AHSPurley Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

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1. Introduction

Abingdon House School, Purley is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of Abingdon House School, Purley policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the Abingdon House School, Purley's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular, it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole Abingdon House School, Purley is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values:
While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Abingdon House School, Purley documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

In the Abingdon House School, Purley's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, which states that a 'parent', concerning a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance, Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility, updated August 2023, considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part-time, and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The Abingdon House School, Purley contracts the services of third-party organisations to ensure regulatory compliance and implement best practices for:

- HR and Employment Law
- Health & Safety Guidance
- DBS Check processing
- Mandatory Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and other relevant training
- Data protection and GDPR guidance
- Specialist insurance cover

Where this policy refers to 'employees', the term refers to any individual who is classified as an employee or a worker, working with and on behalf of the Abingdon House School, Purley (including volunteers and contractors).

The Abingdon House School, Purley is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Abingdon House School, Purley.

The policy documents of Abingdon House School, Purley are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions, a significant revision, although promulgated in Abingdon House School, Purley separately, may have to take effect between the republication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

2. Important contacts

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Emma Stark	07496637231
Deputy DSL	Jon Mansell	07867521279
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Steve Hall	020 8726 6000 (ext. 24334 or ext. 24817)
Chair of governors	Koen Claeys	020 3305 9095
Channel helpline		020 7340 7264

3. Aims

The Abingdon House School, Purley 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 concerning safeguarding
- Staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues

4. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our local safeguarding partners (see section 3).

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent Abingdon House School, Purley Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent Abingdon House School, Purleys to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the Abingdon House School, Purley
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment) provides a framework for the care and protection of children. Section 16LA of the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, establishes the statutory information sharing duty and should be read with the September 2026 Information Sharing Duty statutory guidance.
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015, 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 concerning 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 concerning children
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains Abingdon House School, Purleys' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 concerning protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). This means our governors and headteachers should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils with these characteristics. The Act allows our

Abingdon House School, Purley to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting a specific group of pupils (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment
- The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as: sexual violence, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination

5. 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 mental and physical 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 protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

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.

Making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes is where children share nude or semi-nude images, such as photographs, videos or live streams. This also includes images that are digitally altered or wholly AI-generated (sometimes called 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes') that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video. The sharing of nude or semi-nude images requires a safeguarding response whether they are consensual or non-consensual.

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)
- Integrated care boards (previously known as clinical commissioning groups) for an area within the LA
- The chief officer of police for an area in the LA area

Victim is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim, or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

Alleged perpetrator(s) and perpetrator(s) are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what's appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

6. Equality statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children concerning 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 and disabilities (SEND) or health conditions (see section 10)
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language (EAL)
- They 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 female genital mutilation (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 (see section 12)
- Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or frequently
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from Abingdon House School, Purley to be home educated

7. Roles and responsibilities

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

Abingdon House School, Purley plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-Abingdon House School, Purley approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, racism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, sexual violence/harassment, derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence and conflict. This will be underpinned by our:

- Behaviour policy
- Pastoral support system
- Planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly, tackling issues such as:
    - Healthy and respectful relationships
    - Boundaries and consent
    - Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
    - Body confidence and self-esteem
    - How to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)
    - The concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and FGM and how to access support
    - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence, and why they're always unacceptable

7.1 All staff

- Read and understand at least part 1 of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) in full, and review this guidance at least annually

- Sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have read and reviewed the guidance
- Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents and carers. This includes making parents and carers aware of what we ask children to do online (for example, sites they need to visit or who they'll be interacting with online)
- Provide a safe space for pupils who are LGBTQ+ to speak out and share their concerns

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems that 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 deputies, the behaviour policy, online safety policy and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education/who are absent from education. The family help assessment process and its role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- Be aware of the Abingdon House School, Purley's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures
- The family help assessment process and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and proactively sharing relevant information with other relevant organisations and practitioners, where lawful and appropriate
- 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
- The process for community-based Family Help assessments
- 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, neglect and exploitation, including domestic and sexual abuse (including controlling and coercive behaviour, as well as parental conflict that is frequent, intense, and unresolved), as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, grooming, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines)
- The safeguarding issues that often overlap and can put children at risk of harm, including:
    - Drug taking and/or alcohol misuse
    - Unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education
    - Serious violence, criminal exploitation (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation
    - Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes
- New and emerging threats, including online harm, grooming, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, radicalisation, and the role of technology and social media in presenting harm
- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at Abingdon House School, Purley and online
- The fact that mental health can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. This could include self-harm, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide. They could also be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation
- That children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay or bisexual can be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying
- The potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender
- A child and their family may be experiencing multiple needs at the same time
- What to look for to identify children who need help or protection

Section 16 and Appendix 4 of this policy outline in more detail how staff are supported to do this.

7.2 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The DSL is a member of the senior leadership team. Our DSL is Emma Stark, Deputy Headteacher. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding in the Abingdon House School, Purley. This includes online safety and understanding our filtering and monitoring processes on Abingdon House School, Purley devices and Abingdon House School, Purley networks to keep pupils safe online.

During term time, the DSL will be available during Abingdon House School, Purley hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

The DSL can also be contacted out of Abingdon House School, Purley hours if necessary, via email or phone.

When the DSL is absent, the deputies –Jon Mansell, Headteacher, Kat Taylor, SENCO, Catherine Pollington Therapy assistant, Tayub Razzak, Pastoral Lead and Leann Pancho Pastoral assistant – will act as cover.

If the DSL and deputies are not available, Leyla White will act as cover (for example, during out-of-hours/out-of-term activities).

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, including the statutory information sharing duty under section 16LA of the Children Act 2004 and the school's local information-sharing pathways
- 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 (DBS), and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly
- Have a good understanding of harmful sexual behaviour
- Have a good understanding of the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at our Abingdon House School, Purley
- Make sure that staff have appropriate Prevent training and induction
- Act as a lead practitioner for the local authority

The DSL will also:

- Keep the headteacher informed of any issues
- Liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate
- Discuss the local response to sexual violence and sexual harassment with police and local authority children's social care colleagues to prepare the Abingdon House School, Purley's policies
- Be confident that they know what local specialist support is available to support all children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment, and be confident as to how to access this support
- Be aware that children must have an 'appropriate adult' to support and help them in the case of a police investigation or search
- Ensure that child protection files are kept up to date
- Where children leave the Abingdon House School, Purley, ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new Abingdon House School, Purley

The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputies are set out in their job description.

7.3 The local governing body/Directors

The local governing body/director will:

- Facilitate a whole-Abingdon House School, Purley approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development
- Ensure that all staff who work directly with children read at least part 1 of Keeping Safe in Education (KCSIE) and those who staff who do not work directly with children read part 1 of KCSIE
- Evaluate and approve this policy at each review, ensuring it complies with the law, and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation
- Be aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and our Abingdon House School, Purley's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

- Appoint a senior board level (or equivalent) lead or Gary Balcombe (Cavendish governor) to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board. This is always a different person from the DSL
- Ensure all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, and that such training is regularly updated and is in line with advice from the safeguarding partners
- Ensure that Abingdon House School, Purley has a policy in respect of the use of restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force and which reflects that the adoption of a 'no contact' policy can leave staff unable to fully support and protect pupils
- Ensure that Abingdon House School, Purley has appropriate cyber security systems in place
- Ensure that the Abingdon House School, Purley has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place, and review their effectiveness at least once every academic year. This includes:
    - Making sure that the leadership team and staff are aware of the provisions in place, and that they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training
    - Ensuring that reviews are carried out by the SLT member responsible for filtering and monitoring, with the support of the DSL and IT team. The review will include checks that filtering is working appropriately on all internet-connected devices in all relevant locations. A record of these checks will be kept.
    - Reviewing the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards, and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the Abingdon House School, Purley in meeting these standards

- Make sure:
    - The DSL has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, including additional time, funding, training, resources and support
    - Online safety is a running and interrelated theme within the whole-Abingdon House School, Purley approach to safeguarding and related policies
    - The DSL has lead authority for safeguarding, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.
    - The Abingdon House School, Purley has procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns (no matter how small) or allegations that do not meet the harm threshold (low-level concerns) about staff members (including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors). Appendix 3 of this policy covers this procedure
    - That this policy reflects that children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised
- Where another body is providing services or activities (regardless of whether or not the children who attend these services/activities are children on the Abingdon House School, Purley roll):
    - Seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place, and inspect them if needed
    - Make sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the Abingdon House School, Purley about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate
    - Make sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the Abingdon House School, Purley premises, and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply

The chair of governors will act as the 'case manager' if an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, where appropriate (see Appendix 3).

All local governors will read Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety.

Section 15 of this policy has information on how governors are supported to fulfil their role.

7.4 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 that support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction

    - Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect
- Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the Abingdon House School, Purley, and via the Abingdon House School, Purley website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see Appendix 3)
- Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL on

8. Confidentiality

We use the support of Cavendish Education to ensure that our schools run smoothly and that our students are best supported. When reporting to governors regarding safeguarding any cases are anonymised and only relevant and non-sensitive information is shared. Should we need support from our Managing Director or Compliance Director we will name students if appropriate.

When working with partner agencies we will share what information is required via an encrypted or password protected file.

- Timely and proactive information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding. Where the section 16LA information sharing duty applies, relevant information must be shared where it may help another relevant person assess need or risk, make a decision, provide support or take action to safeguard or promote a child's welfare
- Arrangements should be in place setting out the processes and principles for sharing information within the Abingdon House School, Purley and with local authority children's social care, the safeguarding partners and other organisations, agencies, and practitioners as required
- The duty applies to relevant information about the child and, where relevant to the child's safety or welfare, information about another individual connected to the child. It applies both when the school identifies relevant information and when a relevant organisation or practitioner requests it. Fears about sharing information, lack of consent, anticipated complaint or uncertainty must not by themselves stand in the way of sharing where the duty applies
- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018, Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 and UK GDPR provide a framework for lawful information sharing and do not prevent sharing for safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. Section 16LA is a legal obligation to share where its criteria are met; information must still be limited to what is relevant, necessary and proportionate, shared securely, and handled in accordance with data protection principles
- Consent is not required where information is shared under the section 16LA duty. Staff should be open and transparent with children and families about information sharing where safe and practicable, but should not present sharing as optional where the duty applies. Special category and criminal offence data must be shared only where the relevant additional data protection conditions are met
- 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
- If a victim asks the Abingdon House School, Purley not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment:
    - There's no definitive answer, because even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there's another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies
    - The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children
    - The DSL should consider that:
        - Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
        - The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to the local authority's children's social care
        - Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police.

While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains

- Regarding anonymity, all staff will:
    - Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system
    - Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment – for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved
    - Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities
- The government's information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information (including personal information), and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. The September 2026 statutory Information Sharing Duty guidance under section 16LA now applies. It requires relevant information to be shared when the statutory criteria are met, subject only to the limited detriment exception, and requires appropriate data protection safeguards.
- If staff are unsure about information sharing, they should seek prompt advice from the DSL (or deputy) and, where appropriate, the data protection officer, without causing unnecessary delay. Decisions to share or not share, and the rationale, should be recorded
- Where a child leaves the Abingdon House School, Purley the DSL should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new Abingdon House School, Purley or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. The DSL should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new Abingdon House School, Purley or college in advance of a child leaving
- Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy concerning record-keeping in section 15, and allegations of abuse against staff in appendix 3

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9. Recognising abuse and taking action

All staff are expected to be able to identify and recognise all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and shall be alert to the potential need for family help for a child who:

- Has a disability or certain health condition and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care (EHC) plan)
- Has a mental health need
- Is a young carer
- Is pregnant and/or is a parent themselves
- Has exhibited early signs of abuse, violent and/or harmful behaviours
- Is bereaved
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or home
- Has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, in on a part-time timetable, is at risk of permanent exclusions and in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised into terrorism
- Has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- Is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse, such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage
- Is a privately fostered child

Staff, volunteers and governors 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)'.

9.1 If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or is in immediate danger
A referral should be made to the local authority children's social care and/or the police **immediately** if there is a belief a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger. **Anyone can make a referral**.
Tell the DSL as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

You might also include the following link to the GOV.UK webpage for reporting child abuse to your local council: https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council

9.2 If a child discloses 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 the local authority children's social care and/or the police directly (see 9.1), and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so. Aside from these people, do not disclose the information to anyone else unless told to do so by a relevant authority involved in the safeguarding process

Bear in mind that some children may:

- Not feel ready, or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected
- Do not recognise their experiences as harmful
- Feel embarrassed, humiliated or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers

None of this should stop you from having a 'professional curiosity' and speaking to the DSL if you have concerns about a child.

9.3 If you discover that FGM has taken place or a pupil is at risk of FGM
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 of this policy.

Any teacher who either:

- Is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18, and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or purposes connected with labour or birth

Must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a mandatory statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have been specifically told not to, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve local authority 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 outshould speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

Under Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, teachers and regulated professionals have a **statutory mandatory reporting duty** if a student under 18 discloses that they have undergone FGM. [1,]

- **Internal Escalation**: Inform your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.

- **Action Required**:The case must be reported directly to the police by calling the **101 non-emergency number**.
- **Timeframe**: The report must be made within **48 hours** of the disclosure.
- **Record Keeping**: actions should be securely recorded and the police reference number as evidence of your compliance.

9.4 If you have concerns about a child (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger)

Figure 1 below, before section 9.7, illustrates the procedure to follow if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.

Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree on a course of action.
If, in exceptional circumstances, the DSL 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 the local authority's children's social care. You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000. Share details of any actions you take with the DSL as soon as practically possible.

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

Family Help Assessment
If a Family Help Assessment 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. Relevant information must be shared in accordance with the section 16LA duty where it may help another relevant person assess need, make a decision, provide support or take safeguarding or welfare action; a statutory intervention threshold does not need to have been met.

We will discuss and agree with statutory safeguarding partners, levels for the different types of assessment, as part of local arrangements.

The DSL will keep the case under constant review, and the Abingdon House School, Purley will consider a referral to the local authority's 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 the 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, you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The local authority should decide 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.

1. Internal Referral Process

- Immediate Recording: Any staff member who identifies a safeguarding concern—regardless of how minor it seems—must document the details immediately. Use My Concern to record the exact nature of the concern, the child's details, and any disclosures made.
- Verbally Inform the DSL: Hand over or discuss the logged concern with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL during the same school day. If the DSL is unavailable and a child is at immediate risk, do not delay; contact local emergency services or children's social care directly.
- Parental Notification: The DSL will determine if it is safe to inform parents/carers. Informing parents is standard practice unless doing so would place the child or others at an increased risk of harm.

2. External Referral Pathway (Croydon Council)

If the internal assessment indicates that a child is a "Child in Need" (Section 17) or is suffering/at risk of suffering significant harm (Section 47), the school must contact the Croydon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):

- Urgent Concerns (Office Hours): If a child requires same-day intervention or is at risk, the DSL must call 020 8255 2888 (Monday to Friday, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM).
- Out of Hours: For urgent evening or weekend concerns, contact the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 020 8726 6400 (Select Option 5 for Children's Services).
- Immediate Danger: If a child is in immediate danger, staff must dial 999 for the Police without delay.
- Written Referrals: Telephone calls must be followed up within 24 hours by completing the official online portal via the Croydon MASH Referral Form. Non-urgent consultations can also be flagged to mash@croydon.gov.uk or MASHEducation@croydon.gov.uk.

3. Escalation and Professional Disagreement Process

When agencies or practitioners disagree about a safeguarding decision, threshold application, or the management of a case, the issue must not be left unresolved. Staff and the DSL must follow the local formal Escalation Procedure (such as the local Safeguarding Children Partnership resolution policy):

- Stage 1 (Direct Discussion): The practitioner or DSL raises the concern directly with the counterpart in the collaborating agency to find a mutual solution.
- Stage 2 (Line Manager Escalation): If a resolution is not achieved, the issue is formally escalated to line managers or senior leadership within both organisations. All communications must be documented in writing (e.g., via email).

- Stage 3 (Senior Leadership & Panel): Persistent disagreements are escalated to senior agency directors or the local Safeguarding Children Partnership executive board for a final binding decision.
- Audit Trail: Every step of the professional challenge, the final agreements reached, and the rationale must be clearly logged on the child's secure safeguarding file.

9.5 If you have concerns about extremism

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

If, in exceptional circumstances, the DSL 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 the local authority's children's social care. Make a referral to the local authority's children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' above). Inform the DSL or deputy as soon as practically possible after the referral.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include the police or Channel, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of becoming involved with or supporting terrorism, or the local authority's children's social care team.

The DfE also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which Abingdon House School, Purley staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism concerning a pupil. You can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. Note that this is not for use in emergencies.

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

9.6 If you have a concern about mental health

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.
Mental health problems can also, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns (for example, self-harm).

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. However, staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If a child is struggling with their mental health, self-harming, has an eating disorder or is experiencing suicidal ideation and making plans to end their life, there are likely to be potential warning signs which education staff are well placed to recognise, including:

- Significant changes in behaviour,
- Ongoing difficulty sleeping
- Withdrawing from social situations
- Not wanting to do things they usually like
- Physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves

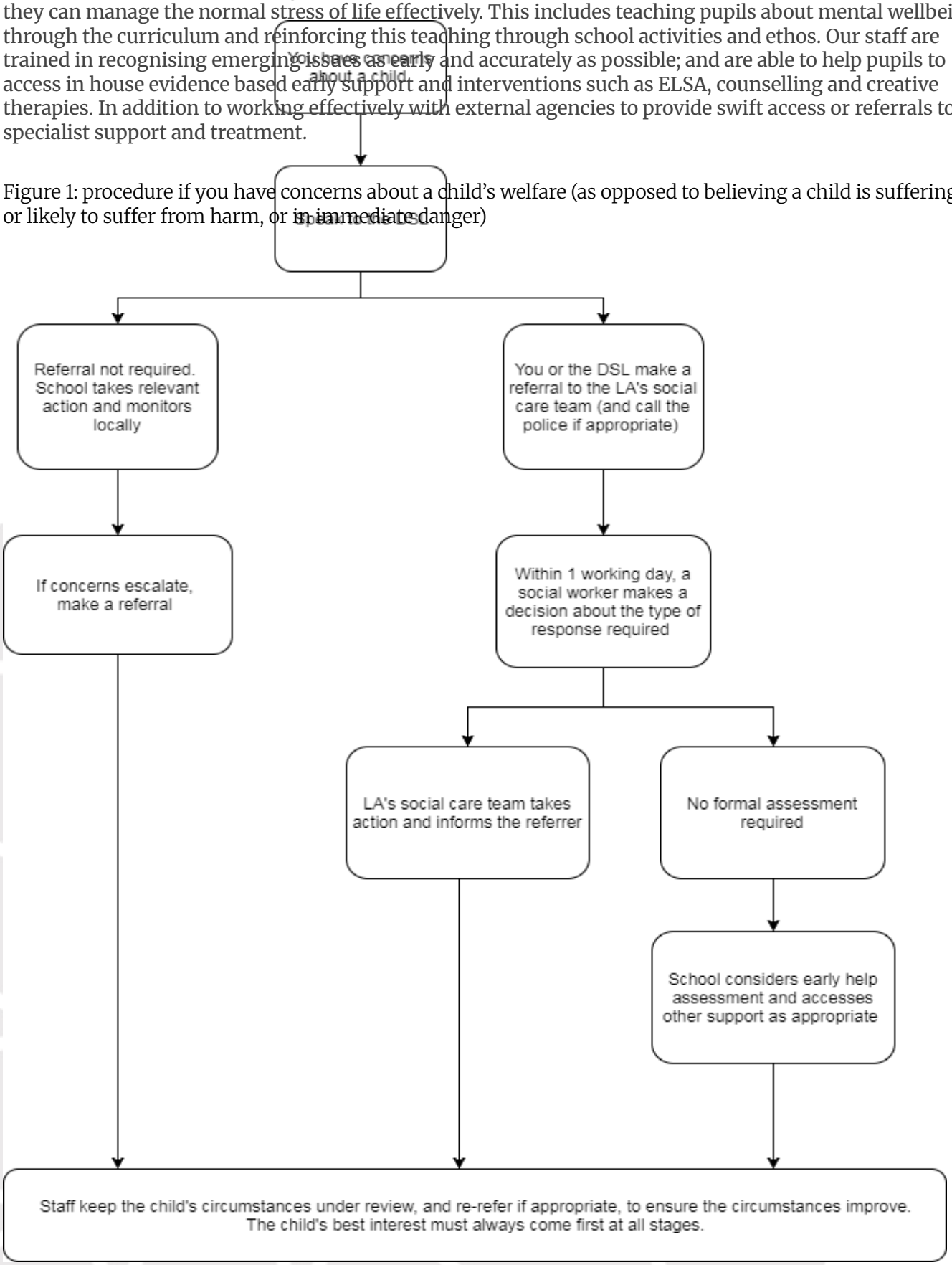
If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by following the steps in section 7.4. If you feel that a child is in danger, call 999 or arrange for the child to be taken to A&E immediately by their parent or other suitable person.
If the child needs help urgently for their mental health, but it's not an emergency, staff can get help from NHS 111 online or call 111 and select the mental health option.

If you have a mental health concern that is not also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL and pastoral team to agree on a course of action.

Early intervention to identify issues and provide effective support is crucial.

At Abingdon House School Purley we have created a safe and calm environment which helps to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school population. We equip pupils to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This includes teaching pupils about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and reinforcing this teaching through school activities and ethos. Our staff are trained in recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible; and are able to help pupils to access in house evidence based early support and interventions such as ELSA, counselling and creative therapies. In addition to working effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.

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)



9.7 Concerns about a staff member, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the headteacher as soon as possible. If the concerns/allegations are about the headteacher, speak to the chair of governors.

The headteacher/chair of governors will then follow the procedures set out in Appendix 3, if appropriate.

If you believe there is a conflict of interest in reporting a concern or allegation about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor) to the headteacher, report it directly to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

If you receive an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using the Abingdon House School, Purley premises for running an activity for children, follow our Abingdon House School, Purley safeguarding policies and procedures, informing the LADO, as you would with any safeguarding allegation.

9.8 Allegations of abuse made against other pupils

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", as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils.

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 Abingdon House School, Purley's behaviour policy, 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 Abingdon House School, Purley at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including where generated by AI), which may include or be driven by misogyny/misandry

See Appendix 4 for more information about child-on-child abuse.

Procedures for dealing with allegations of child-on-child abuse

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's 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 and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed. This will include considering Abingdon House School, Purley transport as a potentially vulnerable place for a victim or alleged perpetrator(s)
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

If the incident is a criminal offence and there are delays in the criminal process, the DSL will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator. We will ask the police if we have any questions

about the investigation.

Creating a supportive environment in Abingdon House School, Purley and minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse.

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Be 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
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensure pupils can easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems (as described in section 9.10 below)
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- Be alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum, or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners
- Recognise the intersection of misogyny/misandry and harmful sexual behaviour. We will actively identify, challenge and address how misogynistic/misandrist attitudes contribute to the normalisation of inappropriate behaviour and increases the risk of leading to child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, within our Abingdon House School, Purley environment
- Be alert to the prevalence of harmful online material and extreme misogynistic/misandrist ideologies, including misogynistic influencers, and recognise the impact this content could have on shaping pupils' attitudes
- Support children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. We will do all we can to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed
- Consider intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:
    - How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
    - That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in Abingdon House School, Purley, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of "it could happen here"
    - That if they have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
        - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
        - A friend may make a report
        - A member of staff may overhear a conversation
        - A child's behaviour might indicate that something is wrong
    - That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation
    - That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
    - The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it
    - That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns
    - That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side
    - That exposure to misogynistic/misandrist content online can indicate a safeguarding concern and requires early discussion with the DSL

The DSL will take the lead role in any disciplining of the alleged perpetrator(s). We will provide support at the same time as taking any disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action can be taken while other investigations are going on, e.g. by the police. The fact that another body is investigating or has investigated an incident doesn't (in itself) prevent our Abingdon House School, Purley from coming to its own conclusion about what happened and imposing a penalty accordingly. We will consider these matters on a case-by-case basis, taking into account whether:

- Taking action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution – we will liaise with the police and/or local authority children's social care to determine this
- Some circumstances make it unreasonable or irrational for us to reach our own view about what happened while an independent investigation is ongoing

9.9 Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes

This is a suggested approach based on guidance from the UK Council for Internet Safety and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology for all staff and for DSLs and senior leaders.

Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

All incidents involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, regardless of whether they are consensual or non-consensual, require a safeguarding response. If you are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual making or sharing of nude or semi-nudes, including where generated by AI, you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must not:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save 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 incident information with relevant staff, pupils involved, and their parents/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 Abingdon House School, Purley staff – this may include the staff member who reported the incident and the safeguarding or leadership team that deals with safeguarding concerns. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to the 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 image(s) to safeguard the young person (in most cases, images or videos should not be viewed)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the image(s) 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 or videos 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 Abingdon House School, Purley, 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 and/or children's social care if:

- The incident involves an adult. Where an adult poses as a child to groom or exploit a child or young person, the incident may first present as a child-on-child incident. See Appendix 4 for more information on assessing adult-involved incidents
- 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 their SEN)
- What the DSL knows about the images or videos 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 images or videos is under 13
- The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (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 or children's social care. The decision will be made and recorded in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

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 to establish the facts and assess the risks.

They will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate).

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.

Informing parents/carers
The DSL will inform parents/carers 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 through local neighbourhood police, by completing the online form or dialling 101.

Recording incidents
All incidents of sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, and the decisions made in responding to them, will be recorded. The record-keeping arrangements set out in section 14 of this policy also apply to recording these incidents.

Curriculum coverage

Pupils are taught about the issues surrounding the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes as part of our RSE and I.T programmes. Teaching covers the following about the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes:

- 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 and when it may be deemed as online sexual harassment
- 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 the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes is also shared with pupils so they are aware of the processes the Abingdon House School, Purley will follow in the event of an incident.

Teaching follows best practice in delivering safe and effective education, including:

- Putting safeguarding first
- Approaching from the perspective of the child
- Promoting dialogue and understanding
- Empowering and enabling children and young people
- Never frightening or scare-mongering
- Challenging victim-blaming attitudes

9.10 Reporting systems for our pupils
Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will take the child's wishes and feelings into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

We recognise the importance of ensuring pupils feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations.

To achieve this, we will:

- Put systems in place for pupils to confidently report abuse
- Ensure our reporting systems are well-promoted, easily understood and accessible for pupils
- Make it clear to pupils that their concerns will be taken seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback
- Safeguarding posters are positioned prominently across the school, through our PSHE and tutor programme pupils are educated on what to do and who they can report any concerns to.
- Any child is able to report any concerns to any adult, the adult will then follow the policy in order to ensure the correct support is accessed.

10. Online safety and the use of mobile technology

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

To address this, our Abingdon House School, Purley aims to:

- Have robust processes (including filtering and monitoring systems) in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and governors
- Protect and educate the whole Abingdon House School, Purley community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole Abingdon House School, Purley community
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate

The 4 key categories of risk
Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:
- **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories
- **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this, such as 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** – online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images including those generated using AI and online bullying; and
- **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

To meet our aims and address the risks above, we will:

- Educate pupils about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:
    - The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
    - Keeping personal information private
    - How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
    - How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they're a witness rather than a victim
- Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues, including cyber-bullying, the risks of online radicalisation, and the expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring. All staff members will receive refresher training as required and at least once each academic year
- Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example, that:
    - Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to Abingdon House School, Purley for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present
    - Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras
- Make all pupils, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and governors aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in Abingdon House School, Purley, use of the Abingdon House School, Purley's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology
- Explain the sanctions we will use if a pupil is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones
- Make sure all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the Abingdon House School, Purley's IT systems. [Note: filtering and monitoring requirements also apply to your use of generative AI – see section 8.1 below.] [If you don't have a separate online safety policy document that covers your filtering and monitoring procedures in detail, include them in our online safety policy.
- Carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our Abingdon House School, Purley community
- Carry out an annual review of our filtering and monitoring effectiveness. This will be conducted by Deputy Headteacher with the support of our DSL and IT support
- Provide regular safeguarding and children protection updates, including online safety, to all staff, at least annually, to continue to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard effectively
- Review the child protection and safeguarding policy, including online safety, annually and ensure the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly

This section summarises our approach to online safety and mobile phone use. For full details about our Abingdon House School, Purley's policies in these areas, please refer to our online safety policy and mobile phone policies, which can be found on our website

10.1 Artificial intelligence (AI)

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini.

Abingdon House School, Purley recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning, and helping to protect and safeguard pupils. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose pupils to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

Abingdon House School, Purley will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully pupils in line with this policy and our [anti-bullying/behaviour/artificial intelligence] policy.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools while they are still being developed and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the Abingdon House School, Purley. Our Abingdon House School, Purley's requirements for filtering and monitoring also apply to the use of AI, in line with Keeping

11. Notifying parents or carers

Where safe and practicable, we will be open with the child and/or their parents or carers about safeguarding information sharing, including what is being shared, with whom and why. The DSL will normally lead this communication. Consent is not required where the section 16LA information sharing duty applies, and staff must not imply that agreement determines whether information will be shared.

Other staff will only talk to parents or carers about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL. If we believe that notifying the parents or carers would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority's 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 or carers of all the children involved. We will think carefully about what information we provide about the other child involved, and when. We will work with the police and/or local authority children's social care to make sure our approach to information sharing is consistent.

The DSL will, along with any relevant agencies (this will be decided on a case-by-case basis):

- Meet with the victim's parents or carers, with the victim, to discuss what's being put in place to safeguard them, and understand their wishes in terms of what support they may need and how the report will be progressed
- Meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss support for them, and what's being put in place that will impact them, e.g. moving them out of classes with the victim, and the reason(s) behind any decision(s)

12. Pupils with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues

We recognise that pupils with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. Children with disabilities are more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, exploitation and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse, such as behaviour, mood and injury, relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- Pupils are more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils
- The potential for pupils with SEN, disabilities or certain health conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges risks that they do not understand that what is happening to them is abuse
- The need for intimate care or that these children are isolated from others
- That these children are more likely to be dependent on adults for care
- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in Abingdon House School, Purley, or being unable to understand the consequences of doing so

We offer extra pastoral support for these pupils. This includes:

Checkins, support in and out of lessons, a safe space to complete work if feeling overwhelmed. Quick referral system to in house ELSA and therapeutic support.

Any abuse involving pupils with SEND will require close liaison with the DSL (or deputy) and the SENCO. The School, consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, and ensure any appropriate support for communication is in place.

13. Pupils with medical conditions

An incident relating to the management of a child's medical condition (including allergies) does not itself warrant a referral to local safeguarding partners.

A safeguarding referral will be made where an incident highlights concern that the child might be at an increased risk of being neglected, abused or exploited by persons inside or outside of their family because of their medical condition. For example, information about the child's medical condition might be withheld from the Abingdon House School, Purley, or the child may be repeatedly sent to Abingdon House School, Purley without essential medication, putting them at risk.

14. Young Carers

The Abingdon House School, Purley recognises that caring responsibilities can impact on a child's attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing, and early identification is essential to ensure young carers receive support at the right time and by the appropriate services including additional support from external partners, or local authority and health service.

15. Pupils with a social worker

Pupils may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially create barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

Where we are aware that a pupil has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the pupil's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:

- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- The provision of pastoral and/or academic support

16. Looked-after and previously looked-after children

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. In particular, we will ensure that:

- Appropriate staff have relevant information about children's looked-after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements
- The DSL has details of children's social workers and relevant virtual Abingdon House School, Purley heads

We have appointed an appropriately trained teacher, Emma Stark, to take the lead on promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

As part of their role, they will:

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to
- Work with virtual Abingdon House School, Purley heads to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children

17. Pupils who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning

The Abingdon House School, Purley recognises that a child being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself a risk factor for harm. However, pupils who are (or who are perceived by other children to be) lesbian, gay, or bisexual can sometimes be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying. See our behaviour policy for more detail on how we prevent bullying based on sexuality.
Any concerns should be reported to the DSL.

18. Pupils who are questioning their gender

18.1 Supporting pupils who are questioning their gender
We are aware of the potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender, including the possibility of complex mental health and psychosocial needs, such as relating to relationships with family, peers or their broader social environment.

We will take a strong, proactive stance on all forms of bullying based on gender. See our behaviour policy for more detail. The Abingdon House School, Purley will ensure that children and their families are aware that, while the Abingdon House School, Purley will appropriately sanction any cases of bullying or harassment, and take a strong stand against bullying, it must also be conscious of the rights of pupils and staff in relation to their religion or belief.
When supporting a pupil questioning their gender, we will take into account the principle of taking a careful approach.

The DSL will lead in these cases.

18.2 Involving parents/carers in cases of pupils questioning their gender
Where a child who is questioning their gender asks for support from the Abingdon House School, Purley, we will engage parents/carers as a matter of priority.

However, in the rare circumstances where involving parents/carers might put a pupil at greater risk than not involving them, the DSL will determine a course of action needed to safeguard the child before contacting parents/carers or any decisions are taken.
Where a child confides in a member of staff about their feelings but does not ask the Abingdon House School, Purley to make changes to how they are treated, the Abingdon House School, Purley will only break any confidence if there is a related safeguarding risk.

18.3 Considering requests for support with social transition
The Abingdon House School, Purley will not initiate any action regarding social transition. However, when a pupil or their parent/carer requests that the Abingdon House School, Purley makes changes or puts support in place to facilitate the pupil presenting as the opposite biological sex (“social transition”), we will work together with parents/carers to determine what is in the best interests of the child and other children.

Members of staff will not adopt any changes relating to social transition unless a decision has been made by the Abingdon House School, Purley and a child’s parents/carers have been involved (as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)).

In making decisions about supporting social transition, the Abingdon House School, Purley will ensure compliance with its obligations in respect of safeguarding legislation and equality and human rights law, ensuring that any assessment of discrimination is informed by the Abingdon House School, Purley’s evaluation of the welfare and best interests of the child and other children. The Abingdon House School, Purleys will make decisions in line with the following principles:

- The Abingdon House School, Purley has statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children: the first step when considering a child’s request for support with social transition will be to consider what is in the best interests of the child and other children, and a decision relating to social transition may not be the same as a child’s wishes

- Parents and carers should be actively involved and their views treated with importance: (except in the rare circumstances where involving parents or carers would constitute a greater risk to the child than not involving them) where a child who is questioning their gender asks for support from the Abingdon House School, Purley parents/carers will be engaged as a matter of priority and their views will carry great weight and be properly considered
- Accommodating social transition is an active intervention so the Abingdon House School, Purley will take a very careful approach: social transition is an active intervention that may have significant effects on the child in terms of their psychological functioning and longer-term outcomes
- The Abingdon House School, Purley will comply with obligations under the Equality Act and Human Rights Act when considering requests for support with social transition

The Abingdon House School, Purley will ensure that the decision-making process is documented and records are kept.
The circumstances or needs of a child may change over time, and the Abingdon House School, Purley may need to review its original decision and will involve the DSL in doing so.

18.5 Rules on single-sex sports
The Abingdon House School, Purley may teach and play some sports or games, or activities of a competitive nature, in single-sex groups where the physical strength, stamina or physique of the average girl would put her at a disadvantage in competition with the average boy (or vice versa). Abingdon House School, Purley can separate children according to their biological sex in these circumstances.

Some sports may need to be played in single-sex groups from a certain age to ensure children's safety. Where single-sex sports are implemented for safety reasons, there are no exceptions and pupils must not be allowed to participate in sports designed for the opposite sex.

19. Complaints and concerns about Abingdon House School, Purley safeguarding policies

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

19.2 Other complaints

1. Pupil-Related Safeguarding Complaints (Peer-on-Peer)

When a complaint or concern involves safeguarding issues between pupils—such as peer-on-peer abuse, severe bullying, or cyber-bullying—the school transitions the issue between its AHSP Behaviour Support Policy and the core Safeguarding (Child Protection) framework

2. Premises and Estates-Related Safeguarding Complaints

If a complaint regards physical school safety, environmental hazards, or a failure in site security (e.g., broken perimeters or unsafe access control), it is handled under the AHSP Health and Safety Policy:

19.3 Whistleblowing
Please refer to our separate AHSPurley Whistleblowing Policy that can be accessed via our website.

20.Record-keeping

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

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the rationale for those decisions must be recorded in writing. This includes decisions to share or not share information under the section 16LA information sharing duty, including the rationale on relevance, how sharing may facilitate the recipient's safeguarding or welfare functions, any assessment of detriment and any mitigation considered. It should also include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency, such as local authority children's social care or the Prevent programme. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Records will 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

Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child.

Any non-confidential records will be readily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and will only be 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 Abingdon House School, Purley.

If a child for whom the Abingdon House School, Purley has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another Abingdon House School, Purley, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded as soon as possible, securely, and separately from the main pupil file.

To allow the new Abingdon House School, Purley/college to have support in place when the child arrives, this should be within:

- 5 days for an in-year transfer, or within
- The first 5 days of the start of a new term

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.

Abingdon House School, Purley (AHSP) manages all child protection and safeguarding files through strict administrative protocols designed to protect vulnerable pupils while remaining fully compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR, and statutory guidance.

- Format of Records: Safeguarding records are maintained primarily electronically using a secure, specialized online logging infrastructure. Any historical or incoming physical paper documents are scanned directly into the student's profile and then securely disposed of using confidential shredding protocols.
- Where Records Are Held: Electronic records are hosted on an encrypted, cloud-based platform that is entirely isolated from the school's general academic and attendance databases.
- Security Measures: Access to the safeguarding platform is highly restricted. It requires strong multi-factor authentication (MFA) and complex password rotations. It is accessible exclusively by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy DSLs, and the Headteacher. General school laptops and transportable devices are fully encrypted to prevent accidental data visibility or loss.

In addition:

- Appendix 3 sets out our policy on record-keeping for allegations of abuse made against staff

21. Training

21.1 All staff
All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistleblowing procedures and online safety, to ensure they understand the Abingdon House School, Purley's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse, exploitation or neglect.

This training will be regularly updated and will:

- Be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole-Abingdon House School, Purley safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning
- Be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners
- Include online safety, including an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff around filtering and monitoring
- Have regard to the Teachers' Standards to support the expectation that all teachers:
    - Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe environment
    - Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils

All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of becoming involved with or supporting terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas.

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

Contractors who are provided through a private finance initiative (PFI) or similar contract will also receive safeguarding training.

Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

21.2 The DSL and deputies
The DSL and deputies will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years.

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).

They, or any other designated Prevent lead, will also undertake more in-depth Prevent awareness training, including on extremist and terrorist ideologies.

21.3 Governors
All governors receive training about safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) at induction, which is regularly updated. This is to make sure that they:

- Have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, such as providing strategic challenge
- It can be assured that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the Abingdon House School, Purley to deliver a robust whole-Abingdon House School, Purley approach to safeguarding

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

21.4 Recruitment – interview panels
At least 1 person conducting any interview for any post at the Abingdon House School, Purley will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

See our Safer Recruitment policy for more information about our safer recruitment procedures.

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

22.Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Behaviour
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints
- Health and safety
- Attendance
- Online safety
- AI
- Mobile phone use
- Equality
- Relationships and sex education
- First aid
- Curriculum
- Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Privacy notices

23. Contact Information

For any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please contact Emma Stark (DSL) or Jon Mansell (Headteach

Emma Stark Deputy Headteacher DSL, emma.stark@ahspurley.com, 020 8092 2080
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24. Approval & Policy Review

This Policy has been reviewed and approved by:

Policy Approver(s)	The Board of Directors
Storage Location	Website, Online, Policies Drive
Effective Date	1st September 2026
Next Review Date	31st August 2027

25. Revision History

Version	Change	Author	Date of Change
V1	Original document	Cavendish Central Team	01/09/2025

V1.1	Updated to align with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026	Cavendish Central Team	01/09/2026

These appendices are based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Appendix 1: types of abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others.

This can be particularly relevant in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

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

Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or care giver 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.

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 cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children
- Verbal abuse such as criticism, belittling, or name-calling

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

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or penetration with an object) 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

Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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 Policy

Appendix 3: Allegations against staff (including low level concerns) policy

Appendix 4: Specific Safeguarding Issues

This appendix is mostly based on the advice in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026), in particular part 1

In accordance with Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, Abingdon House School, Purley (AHSP) maintains a proactive, context-specific approach to identifying and mitigating wider safeguarding risks. Given our specialized context supporting pupils with unique learning profiles and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), our approaches, preventative measures, and multi-agency protocols are tailored to address vulnerabilities uniquely associated with neurodivergent learners

Part 1 also includes information on further issues to be aware of, including child abduction and community safety incidents, children's involvement in the court system, children with family members in prison, county lines, modern slavery and cybercrime.

The school implements robust security, targeted behavioral support, and predictable daily routines to safeguard vulnerable pupils and mitigate community safety risks. Additional measures include specialized PSHE curricula and digital monitoring to protect students from grooming, modern slavery, and online harm.

Assessing adult-involved nude and semi-nude sharing incidents
All adult-involved nude and semi-nude image sharing incidents are child sexual abuse offences and must immediately be referred to police/social care. However, as adult-involved incidents can present as child-on-child nude/semi-nude sharing, it may be difficult to initially assess adult involvement.

There are two types of common adult-involved incidents: sexually motivated incidents and financially motivated incidents.

Sexually motivated incidents
In this type of incident, an adult offender obtains nude and semi-nudes directly from a child or young person using online platforms.

To make initial contact, the offender may present as themselves or use a false identity on the platform, sometimes posing as a child or young person to encourage a response and build trust. The offender often grooms the child or young person on social media, in chatrooms or on gaming platforms, and may then move the conversation to a private messaging app or an end-to-end encrypted (E2EE) environment where a request for a nude or semi-nude is made. To encourage the child or young person to create and share nude or semi-nude, the offender may share pornography or child sexual abuse material (images of other young people), including AI-generated material.

Once a child or young person shares a nude or semi-nude, an offender may blackmail the child or young person into sending more images by threatening to release them online and/or send them to friends and family.

Potential signs of adult-involved grooming and coercion can include the child or young person being:

- Contacted by an online account that they do not know but appears to be another child or young person
- Quickly engaged in sexually explicit communications, which may include the offender sharing unsolicited images
- Moved from a public to a private/E2EE platform
- Coerced/pressured into doing sexual things, including creating nudes and semi-nudes
- Offered something of value such as money or gaming credits
- Threatened or blackmailed into carrying out further sexual activity. This may follow the child or young person initially sharing the image or the offender sharing a digitally manipulated image of the child or young person to extort 'real' images

Financially motivated incidents

Financially motivated sexual extortion (often known as 'sextortion') is an adult-involved incident in which an adult offender (or offenders) threatens to release nudes or semi-nudes of a child or young person unless they pay money or do something else to benefit them.

Unlike other adult-involved incidents, financially motivated sexual extortion is usually carried out by offenders working in sophisticated organised crime groups (OCGs) overseas and are only motivated by profit. Adults are usually targeted by these groups too.

Offenders will often use a false identity, sometimes posing as a child or young person, or hack another young person's account to make initial contact. To financially blackmail the child or young person, they may:

- Groom or coerce the child or young person into sending nudes or semi-nudes and financially blackmail them
- Use images that have been stolen from the child or young person taken through hacking their account
- Use digitally manipulated images, including AI-generated images, of the child or young person

The offender may demand payment or the use of the victim's bank account for the purposes of money laundering.

Potential signs of adult-involved financially motivated sexual extortion can include the child or young person being:

- Contacted by an online account that they do not know but appears to be another child or young person. They may be contacted by a hacked account of a child or young person
- Quickly engaged in sexually explicit communications which may include the offender sharing an image first
- Moved from a public to a private/E2EE platform
- Pressured into taking nudes or semi-nudes
- Told they have been hacked and they have access to their images, personal information and contacts
- Blackmailed into sending money or sharing bank account details after sharing an image or the offender sharing hacked or digitally manipulated images of the child or young person

Children who are absent from education

A child being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may be absent or become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk of becoming missing from education. 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
- Cease to attend a Abingdon House School, Purley
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse, exploitation 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 Abingdon House School, Purley without a new Abingdon House School, Purley 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 absent, 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 local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. 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 a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can be perpetrated by organised networks or gangs, and the victim may identify as part of this group.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. It can include children who have been moved for the purpose of exploitation. This may constitute modern slavery.

Indicators of CCE can include a child:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing Abingdon House School, Purley or education
- Not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CCE, 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.

Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. Most sexual abuse is committed by individuals known to the victim. It can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group. Victims are not always recognised and can be criminalised for actions they take while under coercion.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. 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. Most sexual abuse is committed by individuals known to the victim.

CSE can include both physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity. It can also 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. CSE may also occur without the victim's immediate knowledge, for example through others copying videos or images. It can include children who have been moved for the purpose of exploitation. This may constitute modern slavery.

In addition to the CCE indicators above, indicators of CSE can include a child:

- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

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.

Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence)

Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of Abingdon House School, Purley. It can also take place both face-to-face and online, and can occur simultaneously between the two.

Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both victim and alleged perpetrator, it is preventable and it may involve serious physical harm or threats involving weapons.

Our Abingdon House School, Purley has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We recognise that even if there are there no reports, that doesn't mean that this kind of abuse isn't happening.

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

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Discriminatory behaviour (including racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other prejudice-based incidents)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (this is sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon
- Harmful sexual behaviour (an umbrella term widely used in child protection, and which applies to behaviour occurring online, face-to-face, or both), sexual violence and sexual harassment, which may include misogyny/misandry
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party

- Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including those generated using AI
- Upskirting, which is a criminal offence, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Where children abuse their peers online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.

If staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse, or if a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 7 of this policy, as appropriate. In particular, section 7.8 and 7.9 set out more detail about our Abingdon House School, Purley's approach to this type of abuse.

When considering instances of harmful sexual behaviour between children, we will consider their ages and stages of development. We recognise that children displaying harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma, and will offer them appropriate support.

Domestic abuse

Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse and/or violence at home where it occurs between family members. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse (abuse in intimate personal relationships between children including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and stalking) and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. It can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological or emotional. It can also include ill treatment that isn't physical, as well as witnessing the ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background, and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. Children who witness domestic abuse are also victims.

Older children may also experience and/or be the perpetrators of domestic abuse and/or violence in their own personal relationships. This can include sexual harassment.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children and affect their health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn.

Police must notify a Abingdon House School, Purley of a domestic abuse incident where a child is involved, has witnessed or been present, lives at (or is linked to) the address where it occurred, or where a Child Concern Notification has been issued, regardless of whether the child was there at the time. The police will inform the key adult in Abingdon House School, Purley (usually the designated safeguarding lead) before the child or children arrive at Abingdon House School, Purley the following day. This notification should reflect the 'voice of the child' (for example, statements made the child or behaviour observed). This is the procedure set out in the statutory Operation Encompass guidance for information sharing.

The DSL will provide support according to the child's needs and update records about their circumstances.

Homelessness

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

The DSL and deputies 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 local authority children's social care. Where children are living independently from their parent/carers (e.g. if they've been excluded from their family home), we will work with the local authority children's social care team to support them.

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 HBA 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 Abingdon House School, Purley, 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/carers 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 Abingdon House School, Purley
- 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. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of 1 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.

It is also illegal to cause a child under the age of 18 to marry, even if violence, threats or coercion are not involved.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the '1 chance' rule, i.e. we may only have 1 chance to speak to the potential victim and only 1 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 fmu@fco.gov.uk
- Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or Abingdon House School, Purley counsellor, as appropriate

Preventing radicalisation

- Radicalisation refers to the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence
- Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs Terrorism is an action that:
  - Endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people;
  - Causes serious damage to property; or
  - Seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system

The use or threat of terrorism must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Abingdon House School, Purleys have a duty to prevent children from becoming involved with or supporting terrorism. The DSL, or designated Prevent lead, will undertake in-depth Prevent awareness training, including on extremist and terrorist ideologies. They'll 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 Abingdon House School, Purley from becoming involved with or supporting 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, and equip our pupils to stay safe online at Abingdon House School, Purley and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. 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 the 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 social media
- 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, they will follow our procedures set out in section 7.5 of this policy, including discussing their concerns with the DSL.

Staff should always take action if they are worried.

Further information on the Abingdon House School, Purley's measures to prevent radicalisation are set out in other Abingdon House School, Purley policies and procedures.

Harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in Abingdon House School, Purleys

The Abingdon House School, Purley will respond to all signs, reports and concerns of harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence. This includes incidents occurring outside of the Abingdon House School, Purley premises, and/or online.

Sexual violence refers to specific sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 involving:

- Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents
- Assault by penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents
- Sexual assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. Sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault)
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party)

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, and can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity, and each time activity occurs. A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity, the age of consent is 16, and sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

HSB can occur:

- Between 2 children of any age and sex
- Through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children
- Online and face to face (both physically and verbally)

HSB exists on a continuum and may escalate into sexual harassment or sexual violence. It can occur online or face-to-face (both physically and verbally) and is never acceptable. Sexual violence and sexual harassment may overlap.

Children who are victims of HSB, sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same Abingdon House School, Purley.

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that staff make sure they are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting any form of abuse or neglect. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

When supporting victims, staff will:

- Reassure victims that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them
- Regularly review decisions and actions, and update policies with lessons learnt
- Look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, and decide on a course of action where we identify any patterns
- Consider if there are wider cultural issues within the Abingdon House School, Purley that enabled inappropriate behaviour to occur and whether revising policies and/or providing extra staff training could minimise the risk of it happening again
- Remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting signs that a child has experienced sexual violence, and show sensitivity to their needs

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay and bisexual children, or children questioning their gender are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- Challenging inappropriate behaviours
- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them
- Recognising the intersection of misogyny/misandry and harmful sexual behaviour. It's important not to dismiss issues that may seem minor at first, such as derogatory language, as behaviours can escalate into more severe forms of child-on-child abuse

If staff have any concerns about HSB, sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in section 9 of this policy, as appropriate. In particular, section 9.8 and 9.9 set out more detail about our Abingdon House School, Purley's approach to this type of abuse.

Serious violence

Serious violence is a continuing safeguarding concern which may involve:

- Physical assault
- Carrying, threatening with or using weapons (often in the context of peer conflict or bullying)

- Criminal exploitation

Indicators which may signal that a child is at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime may include:

- Increased absence from Abingdon House School, Purley
- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- 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 (this could indicate that the child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation (see above))

Risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include:

- Having been frequently absent, suspended, spent time in alternative provision, or permanently excluded from Abingdon House School, Purley
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery
- Being male
- Having experienced child maltreatment
- Having used drugs or alcohol in early adolescence
- Having previously been a victim or previously perpetrated violence

Staff will be aware of these indicators and risk factors and will be alert to when children might be at highest risk around the Abingdon House School, Purley day (for example, immediately after Abingdon House School, Purley).

If a member of staff has a concern about a pupil being involved in, or at risk of, serious violence, including a child carrying or using a weapon (or expressing intent to do so), they will report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Assess the risk to both the individual pupil and others in the Abingdon House School, Purley, consider wider information or concerns and take appropriate action
- Put in place a safety and support plan for the pupil (depending on the risk)
- Where relevant, consider action to de-escalate peer conflict

Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and to leave their belongings, including leaving their mobile phone(s), in a safe place during their visit.

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 visitors' book and wear a visitor's badge.

Visitors to the Abingdon House School, Purley who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and Abingdon House School, Purley improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- The organisation sending the professional, such as the local authority or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an appropriate level of DBS check has been carried out (if this is provided, we will not ask to see the DBS certificate)

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the Abingdon House School, Purley any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using Abingdon House School, Purley 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 the parent/carer by phone and direct the child to wait in reception until an adult is able to pick them up. This will be recorded on Arbor.

Missing pupils

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child goes missing, we will:

Abingdon House School, Purley (AHSP) operates a rapid-response protocol to ensure that any child who goes missing from supervision, either on the school premises or during an off-site educational visit, is located and returned to safety as quickly as possible.

If a child is discovered to be missing from their designated classroom or activity group, the school will immediately initiate the following sequential procedures:

1. Immediate Search and Alert Phases

- Instant Notification: The staff member who notices the absence must immediately notify the Main Office and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- Premises Sweep: The Headteacher or a designated member of the SLT will coordinate an immediate, thorough search of the school premises, including communal areas, therapy rooms, toilets, and the school perimeter.
- External Visits: If a pupil goes missing during an off-site trip, the trip leader will immediately organize a search of the immediate area, instruct remaining staff to keep the rest of the group together under tight supervision, and notify the school's main office instantly.

2. Communication and Agency Escalation

- Contacting Parents/Carers: If the initial site sweep does not locate the pupil within 10 minutes (or immediately if the pupil is flagged as a high-risk independent flight risk due to their SEND profile), the Headteacher or DSL will immediately telephone the parents or emergency contacts to inform them of the situation and check if the child has returned home.
- Police Notification: If the child cannot be found after the initial internal search, or if there is any suspicion of abduction or immediate danger, the school will immediately dial 999 to report a missing child to the Metropolitan Police.
- MASH Referral: The DSL will concurrently notify the Croydon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 020 8255 2888 to flag the active incident.

3. Care, Welfare, and Recording

- Who Will Look After the Child: Once the child is found, they will immediately be placed under the direct care of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Headteacher, or a trusted member of the school's integrated therapy team. They will assess the child's physical and emotional well-being, provide a calm and low-stimulus environment to help them regulate, and arrange any necessary medical attention.
- Incident Recording: The entire timeline of the incident—including the exact time the pupil was missed, the search steps taken, times of contact with parents and emergency services, and the circumstances under which the pupil was found—must be formally logged within 24 hours on the school's secure electronic safeguarding system MyConcern. This record is maintained securely by the DSL as a high-priority child protection file.

Appendix 5: The Local Authorities Safeguarding Procedures

Croydon utilizes a 4-Tiered Continuum of Need Matrix to determine the level of intervention required for any child:

- Universal (Level 1): Children whose needs are met within mainstream provisions (schools, GP services).
- Vulnerable / family help (Level 2): Children showing early signs of vulnerability or extra support needs. The school will collaborate with the Croydon family help Support Team to implement a Team Around the Family (TAF) plan.
- Complex / Targeted Multi-Agency (Level 3): Children with chronic or highly complex needs requiring a coordinated multi-agency response (Section 17 Child in Need).
- Acute / Severe Risk (Level 4): Children suffering from, or at immediate risk of, significant harm (Section 47 Child Protection). This triggers an immediate statutory referral to the Croydon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Making a Statutory Referral to Croydon MASH

When a concern meets the threshold for Level 3 or Level 4, the school follows Croydon's strict operational referral pathway:

- Immediate Verbal Referral: For urgent concerns where a child is at immediate risk of harm, the DSL will immediately contact Croydon MASH by telephone on 020 8255 2888.
- Out of Hours / Weekends: If a critical safeguarding issue arises outside of school operational hours, the DSL will contact the Croydon Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 020 8726 6400.
- Written Confirmation: All telephone referrals—and any non-urgent Level 3 concerns—must be formally submitted via the online Croydon Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) via the Croydon Children's Services Portal within 24 hours.

Croydon Strategy Discussions and Section 47 Enquiries

If a referral indicates that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, Croydon Council will lead a multi-agency response:

- Strategy Discussion: Croydon Children's Social Care will convene a Strategy Discussion involving the Police, Health practitioners, and Abingdon House School (typically represented by the DSL).
- School Contribution: The school will provide detailed attendance histories, academic performance profiles, behavioral logs (including CPOMS data), and notes on any communications with the family to assist the Section 47 Enquiry.

Managing Allegations Against Staff: The Croydon LADO

Where a complaint or allegation is made that a member of staff or volunteer has harmed a child, behaved in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children, or committed a criminal offence against a child, the school follows the London Child Protection Procedures via the Croydon Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):

- Notification: The Headteacher (or the Chair of Governors if the allegation involves the Headteacher) must notify the Croydon LADO within 1 working day
  of the allegation being raised.
- Contact Pathway: The LADO team is contacted directly via LADO@croydon.gov.uk or by calling 020 8726 6000 (Ext. 24302).
- Internal Actions: The school will not investigate the allegation internally, interview witnesses, or alert the staff member until explicit, formal direction is received from the Croydon LADO, ensuring that potential criminal or statutory investigations are not compromised.