (known as cuckooing).

Staff should follow the safeguarding protocol if they suspect someone is involved in county lines.

**Children with SEND**

Particular attention needs to be given to those children with SEND as this can make children more vulnerable to abuse. This is partly due to their difficulties understanding what is right and wrong but can also be due to people making assumptions about the child based on their difficulties. They also can have issues both with communicating the problem and engagement with services.

Staff must be aware that behaviour, mood and injury of children may relate to possible abuse and not just their SEN or disability and should not make assumptions.

Staff must be aware that statistically, this group are at higher risk of social isolation, which in turn, may lead to them being more vulnerable

Staff must also be aware that bullying can often have a disproportionate impact on these children and that communication difficulties may hinder children's ability to make disclosures.

Within Toner Avenue, all staff are aware of these additional barriers and we have readily available pastoral support. Staff can refer children to undertake Nurture work or ELSA work (Emotional Literacy Support) at any point within the year. They should raise concerns with either Mrs C Hutchinson or Mrs Hughes. Children are also able to access support via the Emotional Resilience team. Referrals should be made via the head or deputy.

(<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/right-safe-disabled-children-abuse-report.pdf>)

### **Children who are missing from education**

Children who are missing from education (CME) are defined as: "children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education..." Attendance is monitored closely and absences are chased up by phonecall on the first day of absence. We endeavour to have at least 2 contact numbers for each pupil and will ring both.

Where there are concerns relating to the attendance or safety of a child (e.g. if a child is subject to an Early Help / Child In Need / Child Protection Plan), absences are reported immediately to the Head / Deputy and passed on to the lead professional as appropriate.

Confirmation of changes of setting are kept on file and contact is made with the new school to ensure the transfer of information. Where there are concerns about the whereabouts of a child, guidance from the Local Authority (**Russ Saunders, 0191 4246332**) will be sought.

When new starters are expected to arrive but fail to do so, school will work with the Local Authority Admissions Team to locate the family. [CYPSPReferrals@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:CYPSPReferrals@southtyneside.gov.uk)

### **KCSiE / Kidsafe**

Kidsafe is a national programme that is matched with Ofsted and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) requirements. The aims are; to enable pupils to protect themselves against all forms of abuse; to feel safe at all times in school and home; to know what constitutes unsafe situations and to be aware of how to keep safe, including in relation to e-safety. The programme, delivered by trained tutors, consists of 6 sessions giving pupils effective strategies to deal with all forms of child abuse. It is age appropriate and delivered in a manner conducive for discussion. It is particularly

useful in helping children with SEND break down any barriers they have with communicating their responses to specific situations. It is also a useful tool to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse.

### **Online Safety**

As part of our work around safety, all children are taught about the potential risks which are included with being online. All children / parents sign an agreement which outlines appropriate online behaviour. The school has the Healthy Schools E Safety Award and staff are diligent when dealing with any concerns relating to the use of social media or online bullying or suspected abuse. Pupils should be just as clear about what is expected of them online as offline. Appropriate filtering and monitoring are in place through the local authority and the Head and Deputy are alerted to any online incidents where inappropriate text has been typed or searched for. Further details can be found in the acceptable use policy. Our Kidsafe Programme also covers keeping safe online. At Toner Avenue School, we understand the responsibility to educate our pupils on E-Safety issues; teaching them the appropriate behaviours and critical thinking skills to enable them to remain both safe and legal when using the internet and related technologies, in and beyond the context of the classroom. 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/>).

### **Sex and relationships Education**

Toner Avenue has chosen to implement this element of the curriculum through the One Life Scheme, provided by the Local Authority. All children will be educated as to what healthy, diverse and appropriate relationships are and how to build and sustain them, how to identify whether a relationship is safe, and how to seek help for themselves or others if they are concerned. Further details can be found in the Sex and Relationship Policy. Toner Avenue School works in partnership with the local school nurse team and Operation Encompass (the next steps) to further supplement this curriculum, tailored to the needs of specific cohorts as required.

## **Early Help**

All staff are aware of the Early Help process in South Tyneside Local Authority and are required, where necessary to provide updates and information which will feed into plans. Any child may benefit from Early Help, but all staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for Early Help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has SEND (whether or not they have an Education Health and Care Plan)
- is a young carer
- Has a mental health need;
- is showing signs of being drawn in to antisocial or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing / goes missing from care or from home
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse
- has returned to their family from care
- is showing early signs of abuse or neglect
- is at risk of being exploited or radicalised
- Has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending.
- Is a privately fostered child
- Is at risk of 'honour' – based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- Is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

If staff feel that Early Help would be appropriate to support a child or family, they should discuss it with the designated person.

## **Concerns of a General Nature/not Relating to a Specific Individual**

There may be instances where concerns do not relate to a specific individual. It may be that there are concerns in respect of institutional abuse or neglect within a service, and this may affect a number of people who use that service.

Concerns do not need to be specific to an individual in order to alert. The Duty of Care remains the same whether alerting concerns involving one individual, several individuals or service-related issues that may affect many people.

## **Private Fostering**

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative'.

This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer, for **28 days or more**. Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts (whether of full blood, half blood or by marriage/affinity).

To ensure that these children are being well cared for, it is a **legal requirement** that parents and carers notify their local authority before entering into these arrangements.

There is a mandatory duty for professionals to assist in the identifying and notifying the Local Authority of any children living in these circumstances. **This is a key part of everyone's safeguarding responsibility**. If you become aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement you must notify the Designated Person immediately.

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

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and or neglect. These children can be particularly vulnerable and it is important that information regarding these children is shared, on a need to know basis, with close inter agency working. The school has a Designated Teacher (Mrs C Hutchinson) who works with the Virtual Head to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after, have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders.

### **Volunteers/Students**

Under no circumstances should volunteers / students be left to work unsupervised with children unless they have a DBS check certificate which has been verified by the school office.

### **Governors**

Governors are required to have an enhanced criminal records certificate from the DBS. If governors are engaging in regulated activity, they will also need a barred list check.

### **Contractors**

Schools must ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check, particularly if they are engaging in regulated activity. Whilst the contractors will be within the compound during the build stage, staff should be extra vigilant during this time and ensure children are safeguarded at all times.

### **Elective Home Education**

Whilst many home educated children have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience, this is not the case for all. Home education can mean some children are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe.



Where a parent / carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, the school will contact the Local Authority and other key professionals as appropriate to coordinate a meeting with parents. This will be done before a final decision has been made, to ensure that the parents / carers have considered what is in the best interests of the child.

### **What to do if there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare.**

It is recognised that a child may seek out an adult to share information about abuse or neglect with, or talk spontaneously either individually or in groups when an adult is present.

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.

In the event of a child making a disclosure, staff members or volunteers must:

- Listen carefully to the child or adult, and NOT directly question them.
- Give the child or adult time and attention.
- Allow the child or adult to give a spontaneous account; do not stop them when they are freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Explain that they cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.

### **Reassure the child that:**

- You are glad they have told you;
- S/he has not done anything wrong;
- What you are going to do next;
- Explain that you will need to get help to keep them safe;
- You must NOT ask the child or adult to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

### **What to do next:**

- Make an immediate, careful record of what has been said using the child's

words wherever possible, creating a CPOMS incident. All staff have been provided with a log in account and training. If, for some reason a CPOMS incident can not be created, then a written safeguarding concern form should be completed.

- Inform the Designated Child Protection Lead **IMMEDIATELY**. They will make the decision based on the evidence (plus possible future discussion with the child where appropriate) whether Social Care should be informed.
- Record in writing the fact you have made a referral to the Designated Child Protection Lead.

It is important that staff recognise their role is not to investigate any possible abuse but rather to inform the Designated Person so that the relevant authorities can be notified. Information should always be passed to the designated person (or deputy) immediately as they potentially will have contextual understanding that staff may not be privy to.

### **Consulting about the concern**

The purpose of consultation is to discuss concerns in relation to a child and decide what action is necessary. Staff or volunteers may become concerned about a child who has not spoken to them, because of something they have observed, or information they have heard about a child.

If a child is upset or has a visible injury it is good practice to ask them why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to a child who wants to talk. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.

If staff members are concerned about a child they must share their concerns immediately. Initially they should talk to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Concerns should also be recorded in writing using the Safeguarding Concern document (Appendix 2) and passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as practical on the same day.

### **Immediate Action**

Immediate action may be necessary at any stage in involvement with children, and families.

It is always good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns.

**IN ALL CASES IT IS VITAL TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NECESSARY TO SAFEGUARD A CHILD, THIS MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care is made immediately. Referrals should follow the local referral process.

- If emergency medical attention is required this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 999) or taking a child to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department. In the case of a child, it would be appropriate for a responsible person or designated adult to accompany the child to hospital.
- If a child, is in immediate danger the police should be contacted (dial 999) as they alone have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary, via a Police Protection Order.

**Making a referral**

All concerns should be brought to the Designated Safeguarding Lead's attention immediately. It is important that all concerns, even those which appear minor, are reported promptly as they may form part of a bigger picture. Staff must not keep to themselves any information about abuse which a child gives them; they are required by law to pass this information on.

If the concerns meet the Local Authority thresholds, the Designated Person may make a referral. A referral involves giving Children's Services or the Police, information about concerns relating to a child in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency followed by any necessary action.

In certain cases the level of concern will lead straight to a referral without external consultation being necessary.

Parents/carers should be informed if a referral is being made **except** in circumstances where it is considered that informing parents/carers would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk.

However, inability to inform parents for any reason should not prevent a referral being made. It would then become a joint decision with Children's Services about how and when the parents or carers should be approached and by whom.

**If the concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from someone not known to the child or child's family, (stranger abuse) the Designated Person (or someone she has delegated to) will make a telephone referral directly to the police and advise the parents or carers.**

**If the concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from a family member or someone known to the child, the Designated Person (or someone he has delegated to) will make a telephone referral to the Contact and Referral Team at the Town Hall, (0191 4245010) or the Adult Services Duty Team. Alternatively, calls can be made to the Integrated Safeguarding Interventions Team (ISIT) on 0191 4246335. The ISIT team work alongside children's services, police, probation, education, health, domestic violence services and other partners to and is able to offer advice and guidance to professionals.**

**If the concern is about potential radicalisation, the Designated Person (or someone she has delegated to) may contact the Local Authority Prevent Lead (Graeme Littlewood), contact the local police via 101 (the non-emergency number) to gain support or advice and may make a referral to the Channel Programme. (Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.)", *The Prevent Duty, June 2015*. In emergency situations, where there are concerns that a child's life is in immediate danger 999 will be called.**

**The Local Authority provides further details and advice online in their policy and procedures web pages at <http://southtynesidescb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>**

### **Record Keeping**

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for these decisions should be recorded in writing. Information is stored on CPOMS and hard copies in individual children's files.

Records must 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.

Examples of poor reporting practice are not acceptable. These include:

- Failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect
- Poor record keeping
- Failing to listen to the views of the child

- Failing to re-assess when situations do not improve
- Not sharing information with the right people within and between agencies
- Sharing information too slowly
- A lack of challenge to those who appear to not be taking action.

### **Confidential Records of Concern**

It is important for all staff to follow the statement of confidentiality outlined below:

*We treat all children, carers, parents and families with respect. Information that is given to us will be treated confidentially and shared only with those persons who have an agreed reason to have the information. Information will only be passed to other people with the agreed consent of the person giving the information, except if there are concerns about the welfare of a child. In these circumstances a discussion will be held with the Designated Person and if it is considered appropriate the information will be shared with professionals in the local authority/police/health.*

Staff must ensure that any records in respect of the children, their parents and/or carers are kept confidential in a secure place. Information should only be shared on a need to know basis. Where the sharing of information is vital to protect a child, the issue of confidentiality is secondary to their need for protection.

### **Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers / Whistle Blowing - further detail can be found in Part 4 of KCSIE 2021**

Allegations are usually addressed in two areas:

- Allegations that a child is being harmed by a member of staff, is known as 'Allegations Management'
- General allegations of wrongdoing is known as 'Whistle-Blowing'

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure they do not abuse their positions of trust within our organisation. Any concerns raised by a member of staff/volunteer or a member of the public regarding inappropriate behaviour by any member of this organisation will be managed via the following procedure and all allegations will be acted on.

### **Allegations Management**

If anyone raises a concern about another worker, professional or volunteer where they have:

- Behaved inappropriately in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children, in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with these groups in their work, volunteering capacity or private life (Transferable Risk)

This will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mrs Claire Hutchinson) who must inform the South Tyneside Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Allegations Management – **JEAN HUGHES (TEL: 4247340)**. The LADO will advise on how to proceed, whether the matter can be dealt with within our organisation's own arrangements or whether a multi-agency strategy meeting is required.

Where the LADO decides that the issue can be dealt with internally, the reasoning and advice will be recorded and sent to the Head, Children's Services Referral and Assessment Team and the Police Child Protection Unit. In this instance it will be necessary to comply with the timescales in the Local Authority guidance and inform the LADO of the outcome of the investigation.

Where the LADO decides the case needs to proceed to an 'Allegation Management Meeting' (AMM) she will make a referral to the Children's Services Contact and Referral Team and convene the meeting/s in accordance with their guidance.

Complaints made directly to the police will be reported to the LADO as soon as possible and again she will decide whether to hold a strategy meeting. The Police may interview the complainant if they feel this is appropriate.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/999348/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/999348/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2021.pdf) Part 4 has specific details about how to allegations will be managed and resolved.

Where a teacher's employer, including an agency, dismisses or ceases to use the services of a teacher because of serious misconduct, or might have dismissed them but they left first, they must consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State (Via the Teachers Regulation Agency). Details can be found on GOV.uk

### **Whistle-Blowing**

Members of staff may be the first to notice if anything is seriously wrong within the organisation. However, they might not say anything because they think this would be disloyal, or they might be worried that their suspicions are not justified. They may also be worried that they or someone else may be victimised.

If anyone wants to raise any concern, they can do so with confidence and without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result. Members of the public should also be encouraged to voice any concerns they raise officially.

#### What types of action does this include?

This policy is intended to deal with serious or sensitive concerns about wrongdoings such as the following:

- Fraud or corruption
- Member groups, children or students, particularly children in our care, being mistreated
- Unauthorised use of money
- An unlawful act
- Any danger to health and safety
- A person abusing their position for any unauthorised use or for personal gain
- A person deliberately not keeping to a policy, a code of practice or any law or regulation
- A person failing to meet appropriate standards
- A person being discriminated against because of their race, colour, religion, ethnic or national origin, disability, age sex, sexuality, class or home life

The concern may be about members of staff, or other people who work directly for or with the organisation, as part of a collaborative/partnership agreement.

#### What is not covered?

Whistle-Blowing policies cannot be used to deal with serious or sensitive matters that are covered by other procedures.

Such Procedures include the following –

- Staff complaints about their employment. These complaints should be dealt with through the Grievance Procedure.
- Parent's complaints about services. These complaints should be dealt with through the Complaints Policy.

It is important to adhere to the following if any concerns are disclosed to individuals. Staff who have concerns should speak to the Head or Deputy.

- Whistle-blowers should be made to feel confident in using the policy to raise issues as where an allegation is true they have nothing to fear. Let them know that if necessary you will take appropriate action under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 to protect them from any harassment, victimisation or bullying.
- You will keep their concerns confidential if this is what they want, unless you are unable to by law. Explain this at the time they raise a concern so they can decide whether or not to proceed.

### Anonymous Allegations

- Let people know that because you will protect them (as explained above); you encourage them to give their name when they make an allegation. Concerns raised anonymously tend to be far less effective and if, for example, you do not have enough information, you may not be able to investigate the matter at all.
- If they feel that they still do not want to give their name, the Head will decide whether or not to consider the matter. The decision will depend on:
  - The seriousness of the matter;
  - Whether the concern is believable;
  - Whether an investigation can be carried out based on the information provided.

Any member of staff or volunteer raising a concern should first do so with their manager or the nominated person, this will depend on the seriousness and sensitivity of the matter, and who is suspected of the wrongdoing.

Concerns are better put in writing giving as much information as possible – including any relevant names, dates, places and so on. The earlier the issue is raised, the easier it will probably be to take effective action.

A person raising a concern will not have to prove beyond all reasonable doubt that the allegation is true, but they will have to show that there are good reasons for their concern.



Staff are also aware that they can contact the NSPCC's dedicated helpline on 0800 028 0285 or via [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk) if they have significant concerns about the way child protection is handled within school.

## **Code of Behaviour**

All staff and volunteers are expected to behave in a manner which reflects the child, young person and vulnerable adult-centred principles of our organisation. This good practice will be reinforced during staff development, supervision and training sessions.

## **Working with Children**

It is essential that care is taken to minimise the possibility for abuse and misunderstanding and misinterpretation. False allegations are rare but general good practice will help prevent them. The following examples will help to create a positive culture and climate for children who visit our premises.

- Never work alone with children out of public view.
- Leaders should not ask staff/volunteers to work with these groups in situations where staff/volunteers will be completely unobserved
- Maintain a safe and appropriate emotional and physical distance from children. It is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with children who visit our premises
- Do not engage in rough or sexually provocative games
- Do not make sexual comments
- Do not invite or allow children into your home (childminders are an exception and will be registered and inspected according to legal requirements)
- Do not give children lifts in your car except in emergencies (unless this is part of your job)
- Do not interact with pupils (or their parents) on social media. Further information on appropriate use of Social Media for staff can be found in the Acceptable Use Policy
- Never let allegations, made by anyone, go unacknowledged, unresolved or not acted upon

*Staff/volunteers should be aware of the potential for misunderstanding when touching children.*

Consoling a child who is upset, administering first aid or supporting a participant in an activity is acceptable and necessary behaviour.

### **The use of 'reasonable force'.**

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools and colleges to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means using 'no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom. The decision on whether or not to use reasonable force to control or restrain a child is down to the professional judgement of the staff concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. Where possible, staff should plan positive and proactive behaviour support through the drawing up of positive handling plans, which will be shared with parents. Further advice can be sought from the SENCO (Mrs C Hutchinson) or the Deputy SENCO (Mrs H Storey)

### **Safe Recruitment and Selection**

Our organisation will take all possible steps to prevent unsuitable people working with children.

When interviewing potential staff we will ensure:

- There is an open recruitment process
- There is a rigorous interview
- Applicants identity and claims to any academic or vocational qualifications will be verified (Best practice is to verify identity using birth certificates)
- References will be taken up by direct contact with referees
- Evidence of the date of birth and address of the potential employee will be sought
- Verification of qualifications is carried out
- Where appropriate, an enhanced disclosure via the Criminal Records Bureau will be secured
- Where a position requires an enhanced disclosure and barred list check, this will be clear on the application form, job advert and any other information provided about the post.
- that the candidate has the mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibility (KCSIE, 2021, states that " An applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role", P 53)
- that we verify the applicant's right to work in the UK . Where an applicant has lived or worked outside of the UK, additional checks may be made
- For teaching positions, a prohibition order check will be carried out
- All applicants will complete an application form enabling each of them to have

the same opportunity to provide information about themselves and assist in identifying any gaps in their employment.

During interviews the interview panel will explore:

- The candidates attitude toward children
- His or her ability to support the organisations agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Any gaps in the candidates employment history
- Any concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or referee

A job offer will only be made subject to the necessary checks being satisfactory.

All staff will have a job description and contract of employment, and be required to work a probationary period.

At least one member of any selection panel will have completed the 'Safer Recruitment Training' consistent with South Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board requirements.

### Post Appointment

All staff and volunteers (paid or unpaid), regardless of previous experience will take part in an induction programme during their first three months of employment.

The purpose of this will be to:

- Provide training about our policies and procedures
- To provide support to individuals in the role for which they have been engaged
- To provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities
- To enable the person's line manager, supervisor or mentor to recognise any concerns about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately
- To ensure that the individual is aware of policies, procedures and statements in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- To ensure that individuals understand how and with whom they should raise any concerns with regard to any practice issues
- To ensure that individuals are aware of other relevant procedures, e.g. disciplinary, capability and whistle blowing

- To ensure that all staff and volunteers have appropriate levels of training in safeguarding children and other responsibilities in connection with their role
- To advise individuals about supervision and appraisal systems

A comprehensive list of checks can be found at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/999348/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/999348/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2021.pdf) (Part 3)

## **Complaints**

It is reasonable for children, parents and carers to have the right to complain or make comment if they are unhappy with the care or service they receive. Toner Avenue takes the care of children, young people and vulnerable adults seriously and will address any concerns that are raised.

Receiving complaints and comments about our organisation also helps us to understand the things that we do well and where there are areas that need to be improved.

If anyone would like to complain or comment about any aspect of our organisation it is important to take this seriously and direct them in the first instance to complete a complaints form. If they are reluctant to do this or the situation is regarded as serious the comments should be recorded in writing and brought to the immediate attention of the Head.

**IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT, CONSULT.**

**Toner Avenue School**

**Safeguarding Children**

**\*ONLY TO BE COMPLETED IF CPOMS IS NOT AVAILABLE!**

**Child:**

**Person reporting:**

**Date and time:**

**Concerns:** (Be specific – what have you seen, heard etc.?)

**Actions:**

**Follow up:**

**PASS THIS CONCERN FORM (PAPER OR EMAIL) MRS HUTCHINSON OR THE DEPUTY  
DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD IMMEDIATELY**