St Ralph Sherwin
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Version 4
July 2025

One of three Catholic Multi Academy Trusts in the Diocese of Nottingham

St Ralph Sherwin
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Document Provenance

Title of policy:	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	
Author and policy owner in the Executive Team:	Director of Performance and Standards (with responsibility for Safeguarding)	
Version number:	4	
Date approved:	4.7.2025	
Approved by:	Trust Board	
Date of next review:	July 2025	
Document review and editorial updates:		
Version control	**Date**	**Key revisions included**
Version 1	August 2022	Fully revised policy to meet annual review of KCSIE and all legislation issued for the new academic year. All academies – updated policy to meet local safeguarding procedures for 2022-23
Version 2	August 2023	Fully revised policy to meet annual review of KCSIE and all legislation issued for the new academic year. All academies – updated policy to meet local safeguarding procedures for 2023-24
Version 3	July 2024	Fully revised policy to meet annual review of KCSIE and all legislation issued for the new academic year. All academies – updated policy to meet local safeguarding procedures for 2024-25
Version 4	July 2025	Fully revised policy to meet annual review of KCSIE and all legislation issued for the new academic year. All academies – updated policy to meet local safeguarding procedures for 2025-26

'Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance.' Proverbs 1:5

This policy reflects Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) July 2025 as well as other relevant national guidance and local safeguarding children policies and procedures.

The template policy has been developed to support St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust (SRSCMAT) academies in their safeguarding practice and must be tailored to reflect the individual education setting and its own internal provisions, vision, ethos and mission. Additional information should also be included to reflect the needs of learners, their parents/carers and the community in which the academy is located. Reference should also be made to the individual academy's networks with other education establishments, local and community organisations and businesses.

Note: Schools with early years provision should also ensure that relevant references to the statutory Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework are included in their safeguarding/child protection policy.

Name of Academy: St. Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy

The policy will be reviewed annually as a minimum, unless lessons learnt or new legislation, national or local guidance suggests the need for an earlier date of review.

We are proud of our school as a place of learning, prayer and happiness. Hand in hand with God, Our Lady and St Joseph, we promise to work hard and to be kind to one another so that we can grow stronger together in our faith.

ST RALPH SHERWIN CMAT SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust's first priority is the welfare of our children. We are committed to the highest standards in protecting and safeguarding the children entrusted to our care at all times.

In July 2025, the DfE published the revised Keeping Children Safe in Education – statutory guidance for academies and colleges. This statutory guidance contains

information on what academies, including academies, should do and sets out the legal duties with which they must comply.

In law, individual academies are deemed to be 'relevant partners' of their local authority and as such are under a duty to co-operate in that local authority's Local Safeguarding Partnership arrangements. St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust ensures not only compliance at the local level but also assumes a strategic responsibility to ensure that safeguarding practice is of high quality.

The Trust has established a Leader of Safeguarding within the Central Leadership Team and a Safeguarding Lead Trust Board Director from the Trust Board to share good practice and to develop the strategic Safeguarding policies and procedures of the Trust.

We have comprehensive Safeguarding Procedures in place at each of our academies which are available to download from the websites and from the individual academies on request.

We know that some children may be the victims of neglect or physical, sexual or emotional abuse, and all our staff and volunteers receive regular training on how to recognise the signs of abuse and, by virtue of their day-to-day contact and knowledge of the children, are well placed to identify such abuse and offer support to those children.

In order to protect our children, we:

- create an atmosphere where all our children can feel secure, valued and listened to
- are able to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse
- are able to respond quickly and effectively to cases of suspected abuse
- monitor and support children at risk
- use the curriculum to raise children's awareness, build confidence and skills
- work closely with parent/carers and support external agencies
- ensure that all adults within our academies who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability via an Enhanced DBS check and other pre-employment vetting checks
- provide regular training and updates to our staff on a range of safeguarding issues.

We will endeavour to support each child by:

- encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness whilst not condoning aggression or bullying
- promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within our academies liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children
- notifying Children's Services via the approved mechanisms as soon as there is a significant concern

- providing continuing support to a child about whom there have been concerns and who leaves a academy by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to the child's new academy.

Anyone who is concerned about the safety or well-being of any child within the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust should in the first instance contact the relevant Academy and ask to speak to the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding.

St Ralph Sherwin
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

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St Ralph Sherwin
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

1. Introduction

1.1 This child protection/safeguarding policy outlines how the academy will safeguard and promote children's welfare to keep our learners safe from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

1.2 The policy applies to all adults, including volunteers, governors/trustees, supply staff and contractors working in or on behalf of the setting.

1.3 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- 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 the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

1.4 Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

1.5 We help to keep children safe by:

- Providing safe environments, with secure access, where children can learn and develop
- Acting in the best interests of children to protect them online and offline, including when they are receiving remote education
- At the earliest opportunity, identifying children who may need early help, and who are at risk of harm or have been harmed. This can include, but is not limited to, neglect, abuse (including by other children), grooming or exploitation
- Taking timely and appropriate safeguarding action for children who need extra help or who may be suffering, or likely to suffer, harm. This includes, if required, referring in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help
- Using safe recruitment processes and managing allegations that may meet the harm threshold and allegations/concerns that do not meet the harm threshold, referred to as low-level concerns

1.6 We will ensure that parents/carers and our partner agencies are aware of our child protection/ safeguarding policy by ensuring that it is on the Trust and Academy's website. *This policy is shared with new parents and external agencies that work regularly in school e.g. YMCA.*

1.7 The academy website will also have information about how parents/children/other agencies can contact the designated safeguarding lead and their deputy/ies and include their availability during out of school hours and school holidays.

1.8 Safeguarding and child protection policy statement

St Joseph's operates a whole school approach and ethos to safeguarding and protecting children. Where safeguarding is concerned, we maintain an attitude of *"it could happen here"*. We recognise that everyone in the academy has a role to play to keep children safe; this includes ensuring children feel heard and understood, identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action. Safeguarding and child protection is incorporated in all relevant aspects of processes and policy development. All systems, processes and policies operate with the best interests of a child at their centre.

1.9 We ensure that all children are safeguarded while on or off academy premises and are proactive about anticipating and managing risks that children face in the wider community and online. To support this the academy assesses the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of its learners. Due to the context of our academy, our children may be at greater risk of *Gang related violence, Neglect and Domestic Violence.*

1.10 To protect our learners, we have a Prevent action plan/risk assessment and are part of the Stopping Domestic Abuse Together (SDAT) initiative (Derby and Derbyshire's local version of Operation Encompass).

1.11 The academy recognises we have an important role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and contributes to multi-agency working as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) *(Note: this is currently under consultation).* As a relevant agency, the academy understands its role within local safeguarding arrangements and operates in accordance with the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children multi-agency procedures, including the local criteria for action (known as the Threshold document) and local protocols for assessment in Derby and Derbyshire.

1.12 To support key multi-agency safeguarding communications we have a dedicated secure safeguarding email address (safeguarding@jph.srscmat.co.uk) which is accessible by at least two members of our safeguarding staff. During the academy term and in academy hours, this is checked daily. An 'out of office' message is operational during other times and in academy holidays to advise partner agencies if and how often messages will be checked/responded to and when the academy will reopen.

1.13 The academy is also aware of and implements any local learning where appropriate, such as those as outlined in the DDSCP briefing notes located in the multi-agency safeguarding children procedures document library.

Context

1.14 This policy enables [name of academy] to carry out our functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and must be read alongside key guidance:

- Department for Education's statutory guidance publications for schools and local authorities, including:
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (December 2023)
- Keeping children Safe in Education (July 2025)
- Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children (2018)
- Human Rights Act (1998) and Equality Act (2010), including the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Data Protection Act (2018) and UK GDPR
- Prevent Duty Guidance (2023)
- Derby and Derbyshire Multi-agency Safeguarding Children procedures

1.15 Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm, neglect, or failure to act, it relates to broader aspects of care and education. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other academy policies, such as:

- Children's health and safety and well-being, including their mental health
- Behaviour policy, including how we engage learners struggling to engage in school, mental health and behaviour, acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours, how we prevent and respond to bullying including cyber bullying, prejudiced based and discriminatory bullying and child-on-child abuse. This policy also outlines the academy's screening, searching, and confiscating powers and how they will be used safely, proportionately, and appropriately, including police strip searches
- Reduced timetables, suspension, and permanent exclusion
- Use of reasonable force/physical intervention, including the increased vulnerability of children with special education needs (SEN) or disabilities and equality duties
- School attendance, including children who are absent from education particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods or go missing from education, home, or care
- Meeting the needs of learners with medical conditions
- Providing first aid
- Educational visits
- Intimate care and emotional well-being
- Online safety, including use of mobile and smart technology, online safety at school and at home and other associated issues, including sharing nudes and semi-nudes,

use of mobile phones/devices in school, appropriate filtering and monitoring, and how children can be kept safe from terrorist and extremist materials

- Safer recruitment and selection, including single central record
- Staff behaviour (code of conduct), including low level concerns, managing allegations against staff, including supply staff, contractors and volunteers incorporating 'duty to refer' and whistleblowing, acceptable use of technologies/mobile devices, staff/learner relationships and communications, including the use of social media
- Academy security and visitors
- Policy/agreement for visiting speakers
- SEND annual information report
- Relationships education (RE)/relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education (physical and mental well-being)
- Communications
- Complaints procedure
- Information sharing

The following expressions, where they appear, shall have the following meanings:

i. 'CMAT' means the Catholic Multi Academy Trust, that is the company responsible for the management of the Central Team and the Academies and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff within the Central Team and the Academies.
ii. 'Board' means the board of Directors of the CMAT who are responsible for carrying out the employment functions of the CMAT.
iii. 'Central Team' means all staff employed in the Central Office functions of the CMAT.
iv. 'Chair' means the Chair of the Board of the CMAT as appointed from time to time.
v. 'Companion' means a willing work colleague not involved in the subject matter under which the policy in being invoked, a trade union official, an accredited representative of a trade union or other professional association of which the employee is a member.
vi. 'Diocesan Education Service' means the education service provided by the diocese in which the CMAT is situated, which may also be known, or referred to, as the Diocesan School Commission.
vii. 'Directors' means directors appointed to the Board of the CMAT from time to time.
viii. 'Governor' means a member of the Local Governing Body of the School
ix. 'Headteacher' means the most senior teacher in the School who is responsible for its management and administration. Such teacher may also be referred to as the Head of School or Executive Headteacher.
x. 'Local Governing Body' means the Governors appointed from time to time to carry out specified functions in relation to the School as delegated by the CMAT.
xi. 'School' means the Academy named at the beginning of this Policy and Procedure and includes all sites upon which the Academy undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.

xii. 'Working Day' means any day on which you would ordinarily work if you were a full-time employee. In other words, 'Working Day' will apply differently to teaching and non-teaching staff. However, part-time and full-time staff will not be treated differently for the purposes of implementing this Policy and Procedure.

2. What is abuse?

2.1 All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation , understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school/college, inside and outside of home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child which may be caused by an adult, adults or by another child or children inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. The abuse can be physical, sexual, neglect or emotional, including witnessing the ill treatment of others, such as domestic abuse. Children can be at risk of abuse inside and outside of their home, in their community, inside and outside the academy and online.

2.2 Safeguarding issues can put children at of risk harm. Behaviours linked to drug taking and or alcohol misuse, deliberate absence from or going missing from education, serious violence (including county lines), radicalisation, consensual/non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images can be signs that children are at risk. Abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events; in most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

2.3 Safeguarding action may be needed to protect children from the following risks, which include abuse perpetrated by other children as well as by adults:

- Any concerns that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect
- Bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying, racist, disability and homophobic or gender questioning related abuse
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
- Sexual harassment, online sexual abuse, and sexual violence between children. Online abuse can include sending abusive, harassing, and misogynistic or misandrist messages; sharing nude and semi-nude images and videos; and coercing others to make and share sexual imagery
- Radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour
- Child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation, including county lines
- Risks linked to using technology and social media, including online bullying; the risks of being groomed online for exploitation or radicalisation; misinformation;

disinformation; conspiracy theories; and the generation or sharing of inappropriate content such as youth-produced sexual imagery.

- Abuse within intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship' abuse)
- Upskirting[1]
- Substance misuse – drugs and alcohol
- Gang activity and serious violence, particularly affecting young males who have been excluded, have experienced trauma and have been involved in offending
- Domestic abuse
- Forced marriage, marriage/civil partnership under the age of 18, virginity testing or hymenoplasty, female genital mutilation and so-called 'honour-based' abuse
- Children with Perplexing Presentations (PP) in whom illness is fabricated or induced (FII)
- Homelessness
- Other issues not listed here but that pose a risk to children

2.4 Further information about indicators of abuse and neglect as well as safeguarding risks noted above are located in Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2025).

3. What is a Low Level Concern?

Staff induction

3.1 Staff and governors at *St Joseph's* will have an induction appropriate to their roles, which will include organisation vision/ethos/mission, aspirations, and expectations of all staff, as well as what is considered acceptable and what is not. New staff will also receive information about systems within the academy which support safeguarding, including online safety and copies of policies; this includes:

- Child protection/ safeguarding policy, which includes how the academy deals with child-on-child abuse
- Academy behaviour policy, which includes academy measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- Staff behaviour (code of conduct) policy, which includes acceptable use of technologies/mobile devices, online filtering and monitoring processes utilised and expectations associated with this, including references to the

[1] Upskirting is taking a picture of someone's genitals or buttocks under their clothing without them knowing, either for sexual gratification or in order to humiliate or distress the individual. This is a criminal offence, see Voyeurism (Offences) Act (2019)

DfE's 2023 Cyber Security Standards for Schools, the Generative AI guidance, and the "Plan Technology for Your School" tool, staff/learner relationship and communications, including the use of social media. The policy also incorporates low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing

- The safeguarding response to children who are absent from education
- The safeguarding response to child-on-child abuse
- The role and names of the designated safeguarding lead, their deputy/ies, the designated teacher for looked after children, the senior mental health lead, and the designated governor

3.2 All staff will:

- Receive a paper/electronic copy of, read and sign to say that they have received, read, and understood:
  - Those who work directly with children at least Part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education: for school and college staff and Annex B: Further information (July 2025)
  - Academy leaders, including governors/trustees/proprietors and designated safeguarding leads/deputies all of Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2025)
  - Staff who do not work with children directly at least Keeping Children Safe in Education: for school and college staff (part 1) (July 2025) or Annex A Safeguarding information for school and college staff (a condensed version of part 1)

3.3 All staff will:

- Be aware of:
  - The Stopping Domestic Abuse Together initiative (known nationally as Operation Encompass), a police-led early domestic abuse notification to schools
  - The safeguarding response to children who are absent from education or deliberately missing education.
  - The safeguarding response to child-on-child abuse
  - The early help process for low level and emerging needs and understand their role in it
  - The process for making a referral to local authority children's social care, the statutory assessments that may follow this and the role they may play in such assessments
- Know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected and will be able to reassure children they are being taken seriously, will be supported, and kept safe

- Know what to do if a child shares, produces, or receives a sexual communication, including sharing nudes/ semi-nudes
- Know what to do if a parent or carer shares any concerns about a child
- Be aware:
  - Children may not feel ready or know how to tell and/or might not recognise their experiences as harmful and that certain children may face additional barriers to telling
  - Any child may benefit from early help and be alert to the need for early help for some groups of children, including those who have experienced multiple suspensions, at risk of being permanently excluded from school or be attending Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
  - Of the indicators of abuse, exploitation, and neglect, understand that children can be at risk inside and outside of the academy, in their home, institutional or community setting and online
  - Children can abuse other children, referred to as child-on-child abuse, and the academy policy to prevent and respond to it
  - Children with special education needs or disabilities (SEND), particularly those with neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism, as well as those with certain medical or physical health conditions are particularly vulnerable to online and offline abuse, exploitation, and neglect - and also face additional barriers to the recognition of this abuse
  - In addition to children with SEND, that some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm, including children who need a social worker, children absent or missing from education or who are electively home educated, children requiring mental health support, looked after/previously looked after children and children who are, or may be, lesbian, gay, bi, or gender questioning (LGBTQ+)
  - Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and well-being issues
  - 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
  - That children's poor behaviour may be a sign that they are suffering harm or that they have been traumatised by abuse
  - Of the '*one chance*' rule with suspected or actual victims of forced marriage and so called 'honour-based' abuse. That is, they may only have one opportunity to speak to a victim or potential victim to offer appropriate support and advice
  - Of the possible indicators, alongside other factors, and contexts, that a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology

  - Of the indicators which may signal children are at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime
- Have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children and previously looked after children safe
- Discuss/report any concerns they have about a child with the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy. If staff members are unsure, they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy
- Speak to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy about any concerns about so called 'honour-based' abuse, breast ironing, female genital mutilation (FGM)[1], virginity testing and hymenoplasty[2]
- Work with the designated safeguarding lead and do everything they can to support social workers to help them carry out a statutory assessment
- Be mindful that early information sharing is vital to identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect and in promoting children's welfare, including in relation to their educational outcomes

3.4 **Governors/trustees and the management of academy safeguarding**

As outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) the governing body/trustees have a strategic leadership responsibility for the academy safeguarding arrangements and have the responsibility to ensure that the academy complies with safeguarding duties under legislation. There is a senior board level lead to take leadership responsibility for the establishment's safeguarding arrangements.

3.5 The governing body/trustees and the central leadership teams and designated safeguarding lead are aware of and follow local arrangements. This includes understanding and applying the Threshold document (criteria for action), local Protocol for Assessment in Derby and Derbyshire, (Derby or Derbyshire Child Protection Conference Professionals Dissent process and Dispute Resolution and Escalation policy. Arrangements have been made to set out information sharing processes and principles within the academy and with local authority children's social care, safeguarding partners and other agencies. The academy will supply information as requested by the relevant local authority safeguarding boards which enables and assists partners to perform their functions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in

[1] There is a specific legal duty on teachers to report acts of FGM on girls under 18 to the police
[2] It is illegal to carry out, offer or aid and abet virginity testing or hymenoplasty in any part of the UK; see multi-agency guidance for more information

their area, including information related to local and national child safeguarding practice reviews.

3.6 Governors/trustees exercise strategic oversight of all aspects of safeguarding in the academy and this is a standing item at all governing body/trustee meetings and recorded in minutes. To support this an annual safeguarding audit (s175) is completed to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding policies and processes. This audit is submitted twice a year to the trustees and central leadership team. In addition, an annual review and risk assessment of the academy approach to online safety, policy and practice is undertaken.

3.7 **Headteacher**

The academy headteacher will ensure that the policies and procedures, adopted by their governing body and trustees, are understood, and followed by all staff. This includes working with the designated safeguarding lead, their deputy, and other senior leaders, to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding within the academy and ensuring that educational outcomes of children who have or have had a social worker are promoted.

3.8 **Designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead**

A member of the senior leadership team is appointed to the role of designated safeguarding lead to take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place).

3.9 The designated safeguarding lead co-ordinates the setting's safeguarding and child protection arrangements by providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, including Stopping Domestic Abuse Together (SDAT) notifications, takes part in strategy discussions/meetings and inter-agency meetings – and/or supports other staff to do so - and contributes to the assessment of children.

3.10 The establishment also has a deputy designated safeguarding lead to cover for when the designated safeguarding lead is not available; the lead responsibility however remains with the designated safeguarding lead.

3.11 The designated safeguarding lead actively liaises with other academy staff with safeguarding responsibilities, teachers, pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT leads, SENCos and senior mental health leads on matters of safety and safeguarding to ensure safeguarding and promoting children's well-being are effective.

3.12 The designated safeguarding lead or a deputy is always available during academy hours for the staff in the academy to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

3.13 More information about the role and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2025) Annex C: Role of the designated safeguarding lead.

3.14 **Safeguarding training**

In addition to the safeguarding training at induction, all staff and governors/trustees will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities which is regularly updated[1] as well as Prevent Duty, child-on-child abuse and online safety training (which includes effective responses to sharing nudes/semi-nudes and an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring), so they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to keep children safe. They will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates at least annually to help provide them with an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at the risk of harm ensuring they have the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

3.15 All staff will receive training on attendance, with dedicated attendance training for any staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff, and senior leaders.

3.16 The governors'/trustees' safeguarding training and updates will enable them to have the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that safeguarding processes and procedures are effective and robust and a whole academy approach to safeguarding is in place.

[1] See DDSCP multi-agency training pathway on the training page of www.ddscp.org.uk

Those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children will have received appropriate safer recruitment training.

4. Key Safeguarding Concerns

Academy staff with specific safeguarding responsibilities

Safeguarding Role	Name and Role	Academy contact details
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Tracey Churchill (Headteacher)	01332 361660
Senior Leader(s) available for contact in the absence of the designated safeguarding lead	Louise Kearney (Deputy)	01332 361660
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Lorraine Sheath (Assistant Head)	01332 361660
Other staff with safeguarding responsibilities	Jess Tillett (Assistant Head)	01332 361660
Attendance Lead	Pam Mulvanny	helpline@jph.srscmat.co.uk
SENCo	Louise Kearney	helpline@jph.srscmat.co.uk
Designated Safeguarding Governor/ Trustee	Thulani Simbani	helpline@jph.srscmat.co.uk
Designated Teacher for Looked After/ previously Looked After Children	Tracey Churchill	helpline@jph.srscmat.co.uk
Senior Lead/s for Mental Health and Well-being	Tracey Churchill	helpline@jph.srscmat.co.uk
Governor/Trustee for Mental Health and Well-being	Fr Jonathan Whitby-Smith	helpline@jph.srscmat.co.uk

Other Key Local Safeguarding Contacts

	Derby	Derbyshire
Early Help Advice	Early Help Advisors ***Locality 3 & 4*** • ***Areas:*** *Blagreaves, Littleover, Mickleover, Normanton, Abbey*	Early Help Development Team

	Derby	Derbyshire
	• ***Email:*** *vcm3and4@derby.gov.uk* • ***Phone:*** *01332 641315*	
Targeted Early Help requests	Locality Vulnerable Children Meeting (VCM) for requests for targeted early help via multi-agency team (MAT) or non-urgent social care referrals via Locality Based Single Point of Access (SPA) Clerks: **Locality 3 & 4** Blagreaves, Littleover, Mickleover, Normanton and Abbey Email: vcm3and4@derby.gov.uk	Requests for support from professionals, should be made via the online request for support unless a child is at risk of Significant Harm
Speak to a Social Worker for thresholds advice and consultation	Children's Services Professional Consultation Line 07812 300329	Starting Point Consultation and Advice Service for Professionals 01629 535353
Referrals to Local Authority Children's Social Care	***Initial Response Team*** **Urgent:** 01332 641172 or out of hours via Careline 01332 956606 **Non urgent:** Derby Children's Social Care Online Referral system	***Starting Point*** **Urgent:** 01629 533 190 **Non urgent:** Starting Point online
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Derby and Derbyshire LADO referral form **Email:** CPMduty@derby.gov.uk	Derby and Derbyshire LADO referral form **Email:** professional.allegations@derbyshire.gov.uk
Derbyshire Police	• 999 for emergencies or 101 for non-emergencies • Mandatory reporting of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) via 101 • Academy Police Safer neighbourhood team or link officer	

	Derby	Derbyshire
Prevent (radicalisation and extremism)	• Police Prevent (radicalisation/extremism) Team on 101 or directly via 0300 1228694 • Prevent/channel referral form • For advice contact: Derbyshire - 01629 538473 or prevent@derbyshire.gov.uk Derby - 07765 222032 or sally.siner@derby.gov.uk	
Education Welfare and Local Authority Children Missing Education (CME) Officer	**Derby City – Education Welfare Service** • **Phone:** 01332 641448 • **Email:** cme@derby.gov.uk • **Referral Form:** Derby CME Referral Form (Form 50) • **Guidance:** Children Missing Education – Derby City Council	**Derbyshire – Education Welfare Service** • **Phone:** 01629 535741 • **Email:** cs.cmecoordinators@derbyshire.gov.uk • **Referral Guidance & Forms:** • Children Missing from Education – Derbyshire County Council • How to refer a child missing from education (SchoolsNet)
Virtual School for Looked After Children	• Virtual School Head - 07812 301044 or graeme.ferguson@derby.gov.uk **Specialist Education Support Officer for LAC** • Kate Harm – Specialist Education Officer kate.harm@derby.gov.uk 01332 641439 • Catherine Ward catherine.ward@derby.gov.uk 01332 640346 • Nina McNelis nina.mcnelis@derby.gov.uk 01332 956459 • Sarah Parkman – sarah.parkman@derby.gov.uk 01332 640347 • Susannah Beadle	• Rachel Moore, Head of the Virtual School for Children in Care 07798 882876 or rachel.moore@derbyshire.gov.uk • **For Specialist Education Support Officers for LAC, contact the Derbyshire Virtual School directly** via their general line: **01629 538028** or **virtualschool@derbyshire.gov.uk**

	Derby	Derbyshire
	susannah.beadle@derby.gov.uk 01332 642385 • Genevieve McCaskill – genevieve.mccaskill@derby.gov.uk 07741 091375 • Carla Dewberry – carla.dewberry@derby.gov.uk 07469 368281	
Public Health Nurse/other health contact/s	• *Peartree clinic 01332 888030*	
Emotional Health and Well-being Services	*Emotional Health and Wellbeing portal - Derby & Derbyshire - Emotional Health & Wellbeing*	
Domestic Abuse	• Safer Derby City • Derbyshire constabulary - information and advice about domestic abuse webpages	• Safer Derbyshire domestic abuse webpage • Derbyshire constabulary - information and advice about domestic abuse webpages
Harmful Sexual Behaviour Service	Action for Children Pathway Programme Service for harmful sexual behaviours. Please note this service is for children in Derbyshire who are living with their birth family. pathwayservice@actionforchildren.org.uk	
Cyberchoices	For children at risk of being drawn into cybercrime via East Midlands Cyber Secure	
Homelessness or at risk of homelessness	Derby city council homelessness webpages	***Derbyshire County Council – Children's Care & Support Fact Sheet: Homelessness*** *A detailed PDF summarising who's eligible for help, key contacts, emergency accommodation, and support services (Welfare Rights, Discretionary Fund, etc.)* *southderbyshire.gov.uk+7derbyshiredales.gov.uk+7democracy.derbyshire.gov.uk+7derbyshire.gov.uk* ***Derbyshire County Council – Housing-related support services*** *Explains temporary accommodation, crisis support, and independent living*

	Derby	Derbyshire
		services for those at risk of homelessness *derbyshire.gov.uk*

Key National Contacts

Organisation	Description and contact details
NSPCC helpline for adults	Helping adults protect children 24 hours a day. For help and support, including anyone needing advice about female genital mutilation, young people affected by gangs, concerns that someone may be a victim of modern slavery contact the NSPCC trained helpline counsellors on: • Text 88858 • 0808 800 5000 • help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC helpline Report Abuse in Education	Bespoke helpline for children and young people who've experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals who need support and guidance: • 0800 136 663 • help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice	Free advice and support for professionals concerned about how child protection issues are being handled in their organisation: • 0800 028 0285 • help@nspcc.org.uk
UK Safer Internet Centre professional advice line	Helpline for professionals working with children and young people in the UK with any online safety issues they may face themselves or with children in their care: • 0844 381 4772 • helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Police Anti-Terrorist Hot Line number	0800 789 321
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	Hosted by Refuge, Helpline 0808 2000247
Operation Encompass	Resources for schools include free advice from an Education Psychologist about how best to support children via National Helpline 0204 513 9990
Report harmful online content	• UK Safer Internet Centre – report online harm. A national reporting centre that has been designed to assist anyone in reporting harmful content online • CEOP – to report online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating online

Organisation	Description and contact details
Report Abuse in Education helpline	• Young people who have experienced abuse at school and parents and teachers who are concerned about sexual abuse in education settings can call the Report Abuse in Education helpline on 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk
Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Services	• SWGfL Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service for the children's workforce 0344 2250623 or email hsbsupport@swgfl.org.uk • Stop it now! For worries about a child's sexual behaviour, 0808 1000 900

5. Ensuring a safe environment for all children

5.1 Our academy provides a safe environment where children can learn and develop. This is an essential part of our whole academy approach to safeguarding which incorporates a culture of vigilance where children's welfare is promoted, timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken for children who need extra help or who may be suffering, or likely to suffer harm.

5.2 The school environment is safe and secure and protects our learners from harm or the risk of harm. Positive behaviours are consistently promoted, and abusive or inappropriate behaviour challenged. A positive and supportive environment is promoted which gives learners a sense of being valued.

5.3 Vulnerable children

We recognise that some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm than others and have agreed arrangements to ensure the safety of these children:

- **Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans**). As a matter of routine, the designated safeguarding lead will hold and use the information that the child has a social worker to ensure that as a matter of routine decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. In addition, the academy will work with the virtual head as appropriate, regarding the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker.
- **Children who are absent from education.** The academy proactively manages and take steps to improve attendance across our community. Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all of our learners and is everyone's responsibility in school.

  The academy response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods, supports identifying a range of safeguarding issues and abuse; it also helps prevent the risk of absent children

becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker, where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. We support and monitor attendance and absence carefully to identify learners or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place. This includes:

- Building strong relationships with families, listening to, and understanding barriers to attendance and working with families to remove them.
- Sharing information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, the local authority, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

5.4 The academy also recognises that when children are not in school, such as when a learner is on a reduced timetable, suspended or excluded, they miss the protection and opportunities that education can provide, and can become more vulnerable to harm. Learners who have a social worker, including looked-after children, and previously looked-after children, are especially vulnerable. The academy proactively supports learners in the school environment and decision-making processes about reduced timetables, suspension or exclusion and operate in the best interest of children as outlined in local and national guidance. Where it is agreed that the child can attend school on a part time basis, Derby City policies, procedures and risk assessments are followed.

- **Elective home education.** Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, the school will seek to co-ordinate a meeting with the parents/carers, Local Authority, and other key professionals where possible. This would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child and is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker or is vulnerable. Where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) the local authority should review the plan with parents/carers. Where a child is taken off roll, we will inform the Local Authority of the deletion from our admission register via the system outlined on the Derby or Derbyshire Education Welfare webpages.

- **Children who require mental health support.** The academy has an important role to play in supporting the well-being and mental health of our learners. Mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect, or exploitation. We have clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible emotional well-being issues and mental health problems, seek advice from external agencies where appropriate and have clear referral and accountability systems.
- **Looked after children and previously looked after children.** The academy ensures that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked

after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her. The designated safeguarding lead has:

- Details of the child's social worker, and
- The name and contact details of the virtual school head and the relevant support officer in the authority that looks after the child
- The name of the Personal Advisor appointed to support a child who has left care

When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, the school/ college will work with all local authority children's social care, health and other relevant agencies and take prompt action when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group. The academy has a named designated teacher, who works with the Virtual School, to promote the educational achievement of learners who are looked after, have left care through adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangement orders, or adopted from state care outside of England and Wales. The designated teacher has appropriate training, relevant qualifications, and experience.

- **Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or health issues.** The designated safeguarding lead and SENCo/named person with oversight of SEND will closely liaise whenever there are any concerns or reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation involving a child with SEND, neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism or certain medical or physical health conditions. The academy will consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.

- **Children who are, or may be, lesbian, gay, bi, or gender questioning (LGBTQ+).** The academy will take steps to reduce the additional barriers these children face and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with staff.

- **Private fostering**
  In addition to the above the academy recognises the additional vulnerability of children in private fostering arrangements. A private fostering arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. See Children Act 1989: private fostering. When such arrangements come to our attention, we will advise the local authority.

5.5 We also recognise that in addition to the above, other factors can increase a child's vulnerability to abuse, exploitation, or neglect such as:

- In a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as parental substance (drugs and/or alcohol) misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Misusing drugs and or alcohol

- Being an asylum seeker/refugee
- Being from our new communities
- Living away from home, including private fostering arrangements, or have returned home to their family from care
- Are at risk of homelessness or living in temporary accommodation
- Living in chaotic, neglectful, and unsupportive home situations
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of age, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity leave, disability, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion/belief, gender, sex, or sexual orientation
- Being a young carer
- Not speaking or not having English as a first language
- Being involved in the court system
- Children affected by parental offending or with family members in prison

Children experiencing any of the above factors will have access to support within school. This will range from support for the family through external professionals, to specialist counselling.

5.6 **Teaching safeguarding**
We are committed to offering our learners preventative education to ensure that learners are aware of safeguarding risks, recognise when they are at risk and how and where to get help and support if they need it. They will be taught about healthy relationships online and offline, how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. To be effective, we employ best practice principles to help create a safe classroom environment and to plan and teach effectively. The academy recognises this will need to be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including those who have been victims of abuse and children with special educational needs and disabilities.

5.7 Our preventative education forms part of our whole academy approach to prepare our learners for life in modern Britain, encourages open debate about different points of view and beliefs and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/ misandry, disablism, racism, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence and harassment. It is responsive to contextual, local and national data, issues and trends to ensure it is meeting the challenges that children/young people are facing.

5.8 The academy's core values and standards, alongside the fundamental British Values, are upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of the academy. This is underpinned by the academy's behaviour policy, pastoral support system and our planned evidence-based relationships education/relationships and sex education and health education and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum.

5.9 See St Joseph's relationships education/relationships and sex education and health education policy and behaviour policy.

5.10 **Online safety**

Online safety and protecting learners from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material forms part of the whole academy approach to safeguarding, including policies, curriculum, staff training, roles and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead and parental engagement. The academy has filtering and monitoring systems in place, which meet DfE filtering and monitoring standards. This includes:

- Identifying and assigning roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems
- Reviewing filtering and monitoring provision at least annually
- Blocking harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning
- Having effective monitoring strategies in place that meet safeguarding needs

5.11 The academy protects and educates learners and staff in their use of technology, including where they are learning remotely, and has mechanisms to identify, intervene and escalate any concerns where this is needed.

5.12 The academy online safety policy outlines how the four areas of risk, content, contact, conduct and commerce, will be addressed to protect and educate learners and staff. It also incorporates the use of mobile and smart technology and appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and networks. Security protection procedures which meet the Cyber security standards for schools and colleges are in place in order to safeguard the systems, staff and learners and review the effectiveness of these procedures to keep up with ever evolving cyber-crime technologies. The academy is also in regular communication with parents and carers and uses these communications to reinforce online safety and the systems the academy use to protect children from online harms.

5.13 To ensure that online safety is effective, especially as technology and the associated risks and harms evolve and change, the academy undertakes an annual review and risk assessment.
For more information see academy online safety policy.

5.14 **Systems for children to report concerns and abuse**

Our academy recognises the importance of ensuring that all children feel heard and understood. We have a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures the academy may put in place to protect them. Whenever there are any concerns, the child's wishes will be taken into account when determining what action to take and what services are provided. The welfare and safety of a child is of paramount concern and staff will act in the best interests of the child.

5.15 We understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and any concerns they may have. Some children may feel unable to report their concerns or abuse, others may have additional barriers to telling someone or may not recognise what is happening is abusive.

5.16 The academy has an open and accepting attitude towards children and promotes a positive and supportive environment as part of our responsibility for pastoral care. Our academy ethos promotes trusted relationships between learners and all staff which supports children to tell staff about any concerns they may have.

5.17 Children, parents/carers, and all staff will be free to talk about any concerns and see the academy as a safe place. Many children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice or react to, others may make indirect reports via a friend or staff may overhear conversations. All staff are alert to this and to the potential need for early help and are aware of the indicators of abuse, exploitation and neglect and know what actions they should take.

5.18 The academy has systems in place for children to complain and/or confidently report their concerns, including any form of abuse or neglect, including child-on-child abuse, and know that their concerns will be treated seriously. Children can do this through a face to face conversation or through our email system.

5.19 Working with parents and carers

We recognise the importance of working together with parents/carers to educate as well as safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

5.20 St. Joseph's will ensure that:

- We work with parents positively, openly and honestly
- Parents are encouraged to discuss their issues or concerns about safety and welfare of children, including any worries about a child's emotional well-being or mental health. They will be listened to and taken seriously
- Parents/carers are aware there is a whole academy safeguarding approach to ensure that children are kept safe and well, and as part of this the academy is part of the Stopping Domestic Abuse Together (SDAT) initiative (the local version of Operation Encompass)
- We will provide parents with information about safeguarding issues, such as child exploitation (sexual and criminal), child-on-child abuse, emotional well-being/mental health, online safety, including sharing nudes and semi-nudes, harmful sexual behaviour, and terrorist/extremist material. We will also outline the support available to keep children safe within the academy, locally and nationally
- Up to date and accurate information is kept about learners i.e.
    - names and contact persons with whom the child normally lives
    - those with parental responsibility
    - where reasonably possible, we hold more than one emergency contact number
    - if different from above, those authorised to collect the child from the setting

  - name and contact details of GP
  - any relevant court orders or any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child
- Information about our learners given to us by children themselves, their parents, or carers or by other agencies will remain confidential. Staff will be given relevant information on a 'need to know' basis in order to support the child
- It is made clear to parents and carers that the academy has a duty to share information when there are any safeguarding concerns. Also, that there is a duty to keep records which relate to safeguarding work by the academy, or partner agencies. These will be kept securely, kept apart from the main pupil/student record and only accessible to key members of staff. Copies of these records will be securely sent to any education provider to which the child transfers and a confirmation of receipt obtained
- Where we have reason to be concerned about the welfare of a child, we will always seek to discuss this with the child's parents or carers first. However, there may be occasions where we are not able to do this, for example, when by doing so, it places the child at additional risk or where it may not be possible to speak to the parents/carers

6. Responding to concerns about a child's welfare

6.1 Key points to remember for any member of staff (including volunteers or supply staff) or visitors whenever they have any concerns about a child's welfare:

- In an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999
- Do not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical to keeping a child safe. Early information sharing is vital in keeping children safe, whether this is when problems first emerge, or when a child is already known to local authority children's social care
- Report your concern, including any possible private fostering arrangements, to the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy as soon as you can and by the end of the day at the latest.
- If you are unsure speak to the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy
- If the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy is not around, ensure the information is shared with the most senior person in the academy that day. The concerns and any action taken must then be shared with the designated safeguarding lead as soon as it is possible
- If the concerns are about sharing nudes and semi-nudes do not view, copy, print or share the images
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends, or family
- As soon as you are able complete a record of the concerns. This should be on the same day and before the child is due to leave the school premises.

- All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. This will also help if the school or Trust needs to respond to any complaints about the way a case has been handled
- . Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.
- Records should include; a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern using full names of all parties involved, details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome. If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). This should be completed in our CPOMs system.
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed

6.2 Staff must always **immediately** inform the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy if there are any:

- Concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect, including suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play
- Searching incidents where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a learner was in possession of a prohibited item[1] or where a search has revealed a safeguarding risk
- Behaviour or changes in presentation, including changes in school attendance, which gives rise to suspicions that a child may not be receiving adequate care or may be suffering harm
- Hint or disclosure of abuse about or by a child
- Concerns that a person(s) who may pose a risk to children is living in a household with children present
- Concerns about online abuse including cybercrime, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, sharing nudes and semi nudes and/or where any adult appears to be sexually communicating (e.g., email, text, written note or verbally) with a child
- Concerns about child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and harassment
- Information which indicates that the child is living with someone who does not have parental responsibility for them (this is known as private fostering)
- Concerns that a child is at risk of domestic abuse or so-called 'honour-based' abuse, including forced marriage, marriage or civil partnership under the age of 18, female genital mutilation (FGM), breast ironing, virginity testing or hymenoplasty
- Concerns that a child is at risk of radicalisation, child sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation, including county lines; or that a child or their parent/carer may be a victim of modern slavery (trafficked)

[1] Prohibited items include knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco, cigarette papers, fireworks pornographic images; any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used, to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to property of; any person (including the learner). *(Amend as per academy behaviour policy)*

6.3 There will also be occasions when you suspect that a child may be at risk, but you have no 'real' evidence or that the child may need support with their mental health. The child's behaviour and or appearance may have changed, their attendance at academy may have reduced, their ability to concentrate and focus may have altered, or you may have noticed other behavioural and or physical but inconclusive signs. In these circumstances, you should try to give the child the opportunity to talk. The signs you have noticed may be due to a variety of factors and it is fine to ask the child if they are alright or if you can help in any way.

6.4 It is not the responsibility of the academy staff to determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation; this is the responsibility of local authority children's social care. All staff however have a duty to recognise where extra support is needed or where there are complex needs or child protection concerns requiring intensive or specialist support.

6.5 Ensure you record these early concerns using CPOMs. If a child or adult does begin to reveal that a child is being harmed, you should follow the advice in the section *'If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about a concern or abuse'*.

Remember: If you are unsure, you should always have a discussion with the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy

6.6 If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about a concern or abuse

It takes a lot of courage for a child, parent, carer, or other significant adult to disclose that they are worried or have concerns. They may feel ashamed, the abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. It is important they are reassured that they are being taken seriously, and that they will be supported and kept safe. They should not be made to feel they are creating a problem, blamed or ashamed for making a report. Reports, particularly those about sexual violence and harassment, if possible, should be managed with two members of staff present (preferably one being the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy), however this might not be possible in all cases.

6.7 If a child or adult talks to you about any risks to a child's safety or wellbeing you will need to let them know that you must pass the information on – you are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which you do this is a matter for professional judgement.

6.8 During your conversation with the child (or their parent/carer):

- Allow them to speak freely, listen to what is being said without interruption and without asking leading questions

- Keep questions to a minimum and of an open nature ('TED questions' tell me, explain, describe) i.e., 'can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'did x hit you?'
- Remain calm and do not overreact – the child (or their parent/carer) may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting you
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'
- Avoid admonishing the child or adult for not disclosing earlier. Saying 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing' may be your way of being supportive but they may interpret it that they have done something wrong
- Do not be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the child or adult
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what do other family members think about all this
- At an appropriate time tell the child or adult that to help them you must pass the information on
- Do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort; it may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused
- Tell the child or adult what will happen next. The child or adult may agree to go with you to see the designated safeguarding lead. Otherwise let them know that someone will come to see or contact them before the end of the day
- Report verbally to the designated safeguarding lead
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible and hand it to the designated safeguarding lead
- Children should not be asked to write statements about abuse or any concerns that may have happened to them or sign the staff record
- Seek support if you feel distressed. This may be sometime after the disclosure

6.9 Role of the designated safeguarding lead and their deputy following identification of concerns

Whenever the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy receive information regarding concerns about a child, including via police domestic abuse notifications they will:

- Review information received and assess if any urgent actions are needed, i.e. medical, child's immediate safety
- Check what is known about the child when they arrived (or not) at school today, how they are presenting physically and emotionally and if there are any changes in their behaviour
- Consider what is already known about the child and their family, including whether any previous concerns have been raised by staff or if they are already known to local authority children's services (targeted early help or social care)
- Consider what 'checks' need to be carried out and how best these can be achieved
- Inform relevant school staff who have a specific need to know i.e. class/form teacher and relevant support staff

- Where appropriate use relevant national, local and education-based risk identifying, assessment tools and guidance to support the identification of needs and decision making, such as:
  - Academy-based records, assessments, and chronologies, including any contextual factors/placed based risks
  - Multi-agency guidance, tools and briefing notes, for example Vulnerability of children not in school guidance, Children and Young People Missing from Home or Care protocol, Self-harm and Suicidal Behaviour Guidance, Briefing Note: Harmful Online Challenges and Hoaxes, Guidelines for gathering information and assessing the needs of children whose parents have drug/alcohol issues, Practice Guidance Child Sexual Abuse within the Family, Practice Guidance for responding to Adults and Child Victims of Modern Slavery, Male Circumcision guidance, Was not brought guidance, Childhood Obesity: Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding guidance for practitioners, Guidance for responding to Adults and Child Victims of Modern Slavery, Schools Stopping Domestic Abuse Together Guidance, Domestic Violence Risk Identification Matrix (DVRIM), Safe lives DASH Risk Identification Checklist (domestic abuse risk to adults), Children at Risk of Exploitation assessment, Graded Care Profile (neglect); see DDSCP safeguarding children procedures documents library
  - National guidance and assessment tools e.g. Stop it now (sexual behaviours), Contextual safeguarding tools, Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people
- Not directly approaching a child or parent/carer about an incident when the academy have received a domestic abuse notification (SDAT) and instead make general enquiries with the child about how they are. If a child initiates a conversation about the incident the guidance outlined in the section '*If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about a concern or abuse'* will be followed
- Following the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Procedures and using the DDSCP Threshold document to support decision making about the child's needs and the appropriate level of support and intervention. Possible options include internal support via academy pastoral systems, early help assessment and referral to statutory services such as local authority children's services
- Considering whether the matter should be discussed with the child's parents or carers or whether to do so may put the child at further risk of harm, see Notifying parents
- If unsure about the action to take, including if a child protection referral should be made, seeking advice from local authority children's social care or another appropriate agency
- If the concerns are about radicalisation or violent extremism, making a referral to the police Prevent Team
- Where the child has complex needs or where there are child protection concerns, referring as appropriate to Local Authority Children's Services via agreed processes, providing a copy of the early help assessment, action plan and any other relevant assessments

- Notify the appropriate Local Authority Children's Services of any private fostering arrangements, to allow the local authority to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child
- If a child is at risk of immediate harm, and/or where it is believed a criminal offence has been committed, including sexual violence and harassment, referring to the police. See NSPCC When to call the police; guidance for schools and colleges. Safeguarding considerations must take priority and include how screening, searching, and confiscating powers will be used safely, proportionately, and appropriately, including undertaking a police strip search on a child and the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult.; see Searching, screening and confiscation at school guidance (2022)
- In all cases where children are believed to be at risk of exploitation, complete and submit an Information Sharing Form for Professionals Operation Liberty / Operation Blofeld to raise concerns and share information

6.10 Notifying parents/carers

The academy will normally seek to discuss any needs or concerns about a child with their parents or carers. Where an early help assessment would benefit the child and their family the most appropriate member of staff should approach the parent/carer to take this forward. In situations where there are serious needs or child protection concerns the designated safeguarding lead or deputy will contact the parent or carer. However, if the setting believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, then advice will first be sought from local authority children's social care.

6.11 Pastoral/school-based support (universal support/ low level needs)

In all cases the academy will consider what support could be offered within the setting via pastoral support processes. School staff are able to refer children to the Headteacher for further support. This support is delivered through Bridge the Gap and is communicated with parents. Pastoral support will be kept under constant review to ensure that it is effective.

6.12 **Early help support and assessment (emerging needs)**

Where a child is likely to require co-ordinated support from a range of early help services, or where there are concerns for a child's well-being or a child's needs are not clear, not known or not being met, the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy will support the completion of an early help assessment (EHA) and if needed, co-ordinate a team around the family (TAF).

6.13 Whenever a child and their family are supported via an early help assessment, the academy will keep this under constant review and should the child's situation appear not to be improving or getting worse, consideration will be given to a referral to local authority children's services.

6.14 For more information about the early help assessment process see Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children; Providing early help procedure.

6.15 **Referral to local authority children's social care (intensive and specialist support)**
Concerns about a child's welfare will be referred to local authority children's social care using the agreed referral process as outlined in Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children; Making a referral to Children's Social Care procedure.

If at any point there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, an immediate referral should be made to local authority children's social care and/or if appropriate, the police

Anybody can make the referral

6.16 Where it is believed that there are urgent child protection concerns, the designated safeguarding lead or deputy will make a referral to local authority children's social care by phone and follow this up in 'writing' via the local authority Online Referral System. Non-urgent cases will be referred via the local authority Care Online Referral System.

6.17 In exceptional circumstances, such as in an emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action hasn't been taken, any staff member can refer their concerns directly to local authority children's social care; however, they should inform the designated safeguarding lead or deputy as soon as possible.

6.18 **Female genital mutilation (FGM)**
If the referral is about a 'known' case of female genital mutilation (FGM), in addition to a referral to local authority children's social care, the individual teacher also has a mandatory reporting duty; see Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation; procedural information (2015). Under this duty, 'known' cases of FGM where a girl under 18 informs the person that an act of FGM has been carried out on her, or where physical signs appear to show that an act of FGM was carried out, this must be reported to the police on 101. This is a personal responsibility in addition to the referral to local authority children's social care and the professional who identifies FGM and/or receives the disclosure should make the report by the close of the next working day.

6.19 Action following referral
The designated safeguarding lead, their deputy or other appropriate member of staff will:

- Where a referral was made by phone follow up the referral in writing using the online referral system within 48 hours and attaching any existing assessment e.g.

early help assessment. In all cases the academy will also include information held about any place-based risks (harm outside of the home)

- Be aware that local authority children's social care should make a decision within one working day of the referral being made about what course of action they are taking and let the academy know the outcome. If the information is not forthcoming, the designated safeguarding lead or another appropriate member of staff should follow this up
- Maintain contact with the allocated social worker and support them or other agencies following any referral
- Contribute to any strategy discussion or meetings
- Support any Section 47 enquiries or statutory assessments that are carried out
- Provide a report for, attend, and contribute to any initial and review Child Protection Conference. This includes sharing any reports with parents/carers and where appropriate, the child
- Share the content of this report with the parent/carer and if appropriate the child, prior to the meeting
- Attend core group meetings for any child subject to a Child Protection plan or Child in Need meeting for any child subject to a Child in Need plan
- Whenever there are concerns about the outcome of a Child Protection Conference, use the appropriate Derby or Derbyshire Child Protection Conference Professional Dissent Process
- Where a child on a Child Protection plan, Child in Need plan or who is Looked After moves from the academy or if there are unexplained absences from school, immediately inform the child's social worker/key worker in local authority children's social care
- If after the referral the child's situation does not appear to be improving the designated safeguarding lead should press for re-consideration to ensure their concerns have been addressed and the child's situation improves. See Derby and Derbyshire Multi-Agency Dispute Resolution and Escalation Policy

6.20 **Confidentiality and sharing information**

The academy recognises the importance of information sharing between the academy and local agencies to effectively safeguard our learners. The setting operates with regard to HM Government Information Sharing; Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2018) (Note: this is currently under consultation) and DDSCP Information Sharing Guidance for Practitioners (2022).

6.21 All staff will be mindful of the seven golden rules to sharing information (See Appendix 3) and Data Protection Act (2018) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) obligations. Staff are aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare.

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

If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy

Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children

6.23 Staff should only discuss concerns with the designated safeguarding lead or deputy (or the most senior person on the premises if they are unavailable), headteacher or chair of governors/trustees (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

6.24 Wherever possible consent will be sought to share information. However, where there are safeguarding concerns about a child, information will be shared with the appropriate organisations such as local authority children's social care. In most cases concerns will be discussed with parents and carers prior to the referral taking place unless doing so would increase risk.

6.25 The academy's policy on information-sharing is available to parents and children on request.

6.26 **Record keeping**

All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing using the academy's agreed processes. If in doubt about recording requirements staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy.

6.27 Records of concerns documentation, referrals and other written safeguarding information are kept in a child protection file for each child and stored separately from each child's education file; this file is 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. Child protection files are confidential and stored securely and only made available to relevant individuals.

6.28 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, as well as a review of any progress made. Any professional differences of opinion about the safety of a child will also be recorded; see DDSCP Multi Agency Dispute Resolution and

Escalation Policy and Derby or Derbyshire Child Protection Conference Professional Dissent Process

6.29 When a child leaves the academy, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure a copy of these records will be sent securely as soon as possible (within 5 days for an in-year transferor within the first 5 days of the start of a new term) to any academy or other education setting to which the child transfers and a confirmation of receipt obtained. The child protection file will be separate to the main pupil file. This will allow the new provider to continue supporting the child and have the support in place for when the child arrives.

6.30 The designated safeguarding lead will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new education provider in advance of the child leaving e.g. children who have or who have had a social worker and those receiving support through the Channel programme.

6.31 The designated safeguarding lead, their deputy and key staff such as special education needs co-ordinators will be informed when a child's safeguarding/child protection file is received.

6.32 **Support for those involved in a safeguarding/child protection issue**
Child neglect, abuse and exploitation are devastating for children and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved. We will support the children and their families and staff by:

- Taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- Nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact
- Nominating a 'case manager' where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a child
- Responding sympathetically to any request from a child or member of staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- Maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- Storing records securely
- Offering details of helplines, counselling, or other avenues of external support
- Following the procedures laid down in our whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures
- Co-operating fully with relevant statutory agencies

7. Child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and harassment

7.1 All staff working in or on behalf of the academy maintain an attitude of *'it could happen here'* – this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse. Even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening.

If staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy

7.2 The academy recognises that children may abuse their peers physically, sexually, and emotionally. There is a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse; abuse is abuse and this will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'boys being boys' or 'part of growing up' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

7.3 The setting will take child-on-child abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and address it through the same processes as any safeguarding issue. We will respond to all reports and concerns, including those that have happened outside of the academy and / or online. In addition, we also recognise that children who abuse others and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse are also likely to have considerable welfare and safeguarding issues themselves.

7.4 **What is child-on-child abuse?**

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2025) defines child-on-child abuse as most likely to include but not limited to:
  - Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice based and discriminatory bullying)
  - Abuse within intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
  - Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and /or encourages physical abuse)
  - Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and /or encourages sexual violence)
  - Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
  - Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
  - Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos
  - Upskirting[1], 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

[1] The Voyeurism (Offences) Act (2019) – upskirting is a criminal offence and anyone of any gender can be a victim

  - Initiating/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)
- It can also include causing someone to engage in extremist or radicalising behaviour
- Child-on-child abuse exists on a continuum and different forms of abuse may overlap
- It can affect any child/young person of any age and sex and can occur between two children or through a group of children abusing a single child or group of children
- Sometimes vulnerable children are targeted. For example:
  - Those living with domestic abuse or with intra-familial abuse in their histories
  - Young people in care
  - Those who have experienced bereavement through the loss of a parent, sibling, or friend
  - Black and minority ethnic children are under identified as victims but are over identified as perpetrators
  - There is recognition it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys are likely to be perpetrators. However, both girls and boys can experience child-on-child abuse, but they are likely to experience it differently e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to homophobic taunts/initiation/hazing (rituals and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group)
  - Evidence also shows that children with SEND, and LGBTQ+ children are at greater risk
- It is influenced by the nature of the environments in which children/young people spend their time - home, academy, peer group, online and community - and is built upon notions of power and consent. Power imbalances related to gender, social status within a group, intellectual ability, economic wealth, social marginalisation etc, can all be used to exert power over a peer
- Child-on-child abuse involves someone who abuses a 'vulnerability' or power imbalance to harm another and has the opportunity or is in an environment where this is possible
- While perpetrators of child-on-child abuse pose a risk to others, they are often victims of abuse themselves

7.5 **Preventing child-on-child abuse**

There is a whole academy approach to preventing child-on-child abuse, including child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment; this forms part of the whole academy approach to safeguarding. The academy will seek to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by ensuring an approach that prepares learners for life in modern Britain. The establishment has a clear set of values and standards which are upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of academy life.

7.6 The academy provides a safe environment, promotes a culture of positive standards of behaviour, takes steps to address inappropriate behaviour, has effective systems in place where children can confidently raise concerns knowing they will be taken

seriously and provides safeguarding through the curriculum via relationships education/relationships and sex education, online safety, and other curriculum opportunities. This may include targeted work with children identified as vulnerable or being at risk and developing risk assessment and targeted work with those identified as being a potential risk to others.

7.7 All staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours will not be tolerated or passed off. Staff will maintain an attitude of '*it could happen here*' and all inappropriate behaviour will be addressed.

7.8 The setting deals with a wide continuum of children's behaviour on a day-to-day basis and most cases will be dealt with via academy-based processes. These are outlined in the following policies:

- St Joseph's behaviour policy, including bullying/ online bullying and prejudice-based bullying and academy screening, searching, and confiscating powers and how they will be used safely, and appropriately, including police strip searches
- Online safety policy and other associated issues, including sharing nudes and semi-nudes and extremist material
- Attendance policy
- Relationships education/ relationships and sex education

7.9 **Systems for children to report abuse**

Even if there are no reports, all staff understand it does not mean it is not happening; it may be the case that it is not being reported. We recognise that children may not find it easy to tell staff about the abuse, that certain children may have additional barriers to telling someone and children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice or react to. In some cases, victims may make indirect reports via a friend or staff may overhear conversations. All staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it.

See paragraph 5.4 '*Systems for children to report concerns and abuse*' for information about the systems in place for children to confidently report abuse.

If staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead or deputy

7.10 **Action on concerns**

Child-on-child abuse may be a one-off serious incident or an accumulation of incidents. Staff may be able to easily identify some behaviour/s as abusive however in some circumstances it may be less clear. In particular, reports of sexual violence and harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. In all cases the initial response to a report is very important. Members of staff will take the concerns seriously and

reassure the child that they will be supported and kept safe, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward. If possible, reports should be managed with two members of staff present (preferably one being the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy), however this might not be possible in all cases. The victim will not be given the impression they are creating a problem or made to feel ashamed for making a report or their experience minimised. Abuse which has occurred online or outside of the academy will be treated just as seriously as that which has occurred within the education environment.

7.11 Staff must follow *Section 6. Responding to concerns about a child's welfare* and discuss the concerns and seek advice from the designated safeguarding lead.

7.12 When an allegation is made by a pupil/student against another pupil/student, members of staff should consider if the issues raised indicate that the child and/or alleged perpetrator may have low level, emerging needs, complex/serious needs, or child protection concerns and follow the process outlined in Section 6. Responding to concerns about a child's welfare.

7.13 Considerations for cases where child-on-child abuse is a factor include:

- What are the wishes of victims in terms of how they want to proceed?
- What is the nature, extent and context of the behaviour including verbal, physical, sexual (including sharing of nudes/semi-nudes) and/or online abuse? Was there coercion, physical aggression, bullying, bribery or attempts to ensure secrecy? What was the time, location, duration, and frequency? Is the incident a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse? (Remember there may be other forms of abuse in addition to what has been reported) Were other children and /or adults involved? Has a crime been committed and/or have any harmfully sexual behaviours been displayed?
- What is the child's age, development, capacity to understand and make decisions (including anything that might have had an impact on this e.g. coercion), and family and social circumstances? What is the nature of the relationship between the children involved? Are they in a current or previous intimate personal relationship, do they live in the same household or setting, attend the same academy, classes, or transport?
- What are the relative chronological and developmental ages of the children? Does the victim or perpetrator have a disability or learning difficulty? Are there are any differentials in power, social standing, or authority?
- Is the behaviour age appropriate or not? Does it involve inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation?
- Are there any risks to the child victim or alleged perpetrator themselves and others e.g. other children in academy, adult students, academy staff, in the child's household (particularly siblings or other children related to the household), extended family, peer group or wider social network? Are there any links to child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation or gang related activity?

7.14 Immediate consideration should be given to how best to support and protect the victim and alleged perpetrator and any other children involved/impacted. Where the report involves rape and assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator must be removed from any classes they share with the victim. There must also be careful consideration on how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart on academy premises (including any before or after school activities) and on transport to and from the setting.

7.15 For all other reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment and forms of child-on-child abuse, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and considerations regarding shared classes, academy premises and transport should be considered immediately.

7.16 All decisions will be made in the best interests of the children involved and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator. In all cases, the initial report should be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the designated safeguarding lead taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as local authority children's social care and the police as required. The designated safeguarding lead will refer to relevant assessment tools and guidance as appropriate such as:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2025) part five
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people
- Searching, screening and confiscation at school
- Behaviour in schools
- School suspension and permanent exclusion
- Stop it Now Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool
- DDSCP Thresholds Document
- DDSCP Safeguarding Children Procedures, in particular Children who present a risk of harm to others and Online Safety and Internet Abuse procedures
- When to call the police – guidance for schools and colleges

7.17 Whenever there is an allegation of abuse, including concerns about sexual harassment and violence, made against a child, the designated safeguarding lead and other appropriate staff will draw together separate risk and needs assessments and action plans to support the victim and the alleged perpetrator. These will consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support
- Whether there have been other victims
- The alleged perpetrator/s
- All the other children (and if appropriate adult students and staff) at the academy, especially any actions that are needed to protect them from the perpetrator/s, or from future harms
- The time and location of the incident and any action required to make the location safer

- When information can be disclosed to staff and others, including the alleged perpetrator and parents/carers

7.18 Whenever local authority children's social care and/or the police are involved, the academy will work in collaboration to ensure the best possible support and protection is provided for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator.

7.19 All reports of child-on-child abuse (including sexual harassment and/or sexual violence) will be recorded in the child's safeguarding/child protection file. This will include all decision making, risk and needs assessment and plans recorded in writing as outlined in Section 6.

7.20 Where appropriate incidents may be managed internally (low level needs), via early help (emerging needs) or through local authority children's social care (complex/serious needs or child protection concerns); reports to the police will be run in parallel with children's social care as outlined in the Derby and Derbyshire multi-agency safeguarding procedures, in particular Children who Present a Risk of Harm to Others and Online Safety and Internet Abuse procedures. We share with our pupils - **Shore Space** (shorespace.org.uk) – a confidential live-chat resource for young people concerned about their own or someone else's sexual thoughts or behaviours.

7.21 All risk and needs assessment and action plans whether internal or multi-agency will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. If things do not improve or deteriorate the situation should be reconsidered.

7.22 The academy uses the Contextual Safeguarding School Beyond Referrals Self-Assessment Toolkit & Guidance to self-assess our response to harmful sexual behaviour. All relevant policies will be updated to reflect the lessons learnt and consideration given to the wider cultural issues within the academy that enabled the behaviour to occur.

7.23 Where the victim or alleged perpetrator transfers to another education setting, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure the new provider will be made aware of any on-going support needs (and will discuss this with the victim and where appropriate their parents, as to the most suitable way of doing this) as well as transferring the safeguarding/child protection file. In the case of the alleged perpetrator, where appropriate, this will also include potential risks to other children and staff. See Section 6. Responding to concerns about a child's welfare - record keeping.

Any suspicion or allegations that a child has been sexually abused or is likely to sexually abuse another child (or adult) or where there are concerns about any

other form of abuse, a referral must be made immediately to local authority children's social care and where appropriate, the police

8. Safer recruitment and selection of staff

8.1 The academy uses best practice and has adopted robust recruitment procedures as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2025) to deter and prevent people who are not suitable to work with children from applying, securing employment or volunteering opportunities in the academy. We apply all appropriate measures for our staff, including volunteers, agency and third-party staff (supply staff) trainees/student teachers, governors/trustees, and contractors. This forms a vital part of the whole academy approach to safeguarding and is an essential part of creating a safe environment for our learners.

8.2 Those involved with the recruitment and employment of our staff have received appropriate safer recruitment training and at least one person who conducts an interview has completed safer recruitment training.

8.3 Safer practice in recruitment means thinking about and including issues to do with child protection and safeguarding children at every stage of the process from advertising, job descriptions/person specifications, application forms, shortlisting, employment history and references, selection and pre-appointment vetting checks.

8.4 Everyone who works in the academy, including volunteers and school governors will have appropriate Disclosure and Barring (DBS) and teacher status, teacher and teacher prohibition checks or where appropriate GTCE sanctions and restrictions. Governors/trustees/proprietors will also require section 128 checks.

8.5 Other checks that may be necessary for staff, volunteers, and others:

- **Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK** – will undergo the same checks as all other staff in the academy and further checks deemed appropriate to ensure suitability
- **Agency and third-party staff (supply staff)** - the academy will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation provider that they have carried out checks on an individual who will be working at the academy that we would otherwise perform.
- **Contractors** - where the academy uses contactors to provide services the contact will set out their safeguarding requirements.
- **Trainee/ student teachers** – applicants salaried by the academy will undergo all necessary checks by the academy. The initial teacher training provider will carry out necessary checks on fee funded trainee teachers and will provide written confirmation that these have been carried out and judged suitable to work with children.

- **Volunteers** - the academy will ensure volunteers are appropriately supervised as outlined in statutory guidance on supervising the activities of workers and volunteers with children. In addition, risk assessments will be undertaken, and professional judgment/ experience used when deciding whether to obtain an enhanced DBS certificate for any volunteer not engaged in regulated activity. The details of the risk assessment will be recorded.

8.6 The academy maintains a single central record of pre-appointment checks consistent with Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2025).

8.7 **Visitors**

The academy premises provide a safe learning environment with secure access. We recognise there are different types of visitors, those in a professional capacity, children's relatives or others visiting for school activities or visitors via a third party and have processes in place to ensure they are suitable, are checked and monitored as appropriate.

8.8 We recognise the importance of allowing access for local authority children's social care to conduct, or to consider whether to conduct an assessment and that staff from other partner agencies may need to visit to see a child or young person to either safeguard or promote their welfare. To support our decision making about appropriate checks regarding any professional visitor we operate using guidance outlined in the DDSCP Briefing Note - Professional Visitors to Schools. See academy security and visitor's policy.

8.9 **External speakers/visitors**

The academy may ask external speakers or visitors to work with children or provide assemblies on subjects such as online safety, relationships/relationships and sex education and health education. On these occasions there will be an assessment of the educational value, the age appropriateness of what is going to be delivered and whether relevant checks will be required, and an assessment made of what will be appropriate supervision. There will also be an agreement made in advance of the session/s on how a safeguarding report should be dealt with by an external visitor. See academy policy/agreement for visiting speakers.

8.10 **Alternative provision**

Where a school commissions Alternative Provision (AP), it remains responsible for each pupil's safeguarding and welfare. The school must:

• Obtain written confirmation from the AP that all required safeguarding and vetting checks have been carried out

• Hold an up-to-date record of the AP's address, and of any subcontracted or satellite sites attended

• Review placements at least half-termly to assure attendance, safety and suitability, and act swiftly if concerns arise.

School should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs. Learners in alternative provision often have complex needs and are vulnerable to additional risk of harm. Prior to using an alternative provision, academies are required to complete the Trust's commissioning agreement.

8.11 **Use of academy premises for non-academy activities**
Our academy safeguarding arrangements will apply to all activities provided by the academy under the direct supervision of academy staff. Where activities are provided by another body, the governing body/trustees/proprietor will seek assurance that the provider has appropriate safeguarding/child protection policies and procedures in place, as outlined in the Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings guidance. This includes arrangements to liaise with the academy where appropriate. This applies regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on the school roll/attend the college. Safeguarding requirements are included in all lease/hire agreements.

9. What staff should do if they have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another member of staff or concerns about safeguarding practices within the school/college

9.1 As part of our whole academy approach to safeguarding there are processes in place for continuous vigilance, maintaining an environment that deters and prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behaviour. Our culture and environment supports all of our staff to discuss matters that concern them in the workplace and, where appropriate, outside the workplace (including online) which may have implications for the welfare and safety of children.

9.2 **All** concerns and or allegations about adults working in or on behalf of the academy (including supply teachers, contractors, and volunteers) will be reported, recorded, and dealt with promptly and appropriately, in accordance with the Trust's Low Level Concerns policy.

9.3 This includes whenever the academy receives an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their school promises for the purposes of running activities for children.

9.4 By doing so everyone in the academy will:

- Create and embed a culture of openness, trust, and transparency
- Help to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour at an early stage

- Minimise risk of abuse
- Ensure that academy staff are clear about professional boundaries and act within these, in accordance with the ethos and value of the academy

9.5 **The academy recognise there are two levels of allegation/concern**

1. Allegations that **may** meet the harms threshold
2. Allegations/concerns that **do not** meet the harms threshold, also known as 'low level concerns'

1. Allegations that may meet the harms threshold

This is where an allegation might indicate that a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in a school or college. Where it is alleged that anyone working in the establishment, including supply teachers, contractors and volunteers has:

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

This includes any behaviour that may have happened outside academy and is known as transferable risk.

If you have concerns about another staff member

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague (including supply staff, contractors, and volunteers) must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount.

All concerns of poor practice or concerns about a child's welfare brought about by the behaviour of colleagues should be reported without delay to the headteacher/principal. Where there are concerns/allegations about the headteacher/principal this should be referred to the chair of governors/chair of the management committee/proprietor. In a situation where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the headteacher/principal this should be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The member of staff should make a record which will include time, date, place of incident, persons present, what was witnessed, what was said etc; this should then be signed and dated. *See Appendix 1. reporting*

concerns form

Looking after the welfare of the child
Where a child has been harmed, or there is an immediate risk of harm to a child or if the situation is an emergency, local authority children's social care should be contacted and where appropriate the police. It is the designated safeguarding lead's responsibility to ensure the child is not at risk and refer cases of suspected abuse to children's social care.

For further information about how concerns which may meet the harms threshold will be investigated, recorded and managed, including non-recent allegations by a child and referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) see *St. Joseph's CVA* staff behaviour (code of conduct) policy, which incorporates low-level concerns, managing allegations against staff and whistleblowing.

2. Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold
Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold are referred to as 'low-level concerns". A low-level concern does not mean it is insignificant, rather that the behaviour towards the child does not meet the harm threshold as outlined above.

A low- level concern is any concern, no matter how small, that an adult working in or on behalf of the academy may have acted in a way that is:

- Inconsistent with the staff behaviour (code of conduct) policy, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, or
- Does not meet the harm threshold or is not serious enough to consider a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum. Further information about distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be found in the academy staff behaviour (code of conduct) policy.

Staff should share low-level concerns in confidence with the Headteacher or Deputy.

Low-level concerns about the headteacher/principal should be reported to the chair of governors or CEO. See Low Level Concerns Policy for process and procedure.

9.6 Staff are also encouraged to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

9.7 The headteacher/principal will be the decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns; however, this may be undertaken in collaboration with the designated safeguarding lead.

9.8 Reports about supply staff or contractors will be notified to their employers.

9.9 All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing to include details of the concern, the context and the action taken. For further information about the procedure for recording and responding to low-level concerns see academy policy and code of conduct policy.

9.10 **Concerns about safeguarding practices within the academy**
All staff are encouraged to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the academy safeguarding regime. These concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

9.11 For information about how to raise concerns with the senior leadership team or other channels see staff code of conduct policy, which incorporates the whistleblowing routes available to staff.

St Ralph Sherwin
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

APPENDIX 1

ST JOSEPH'S LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS REPORTING FORM

Use this form to share any concern with the Headteacher, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, even if causing no more than a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Schools' Code of Conduct [including inappropriate conduct outside of work] and/or in a way that on first glance does not appear to meet the allegation, 'harm' threshold.

Continue on separate sheets as necessary.

NAME OF STAFF MEMBER FOR WHOM THE CONCERN IS BEING RAISED	
DATE(s) TIME(s) OF CONCERNING INCIDENT(s)	
BRIEF CONTEXT IN WHICH THE LOW-LEVEL CONCERN AROSE	
DETAILS OF CONCERN- CHRONOLOGICAL, PRECISE AND AS ACCURATE AS POSSIBLE	
Name of Staff member raising the concern **Signed**	**Department and Role** **Time and Date**

ACTION TAKEN BY THE HEADTEACHER
DETAILS OF INITIAL FACT FINDING CARRIED OUT
STAFF MEMBER'S RESPONSE TO THE CONCERN RAISED **OUTCOME/ACTION TAKEN**
This record form will be held securely in one central digital file in MSTEAMS, and monitored with the DSL on a monthly basis, along with other concerns received, to identify any potential patterns of problematic or inappropriate behaviour. Low Level Concern reporting will be treated as confidential as far as possible, however in certain circumstances it may be necessary to share and or disclose the information with third parties for relevant and necessary reasons. This includes where a reporter has indicated they wish to remain anonymous.

APPENDIX 2

[1] In cases which also involve a concern or an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part four of this guidance.
[2] Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, an early help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Chapter one of Working Together to Safeguard Children provides detailed guidance on the early help process.
[3] Referrals should follow the process set out in the local threshold document and local protocol for assessment. Chapter one of Working Together to Safeguard Children.
[4] Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make enquiries to decide whether to take action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Full details are in Chapter one of Working Together to Safeguard Children.
[5] This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).

Taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2025), DfE,

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Catholic Multi Academy Trust

APPENDIX 3 The seven golden rules to sharing information

1. Remember that the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.

2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

3. Seek advice from other practitioners, or your information governance lead, if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.

4. Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be clear of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.

5. Consider safety and well-being: base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.

6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).

7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

Taken from [Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2018)] HM Government