



Lord Scudamore Academy  
Sutton Primary Academy  
Kings Caple Primary Academy  
Llangrove CE Academy  
St Weonards Academy  
Marden Primary Academy  
Pencombe CE School  
Cleghonger CE School

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## September 2024

Date Approved by The Board of Trustees (Online resolution)	26.09.24
Effective Period	1/9/24 – 31/8/25
Reviewer	J McColl
Date of Review	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2024
Next Review Due	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2025

Co-ordinator – Mrs J McColl

## **Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements in each of the HMFA schools**

**HMFA Director for Safeguarding**– Jan McColl

### **Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) in individual HMFA schools:-**

Lord Scudamore Academy -	Jan McColl
Sutton Primary Academy -	Liz Orton
Kings Caple Primary Academy -	Sally Talboys
Llangrove CE Academy -	Sarah Dean
St Weonards Primary School -	Angela Clarke
Marden Primary Academy -	Kym Johnson
Pencombe CE School -	Vic Goodman
Clehonger CE School -	Grace Sage

### **Deputy DSL**

Lord Scudamore Academy -	Cheryl Ryder, Ali Taylor
Sutton Primary Academy -	Vic Bloore, Kelly Welsh,
Kings Caple Primary Academy -	Jan McColl
Llangrove CE Academy -	Ed Fox
St Weonards Primary School -	Hollie Preece-James
Marden Primary Academy -	Liz Beecham
Pencombe CE School -	Jan McColl
Clehonger CE School -	Coral Rudge

### **Safeguarding Governors**

Lord Scudamore Academy	Tanya Everard
Sutton Primary Academy	Matt Ashcroft
Kings Caple Primary Academy	Kate Miller
Llangrove CE Academy	Pavla Boulton
St Weonards Primary School	Rowena Williams
Marden Primary Academy	Luke Williams
Pencombe CE School	Meg Reece
Clehonger CE School	Julie Lunn

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) for each school are always members of the senior management team.

# **SAFEGUARDING and CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

## **Introduction**

The policy reflects current legislation, accepted best practice and complies with the government guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024

This policy was written and adopted on: **1st September 2024**

It is due for review in **September 2025**

This policy is shared with parents via the HMFA website and hard copies are available on request from the relevant school office.

Other policies that need to be taken into account are:

- *Anti-bullying*
- *Child on Child Abuse*
- *PSHE*
- *Behaviour*
- *Low Level Concerns*
- *Attendance*
- *Special Educational Needs*
- *Health and Safety*
- *Safer Recruitment*
- *Managing Allegations*
- *Online Safety*
- *Staff Conduct Policy (Code of Conduct)*
- *Staff Induction*
- *Volunteer/Visitor Policy*
- *Whistleblowing*
- *Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism*

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy applies to all of the schools in HMFA. All of the schools are part of Herefordshire local authority, therefore local procedures and protocols apply. Contextual safeguarding information will be made explicit for individual schools if applicable.

## **Local Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangement**

Note:

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 (the Act) replaced Local Safeguarding Children Boards with new local safeguarding arrangements led by three safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police and clinical commissioning groups). The Act places a duty on those partners to make arrangements for themselves and relevant agencies they deem appropriate to work together for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their area. Education is one of the relevant agencies. In Herefordshire, the arrangements are referred to as the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

**HMFA schools will fulfil their local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following documents:-**

- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf)
- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working\\_together\\_to\\_safeguard\\_children\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023.pdf)
- <https://www.herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/safeguarding-children-partnership#:~:text=The%20role%20of%20the%20Herefordshire,people%20and%20make%20them%20safe.>
- [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [The Education Act 2002 s175 / s157](#)
- [What to do if you are worried a child is being abused \(DfE, 2015\)](#)
- [Use of reasonable force in schools \(DfE, 2013\)](#)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools: Departmental Advice \(DfE, 2018\)](#)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies \(DfE, 2017\)](#)
- [Prevent Duty, Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#)
- [Serious Crime Act 2015](#)
- [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County lines \(Home Office Guidance\)](#)
- [Child missing from home or care \(DfE statutory guidance\)](#)
- [Child sexual exploitation advice for practitioners \(DfE advice for practitioners\)](#)
- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf57a4dcb0757928e5bd39/Children\\_missing\\_education\\_guidance\\_-\\_August\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf57a4dcb0757928e5bd39/Children_missing_education_guidance_-_August_2024.pdf)
- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a75b67a40f0b67b3d5c8a26/drug\\_advice\\_for\\_schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a75b67a40f0b67b3d5c8a26/drug_advice_for_schools.pdf)
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents> [Human Rights Act](#)
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents> [Equality Act](#)

## **CHANGES TO KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION 2024**

Minimal changes for 2024. A more comprehensive update is expected in the 2025 guidance.

1. Children who are lesbian gay, bisexual, or gender questioning – an expected update following publication of the Cass review report. The changes are in paragraphs 205 – 209. The main substance of those new paragraphs is recommending that schools exercise caution because of the many unknowns about the impact of social transitioning, and so schools can consider the broad range of needs that child may have. This should be done in partnership with parents *“other than in the exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child”*.

Do note that these amendments remain under review pending the outcome of the gender questioning children guidance consultation.

2. Abuse and neglect – not so much a major change: the 2024 guidance renames this section as ‘Abuse, neglect and exploitation’ and uses that language throughout the guidance

3. Alternative provision – a new paragraph (171) has been added to make clear that where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil’s needs.

## **Definition of Safeguarding**

In relation to children and young people, safeguarding and promoting their welfare is defined in “Working together to safeguard children” as

- Promoting help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- protecting children from maltreatment whether it is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Within Herefordshire Marches Federation of Academies (HMFA) the governors and staff fully recognise the contribution each school makes to safeguarding children. We recognise that the safety and protection of all pupils is of paramount importance and that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting pupils from harm.

Adults in all our schools take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them.

We believe that the school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes all pupils’ social, physical, emotional and moral development. We will always act in the best interest of the child.

Herefordshire Local Safeguarding Children’s Board has been replaced by the new Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. This remains part of the West Midlands Safeguarding Children Procedures of agreed multi agency child protection policies and procedures. Policies and procedures can be viewed and downloaded from <http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/>

An important aim of all schools within HMFA is to ensure that children are happy in school and receive their education in a safe environment.

The aim of this policy is to provide the knowledge and support to promote the welfare, health, safety and guidance of our pupils.

All schools within HMFA are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all their children. Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school.

### **We believe that:-**

- all children/young people have an equal right to be protected from harm
- children/young people need support which matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse

- all children/young people have the right to speak freely and voice their values and beliefs
- all children/young people must be encouraged to respect each other's values and support each other
- all children/young people have the right to be supported to meet their emotional and social needs as well as their educational needs
- all staff, volunteers and visitors have an important role to play in safeguarding children and protecting them from abuse.

**Furthermore:-**

- where there is a safeguarding concern, governing bodies, proprietors and school leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide
- schools can and do contribute to the prevention of abuse, victimisation, bullying, exploitation, extreme behaviours, discriminatory views and risk-taking behaviours which may be perceived to be 'risky'
- All schools have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment
- All schools practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. (Adults who are not DBS checked will not be left unsupervised with children), including taking account of additional requirements on schools set out in Disqualification under Childcare Act 2006 (as amended) and Keeping children safe in education 2024. See Safer Recruitment policy for full details and list of all statutory checks which school carry out prior to appointments of staff.

**We will:-**

- raise awareness of child protection issues and teach children to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.
- develop and then implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
- support pupils who have suffered or who are at risk of suffering significant harm in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan
- maintain a safe environment in which children can learn and develop

We will also emphasise the appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies, procedures and arrangements of those service providers who may use HMFA schools' premises through extended schools or provide any other before and after school activities.

## **Directors/Governors Responsibilities**

We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of harm. The schools will therefore:

- establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- ensure children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried
- include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise when they are at risk and how to stay safe including when they are online
- ensure staff are aware that children with special educational needs or disabilities or certain health conditions and children in other groups are more vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation and are extra vigilant to signs

We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Partnership and take account of guidance issued by the DfE to:

- ensure we have a designated senior person for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role
- ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for safeguarding
- ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers and members of the governing body) knows who the designated senior person responsible for child protection is
- ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for child protection
- develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer
- ensure all HMFA schools are compliant with the requirements of the Local Safeguarding Partnership
- ensure there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems

We recognise that children who suffer harm or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- the content of the curriculum
- the school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued
- liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as social services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and educational psychology service



- ensuring that, where a pupil on a child protection plan (or has other welfare and social needs) leaves the school, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed
- All educational settings will follow the recently published guidance on filtering and monitoring
- Governing bodies and proprietors will receive safeguarding training which includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. Paragraph 141 of the guidance now states the following: 'Governing bodies and proprietors should consider the number of and age range of their children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often they access the IT system along with the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks'.

We will ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. Schools should consider this as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

This may include covering relevant issues for schools through Relationships Education (for all primary pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state-funded schools) which was made compulsory in September 2020. Schools have flexibility to decide how they discharge their duties effectively within the first year of compulsory teaching and are encouraged to take a phased approach (if needed) when introducing these subjects.

Filtering and monitoring systems for IT. The recently published standards for filtering and monitoring, can be found [here](#).

- The DSL is expected to take lead responsibility for this, and this should be explicit in the role holder's job description
- All staff should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which now includes an understanding of expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring
- Reiteration that all educational settings should follow the recently published guidance on filtering and monitoring
- Governing bodies and proprietors should receive safeguarding training which includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. Paragraph 141 of the guidance now states the following: 'Governing bodies and proprietors should consider the number of and age range of their children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often they access the IT system along with the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks'.

Filtering and monitoring standards set out that schools and colleges should:

- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems
- review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually
- block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning
- have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs

All schools in HMFA will meet the Cyber Security Standards.

Each school in HMFA has a named Safeguarding Governor who takes a lead role for safeguarding. The Safeguarding Governor meets with the DSL for their school at least

termly. This gives the opportunity to ensure that policies and procedures are being followed but also to discuss the wider contextual safeguarding for the school. The responsibility for safeguarding remains with the Governing Body as a whole.

## **The Role of the HMFA Director for Safeguarding (DSG)**

Mrs McColl is the HMFA Safeguarding Director with overall responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection across the Federation.

Reporting to the Trust CEO, the Director of Safeguarding (DSG) is a member of the senior management team.

The Director of Safeguarding will offer substantial safeguarding experience and in-depth knowledge of relevant legislation, policy, procedures and good practice regarding children's welfare and well-being and acts as a source of support and expertise to the Trust.

The Director of Safeguarding will take a strategic view of Safeguarding across all of the HMFA schools. She will assure the quality of systems and procedures and consider ways in which they can be continually improved.

The Safeguarding Director should ensure that the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is updated and reviewed annually and work with the governing body regarding this. She should also report regularly to the Governing bodies.

The DSG will support the Designated Safeguarding Leads in the HMFA schools to carry out their duties, as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.

All Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL's) discuss welfare concerns with the DSG in the first instance. However, if she is not available all DSLs have the relevant training and knowledge and would not delay in making a referral to social care if required.

The DSG is responsible for safeguarding training in each of the HMFA schools, management of early help and the pastoral team. She is also responsible for maintaining a record of the names of pupils who are subject to a child protection plan/multi-agency plan and ensuring that welfare records are kept confidentially and securely in each of the schools.

The DSG will have an awareness of the circumstances in which there is a requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult in line with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) Code C 2019. - Section 12

The Safeguarding Director meets with the DSLs for each of the HMFA schools on a regular basis to ensure that practices are reviewed regularly (Audit). These regular meetings are also used as support and supervision. The DSG receives peer supervision with the Head Teachers.

All new staff must receive a mandatory induction including relevant policies particularly this policy and the staff code of conduct. They must also read at least part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024. The Safeguarding Director will keep records of staff who have received the documents and will offer support to ensure that key themes and procedures are understood by staff.

The Safeguarding Director is responsible for ensuring that all staff and Governors receive safeguarding training on induction which is regularly updated. She will also provide updates via e-bulletins or newsletters at least termly.

Staff will be supported to ensure they understand the role of the DSL.

## **Role of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) Also see KCSIE 2024 Annex C**

The appointment of a DSL with specific responsibility for safeguarding and child protection should not be seen as diminishing the role of ALL members of staff in being alert to signs of abuse, and being aware of the procedures to be followed. As from April 2004, there is a statutory duty for all staff working in schools to safeguard the welfare of the children.

The DSL and his/her deputy(s) must receive DSL multi-agency child protection training every 2 years. Training is available from the Local Safeguarding Children Board or through Create Safer Organisations. She/he must also keep up to date with safeguarding developments by attending local and national events at least annually.

Staff and Volunteers must be inducted fully and also be made aware of basic safeguarding procedures.

Temporary and supply staff must be made aware of basic information in respect of the school's safeguarding procedures, including the name of the DSL.

The DSL must keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all safeguarding concerns. The DSL should also record discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions. Records should also show instances where referrals were or were not made to other agencies.

It is the responsibility of the DSL of the individual schools to ensure that the school is represented and a report is submitted to any child protection conference called for children on their school roll or previously known to them. The DSL should also attend any other meeting that may be convened for the purposes of child protection, e.g. core groups, strategy meetings, planning meetings.

The DSL in each school is responsible for ensuring that confidential welfare files are kept in a locked cabinet separate to the pupil's main files. When children transfer to other schools they are responsible for ensuring that confidential records are sent securely and as soon as is physically possible. All federation schools now use MyConcern.

The DSLs and any Deputies should liaise with the three safeguarding partners and work with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children. [www.npcc.police.uk/documents/](http://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/) should help Designated Safeguarding Leads understand when they should consider calling the police and what to expect when they do.

The DSL/Designated Teacher will maintain links with the Virtual School Head Teacher to ensure that the needs of children who are looked after are met. Reports will be provided and attendance at Personal Education Plan meetings and CLA reviews are essential.

The Safeguarding Director/Designated Teacher for Looked After children and previously Looked After children will also ensure that CLA reports for Governors are completed annually for each of the schools in the federation. See Looked After and Previously Looked After Policy for further information.

Each DSL for individual schools is expected to liaise with other agencies.

The DSL liaises with the Director of Safeguarding as appropriate;

Finally, the role of DSL must not be delegated.

In the unlikely event that the DSL or Deputy DSL is not available, staff should speak to a member of the SLT and/or take advice from MASH on 01432 260858.

## **The role of school staff**

School staff are particularly important, as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.

All staff have responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

Staff should expect to support social workers and other agencies following any referral.

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns.

The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers (which includes Headteachers) should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child.

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

All staff should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. All schools in HMFA use MyConcern.

Copies of policies and a copy of Part one (or Annex A, if appropriate) of Keeping children safe in education 2024 should be provided to all staff at induction and annually.

## **Children who are Vulnerable**

Any child may be vulnerable at certain times in their life, but all school staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
  - living in temporary accommodation
  - living transient lifestyles
  - living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
  - homeless
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- asylum seeker
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child, or
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

## **Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation**

**All school staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.**

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

**Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

**Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **Specific safeguarding issues**

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger.

## **Child on Child Abuse**

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. All staff should be clear as to the school's or college's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

- All staff should understand that even if there are no reports in their schools it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).
- It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below, that are abusive in nature.  
Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

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

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in 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 nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (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).

For further information, see Child on Child Abuse Policy 2023



## **Contextual Safeguarding**

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside the school. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

Children's social care assessments should consider such factors so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse. Further information can be found in Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children 2018.

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation**

- These are defined as forms of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity
- The imbalance can be due to age, as well as other factors like gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status and access to economic or other resources
- In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (e.g. increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator
- It can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults
- It can be a one-off occurrence or be a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse
- It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and can involve violence or threats of violence
- Victims can be exploited even when activity appears to be consensual
- It can happen online as well as in person

### **Indicators of Child Sexual Exploitation may include:**

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation;
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks;

- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work;
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late;
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls;
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections;
- Evidence of/suspicious of physical or sexual assault;
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups;
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers);
- Frequenting areas known for sex work;
- Concerning use of internet or other social media;
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

**Potential vulnerabilities include:**

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues.

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example);
- Recent bereavement or loss;
- Social isolation or social difficulties;
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality;
- Economic vulnerability;
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status;
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited;
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work;
- Having a physical or learning disability;
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories); and
- Sexual identity.

More information can be found in:

Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners (DfE 2017)

The Safeguarding Director and other relevant staff will have undertaken local Child Sexual Exploitation training.

Sometimes children may make an allegation against another child in the school. All allegations are investigated and appropriate action taken which may include a referral to social care or other agencies e.g. CAMHs.

Parents are always informed of the allegation unless sexual abuse on the child is also suspected and by informing the parent may place the child at further risk.

## **Serious violence**

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

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

## **Honour based Abuse**

So called "honour based" abuse encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so-called honour based abuse are abuse regardless of the motivation.

Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

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

FGM involves cutting, and sometimes sewing the girl's genitalia, normally without anaesthetic, and can take place at any time from birth onwards. It is sometimes referred to as 'female circumcision' but this misnomer belies the invasive and irreversible nature of the procedure. It is now more correctly termed female genital mutilation.

The procedure has a cultural, rather than religious, origin and is practised by disparate ethnic communities in many countries, including Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Yemen and Iraq.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it a criminal offence, not only to carry out FGM in England, Scotland and Wales on a girl who is a UK national or permanent resident, but also to take a girl out of the UK to have FGM performed abroad, even to countries where FGM is still legal.

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

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

### **Risk factors for FGM include:**

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

## **Symptoms of FGM**

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

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

- difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable.
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating.
- spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems.
- frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- prolonged or repeated absences from school or college, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.
- confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

The Serious Crime Act 2015 sets out a duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. In schools this will usually come from a disclosure. Teachers **MUST** personally report to the police a disclosure that FGM has been carried out (in addition to liaising with the DSL).

## **Prevent**

From 1 July 2015 all schools, registered early years childcare providers and registered later years childcare providers, are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty. The Co-ordinator for the Federation for the purpose of concerns and monitoring is Jan McColl.

All staff will receive training regarding the Prevent Duty.

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'.

Where staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalized, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have.

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

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

## **Recognising Extremism**

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

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

Please refer to the Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy and The Prevent Duty departmental advice for schools and childcare providers June 2015 for further information.

## **Domestic abuse**

In April 2021, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent and introduced a statutory definition for the first time.

### **Definition**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- (a) physical or sexual abuse;
- (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
- (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
- (d) economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and
- (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.

People are 'personally connected' when they are, or have been married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. If the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives.

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

(The definition can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/part/1/enacted>)

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

All schools within HMFA are part of Operation Encompass.

The National Domestic Abuse helpline can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.

### **County Lines**

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults;
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation.

Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

### **Mental Health**

Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils

- All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation
- Only trained professionals should make a diagnosis of a mental health problem, but staff are well placed to observe children and identify those whose behaviour suggests they may be experiencing a mental health problem, or be at risk of developing one
- Abuse, neglect and other traumatic adverse childhood experiences can have a lasting impact, and it's key that staff are aware of how these experiences can affect children's mental health, behaviour and education

- Staff should take action on any mental health concerns that are also safeguarding concerns, following your school's child protection policy and speaking to the DSL or deputy
- There's DfE guidance available on preventing and tackling bullying and mental health and behaviour, as well as Public Health England guidance on promoting children's emotional health and wellbeing and lesson plans and teaching materials from Rise Above.  
There is a wealth of guidance and support available within the pastoral support teams.

### **Provisions of The Children Act**

Section 3(5) gives the school the right to:

“do what is reasonable, in all the circumstances of the case, for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare.”

S27 and S47 states that there is a duty to assist in the protection or investigation of a child or young person if there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

### **Monitoring**

Members of staff are in daily contact with children and may be the first to notice changes in a child's behaviour, or possible evidence of physical abuse.

A member of staff who has reason to be concerned about a child should act in the best interests of that child. This is especially important where there has been no direct disclosure of abuse, when a child has communication problems, or is too young to give much information.

If all misgivings are channelled through one person (the DSL), there is a greater chance that children at risk will be identified at an early stage.

It is crucial that any concerns are reported to the DSL as quickly as possible, particularly regarding concerns involving physical and sexual abuse where a medical may be required. The DSL will then ensure that the staff member logs the concern on MyConcern.

Staff will not investigate but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to the DSL in order that s/he can make an informed decision of what to do next. However, if a member of staff notices a bruise or mark on a child it is reasonable to ask, in general conversation, how the bruise or mark occurred. Staff should remember to ask open questions.

## **Abuse, neglect and exploitation**

All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation (see below), understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

All school staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation.

All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.

In all cases, if staff are unsure, they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

## **Recognising signs and symptoms**

There are certain symptoms that children who are suffering, or have suffered, abuse are likely to exhibit. Some will lead to powerful suspicion, others will simply suggest the possibility that abuse is taking place, or has done so.

### **Behavioural indicators**

Members of staff see children over prolonged periods and can, over time, notice changes in the way they act. They are therefore particularly well placed to notice unusual patterns of behaviour, which may be evidence of abuse. (*Appendix 1*)

None of these signs conclusively suggests child abuse, but where there is no other convincing explanation for unusual patterns of behaviour, the possibility of abuse cannot be ruled out. If there are other indicators of abuse, or concerns about the child's family life, the evidence should be carefully investigated.

### **Physical indicators**



On the face of it, evidence of physical abuse is relatively easy to identify and assess. However, children frequently have accidents resulting in injury.

Suspensions should be aroused when children and parents/guardians are reluctant to discuss the injury at all, or when their explanations differ in significant detail, or are inconsistent with the severity of the injury.

*Appendix 2*, although not exhaustive, indicates the kind of injury for which an explanation should be sought to eliminate the possibility of non-accidental injury.

Any suspicion of physical abuse may be intensified if the following factors are also present:

- reports of earlier abuse if the child or other children is/are in the care of the same parents/guardians
- failure by parents/guardians to mention previous injuries
- a history of unexplained or inadequately explained injuries
- explanations of the cause of the injury which are contradictory and/or implausible
- delay in seeking medical or other help which would clearly have been appropriate
- refusal by parents/guardians to allow injury and/or its circumstances to be investigated further

### **Indicators of Neglect**

Where there is, or has been, abuse there are often other indicators which will manifest themselves at school (*Appendix 3*). These indicators should alert the teacher to the possibility of abuse, although they are not, in themselves, conclusive evidence.

### **Sexual indicators**

These are signs, which may point to the possibility of sexual abuse. (*Appendix 4*)

### **General Indicators.**

See Appendix 5

### **Procedures**

**Points to note:** The DSL should **always** be **immediately** informed of disclosures of abuse, or suspected abuse.

If in doubt, seek advice immediately.

### ***When to record information***

When there is concern in school over:

- marks on the body
- unusual or different behaviour
- mood changes
- puzzling statements or stories from a child
- information from others

### **What to record**

Many situations may give rise to concern. These are some of the more common ones:

- patterns of attendance
- changes of mood
- changes in classroom functioning
- relationships (with peers, adults)
- behaviour
- statements, comments, stories, 'news', drawings
- general demeanour and appearance
- parental interest and comments
- home/family changes
- medicals
- response to PE/Sport
- injuries/marks, past and present

Staff do not have an investigative brief and therefore should not ask leading questions, THE CHIEF TASK IS TO LISTEN TO THE CHILD and not interrupt if he/she is freely recording significant events. (See *appendix 6 "When a Child Tells"*)

**NEVER** promise to keep secret what a child has said. If appropriate, in cases of disclosure explain that you are going to pass on the information to get help.

## **Recording**

### **How to record**

Inform the DSL immediately and report the concern on MyConcern, noting the time, date, place of the incident and any people present, as well as what was said. Information should be recorded in a factual, non-emotive, non-judgemental way. Think “who, what, where, when”.

If injuries have been sustained, record what you see, using a skin map (*appendix 8*). State when and how the marks were observed (e.g. whilst changing for P.E).

All HMFA schools have purchased “My Concern” software for the reporting and recording all safeguarding and well-being concerns.

### **What happens next?**

Some options may be:

- keeping the information on file and monitoring the situation
- seeking advice and/or support from other agencies
- offering support in the form of an early help assessment
- making a referral to Social Services
- phoning the police

Any action taken will be noted on My Concern and passed on to those adults who need to know.

### **The Safeguarding Director or DSL will ensure that:**

- records of concerns are kept, even if there is no immediate need for referral; and monitored. Early help in the form of an Early Help Assessment Plan may be offered if relevant
- all child protection/welfare records are marked as such and kept securely locked, and if these are stored electronically, that they are differently password protected from the pupils’ other files, and accessible only by the Safeguarding Director, Designated Safeguarding Leads, Head Teachers or other senior staff, Learning Mentor, Family Support Worker and Safeguarding Admin Support
- pupil absence is monitored robustly, concerns are dated and clearly recorded.
- if the pupil has a Child Protection Plan, and is absent without explanation, their allocated Social Worker is informed
- phone calls about absences are similarly logged and dated
- records are monitored for patterns and appropriate action is taken
- where there are existing concerns about a pupil, and they transfer to another school in this authority, a copy of information held e.g. an early help assessment is forwarded

under confidential cover and separate from the pupil's main file to the DSL for child protection in the receiving school

- where a pupil has a **child protection plan** and transfers to another school; the DSL at the new school is informed immediately and ensures their child protection file is transferred as soon as possible but transferred separately from the main pupil file

In addition to the above, all staff should be aware of the early help process and how this help can be accessed via the DSL. The federation employs a Family Support Worker who is responsible for co-ordinating EHAs under the supervision of the Safeguarding Director.

### **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

Staff have a professional responsibility to share information with each other, and with other agencies.

Different circumstances will determine what happens in each case, but usually information will be limited to the minimum number of people who need to know.

Files containing confidential information are kept in a locked cabinet and may only be accessed by the Head Teachers or DSL. Since September 2021, all safeguarding concerns are reported and stored electronically on MyConcern.

The parent's and child's need for privacy and confidentiality will be respected at all times.

We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission or it is necessary to do so in order to protect a child.

We will share with parents any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm or impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk.

There may be exceptional circumstances when the school will discuss concerns with Social Care and/or the police without parental knowledge.

The DSL will make a judgement about this and can seek advice from MASH (while keeping the child anonymous) about whether to discuss concerns with a parent before making a referral.

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. As part of meeting a child's needs, it is important for governing bodies and proprietors to recognise the importance of information sharing between practitioners and local agencies. This should include ensuring arrangements are in place that set out clearly the processes and principles for sharing information within the school or college and with the three safeguarding partners, other organisations, agencies and practitioners as required. School and college staff should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to the local authority children's social care.

It is important that governing bodies and proprietors are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR place duties on organisations and individuals to

process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.

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

This includes:

- being confident of the processing conditions which allow them to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal, and should be treated as 'special category personal data'.
- understanding that 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner but it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.
- for schools, not providing pupils' personal data where the serious harm test under the legislation is met. *For example, in a situation where a child is in a refuge or another form of emergency accommodation*, and the serious harms test is met, they must withhold providing the data in compliance with schools' obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR.

Where in doubt schools should seek independent legal advice.

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

Practitioners may seek further guidance from ***Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers. July 2018***

### **Children who need a Social Worker**

- Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs, such as abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances
- These experiences can leave children vulnerable to further harm, as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health
- The local authority will tell schools if a child has a social worker, and the DSL should hold and use this information in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes, such as when decisions are made on:
  - Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
  - The provision of pastoral and/or academic support

Regular contact with the MASH Education representatives is imperative.

All schools within HMFA recognize that when a child has a Social Worker, this is an indicator that the child is more at risk than most pupils. This may mean that they are more vulnerable

to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behavior and poor mental health.

### **Dealing with parents**

Parent's feelings after abuse has been disclosed or discovered may include:

- reluctance for school/staff/other parents/children to know about it
- guilt, shame, expectation of criticism (therefore, reluctant to face staff)
- anxiety that their child will be stigmatised
- shock, disbelief, distress
- anger with staff if they have "blown the whistle"

### **Helpful responses**

- referring parents to the "Confidentiality" part of this policy
- a reassurance from you that information will be kept private, or an honest explanation if another member of staff has to know all or part of it, in order to help the child

## **Support for Staff**

Staff will be supported in what they have to do by the DSL or the Head Teachers. Coping with child abuse requires not only knowledge of signs, symptoms and procedures but an awareness that involvement in the process can bring heavy practical and emotional burdens. Strong feelings of anger, horror, anxiety, disgust or distress may be aroused. Staff may need reassurance that such feelings are not unusual. They may want to express their feelings to a trusted colleague without infringing on the need for confidentiality. Talking through a difficult situation can be a great relief.

If staff did not agree with a decision made about a course of action regarding a disclosure by a child they may escalate the matter to the Head Teacher.

Where the DSL has a difference of opinion in a course of action from social care, she should discuss with the Head Teacher and start the formal escalation process.  
<http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/>

## **Supervision**

Staff receive regular formal supervision if they are working directly and regularly with children whose safety and welfare are at risk.

Jan McColl will provide supervision for Mrs Ryder, Mrs Southall, Mrs Hanbury and Mrs Christie.

Jan McColl will receive peer supervision with the Head Teacher where regular case reviews will be completed.

Supervision for federation Safeguarding Leads will take place at HMFA DSL meetings facilitated by Jan McColl.

The PSHE programme (Jigsaw) provides opportunities for children to develop skills and practices to maintain their personal safety. The Safer Streets Partnership also provide workshops for Year 6 and all year group compete Protective Behaviours workshops.

**Bullying** is dealt with in the Anti-bullying policy.

Staff should be aware of the different forms that child on child abuse can take. This can include physical injury, sexually harmful behaviour, name calling and sexting. Gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child on child abuse and staff should seek support where necessary.

Staff should be clear that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up”.

Staff must be vigilant for signs of child on child abuse and ensure that all cases are fully investigated, completing an incident form and reporting to the DSL any cases which have arisen.

## **Support for children:**

Children are encouraged to talk to their teachers if something is troubling them. HMFA have a team of staff which includes; Safeguarding Director, Learning Mentor, Family Support Worker and Emotional Literacy Support Assistants who can provide more specific support and help for children and families.

Schools also have worry boxes where children can request to speak to a member of staff about any worry they may have.



### **School based Early Help Offer**

The purpose of early help is to prevent issues and problems becoming serious and harmful to a child or young person, their family and community. When children and families need this extra support, they often need it quickly. At HMFA, we offer a range of Early Help support and during a child's time at our schools, many of them, and their families, will access some form of Early Help. Providing early help to our pupils and families in HMFA means we are more effective in promoting support as soon as we can. Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to teenage years.

### **What does Early Help for pupils include?**

1:1 or group emotional support focusing on:

- Promoting self-esteem and confidence.
- Promoting positive behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Support with developing positive relationships.
- Support with bereavement, family breakdown or other trauma.
- Promoting attendance (school refusal).
- Support with emotional regulation.

### **What does Early Help for families include?**

- Access to a variety of parent workshops in school and on the school's website.
- Assistance in completing paperwork and forms e.g. housing, foodbank vouchers, wraparound care.
- Advice and support in promoting positive behaviour at home.
- Providing information and signposting to other services in the local area.
- Liaising with a range of external services such as housing and Family Support Workers.

Within HMFA we provide a wide range of professionals who offer support to children and families and facilities including;

Family Support Worker

ELSAs

Director of Safeguarding

Learning Mentors

Speech Therapists

Educational Psychologists

Access to our allocated School Nurse

Nurture facilities

External voluntary agencies such as; Vennture, Home Start, CLD Coping Cats, CLIMB

Mental Health trained staff

Extra curricular clubs

### **Early Help Assessment (level 3)**

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

In the first instance, staff should discuss early help requirements with the designated safeguarding lead. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment.

The early help assessment is a standardised approach to conducting assessments of children's additional needs and deciding how these should be met. It is used by practitioners across children's services in England. The Early Help Practitioner will initiate an early help assessment if (s)he feels the child and family have additional needs which cannot be met by a single agency. The Practitioner can only do this with the permission of the family. The early help assessment is completed WITH the family.

The early help assessment promotes more effective, earlier identification of additional needs, particularly in universal services. It aims to provide a simple process for a holistic assessment of children's needs and strengths; taking account of the roles of parents, carers and environmental factors on their development. Practitioners are then better placed to agree with children and families about appropriate modes of support. The early help assessment also aims to improve integrated working by promoting coordinated service provisions.

**Early Help must not be used when there is concern that a child may have suffered or may be at risk of suffering significant harm.**

### **Children missing from education**

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse, neglect and exploitation and may also raise concerns about other safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contact numbers for parents/carers. Parents should be reminded to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) each school within HMFA have:

1. Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).
3. Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
4. Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:
  - a. leave school to be home educated (on receipt of notification of a pupil being removed for home schooling, all parents will be offered a meeting with school to discuss further)
  - b. move away from the school's location
  - c. remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
  - d. are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or
  - e. are permanently excluded

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

When a pupil leaves the school, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.

### **Children with SEND**

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group of children.

These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration;
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children;
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges

All schools within HMFA provide extra pastoral support and attention for these children if required along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place.

### **Private Fostering**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Teaching children how to keep safe**

The school will ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

All schools teach sex and relationship education using the Jigsaw programme.

We will also ensure that all children will receive Protective Behaviour training which includes children being helped to recognise when something doesn't feel "right" and will also help them to identify trusted adults who they can tell if something is wrong.

In addition to this all children will attend assemblies run by Childline as well as children in Year 5 and 6 receiving talks from Childline and Safer Streets Partnership about how to keep themselves safe. Year 6 children will also receive sex and relationship education in the summer term.

Individual children may receive individual Keep Safe work if this is identified as a need.

### **Links with online safety (See Online Safety policy)**

If a member of staff becomes concerned that a child's safety is at risk due to suspecting someone is using communication technologies (such as social networking sites) to make inappropriate contact with the child, the staff member should:-

Report to and discuss with the DSL for child protection in school who will:-

- Advise the child on how to terminate the communication and save all evidence
- Inform the Head Teacher
- Contact CEOP <http://www.ceop.gov.uk/>
- Consider the involvement of police and social services
- Inform LA

### **Filtering and Monitoring**

At HMFA we recognise the importance of clear roles and responsibilities in managing filtering and monitoring systems. Therefore, we ensure that specific roles are identified and assigned to oversee these systems within our institution. The Trust Online Safety lead is: Jo Brace who regularly liaises with the Director of Safeguarding regarding filtering and monitoring.

#### **Regular Review of Provision:**

To maintain the effectiveness of our filtering and monitoring systems, we are committed to conducting at least annual reviews. These reviews allow us to assess the performance and suitability of our current provision and make necessary adjustments to ensure the continued protection of our students.

#### **Blocking of Harmful and Inappropriate Content:**

We prioritise the safety of our students by implementing measures to effectively block access to harmful and inappropriate content. It is our goal to strike a balance between maintaining a secure online environment and minimizing any disruptions to teaching and learning activities.

#### **Effective Monitoring Strategies:**

To proactively address potential risks and threats, we establish monitoring strategies that align with our safeguarding needs. These strategies will enable us to promptly identify and respond to any concerning online activities or content.

### **Staff Use of Mobile Phones and Personal Cameras**

Staff must not use their mobile phones in the vicinity of the children. They may make calls at break or lunch times on their mobile phones when children are not in their classroom or they may use one of the office phones.

Staff personal mobile phones and cameras should not be used to take photographs of children either in the classroom or on school trips. School cameras are available and should be used in conjunction with the Mobile Phone/Acceptable Use Policy.

See Mobile Phone/Acceptable Use Policy for guidance on use of mobile phones on school premises.

Visitors (including parents) are requested to not use their phones whilst in the school and to switch them off.

### **Mobile Phones and Cameras in Early Years Foundation Stage and Kidsclubs**

Appropriate use of mobile phones is essential at Breakfast and Kidsclubs. The use of mobile phones does not detract from the quality of supervision and care of children. All parents have the mobile phone number that is used and are encouraged to text or phone. Practitioners are able to use their personal mobile phones during their break times. During working hours they must be kept out of the reach of children and parents, in a secure area accessible only to staff. All staff are made aware of their duty to follow this procedure which is set out in the Code of Conduct.

All school staff are asked to be vigilant in challenging other staff/parents/visitors to abide by the above requests.

### **Photographs**

We believe that photographs validate children's experiences and achievements and are a valuable way of recording milestones in a child's life. Parental permission for the different ways in which we use photographs is gained as part of the initial registration on admission. We take a mixture of photos that reflect the school environment, sometimes this will be when children are engrossed in an activity either on their own or with their peers. Children are encouraged to use the class camera/iPad to take photos of their peers.

In order to safeguard children and adults and to maintain privacy, cameras are expressly forbidden from being taken into the toilets by adults or children. All adults, whether teachers, practitioners or volunteers at all HMFA schools/settings understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate sharing of images. All images are kept securely in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

At school events such as carol concerts, parents are allowed to photograph/video their children but are asked to refrain from sharing on social media any photographs/video which may contain children other than their own.

Sometimes school may have to ask that photographs are not taken at all. This is for confidential reasons when we need to protect individual children.



## **Pupil Welfare – Assessment of Risks**

There is a record of risk assessment in the school central risk assessment file. It details the risk of incrimination in certain circumstances.

1. **Comforting a child:** staff should avoid providing physical comfort, although very young children may become distressed and seek affection. In this case, avoid hugging or kissing, but instead use a comforting hand on the shoulder or arm.
2. **PE:** if physical contact needs to occur in a demonstration (e.g. gym), place hands in a supportive position, preferably on hands or legs.
3. **First Aid:** appointed first aiders should deal with emergency situations doing the minimum necessary to preserve life, and minimise the consequences of injury until qualified assistance is obtained.
4. **Using Force:** an emergency or violent situation may arise where physical intervention is necessary. It should involve the minimum force required to prevent injury to anyone. De-escalation techniques will always be implemented – restraint is used as a last resort. School will ensure compliance with “Use of Reasonable Force” DfE July 2013.
5. **One to one situations:** meetings should take place in the vicinity of other pupils and staff. If possible, keep the door open, and a desk or table between you and the child. Teachers of children with Special Educational Needs should remain especially vigilant at all times.

## **Allegation against a member of Staff (See also Managing Allegations and Low Level Concerns policies)**

In the event of an allegation about a member of staff (including supply staff) or volunteer in school the allegation should be reported to the Head Teachers, Safeguarding Director or relevant Head of School immediately unless the allegation is about the Headteacher in which case it should be reported to the Chair of Governors.

Senior staff have to decide whether the concern is an allegation or a low level concern.

When an allegation is made against a member of staff or a safeguarding concern is raised, set procedures must be followed.

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (including low-level concerns) can be found in the Managing allegations policy.

Where a concern or allegation indicates that an adult has:

1. behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
2. possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
3. behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
4. behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children;

a referral will be made to the LADO , without delay.

The last bullet point above includes behaviour that may have happened outside of the academy that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children; this is known as ‘transferable risk’.

A “case manager” will lead any investigation. This will be either the headteacher, or, where the headteacher is the subject of an allegation, an Executive Director of HMFA.

Both allegations that meet the harm threshold for a referral to the LADO and allegations/concerns that do not meet the harm threshold, referred to for the purposes of this policy as ‘low level concerns’, will be reported in writing to the headteacher.

Please also see Low Level Concerns policy.

Staff are aware of the Whistleblowing policy and receive a copy on induction.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).



## ***Appendix 1***

### **EMOTIONAL INDICATORS**

- failure to reach potential
- poor self-esteem and insecurity
- withdrawal – social isolation
- physical, mental, emotional developmental delay or disturbance – including failure to thrive
- enuresis/encopresis
- needy dependent behaviour
- deliberate self harm/suicidal thoughts
- behavioural extremes
- substance misuse
- compulsive stealing
- domestic violence
- psychosomatic illness

## ***Appendix 2***

### **PHYSICAL INDICATORS**

#### **Bruising, especially**

- bruises on trunk
- bruises on face, upper arm, shoulders and neck, consistent with gripping
- fingertip bruising/finger marks
- multiple bruising and/or bizarre markings on the skin
- multiple bruising of different colouration (age of injury)
- bruising and/or lacerations around the mouth
- finger or thumb marks on the face or body e.g. symmetrical bruising (pinch marks) direct impression or outline (e.g. hand), finger tips
- black eyes (particularly when both are affected)
- bite marks

#### **Burns and scalds**

- cigarette (small round burns)
- clear outlines (e.g. sock and glove effect)
- friction burns (especially in very young children)
- splash marks above a main scald (indicating the throwing of hot liquid)
- burns of uniform depth covering large areas

#### **Fractures**

- “chip” fractures
- rib fractures
- fractures in very young children
- periosteal reaction (no visible signs of abuse, but child complains of limbs hurting)
- multiple fractures

#### **Be suspicious of:**

- inconsistent explanations

- reluctance to give information
- repeated minor injury
- unrealistic expectations
- medical consent refused
- parent/s incapable/unavailable

### ***Appendix 3***

#### **NEGLECT AND FAILURE TO THRIVE INDICATORS**

- short stature and underweight for chronological age
- cold skin, mottled pink or purple
- swollen limbs with pitted sores which are slow to heal
- poor skin condition, especially in nappy area
- diarrhoea caused by tension, poor diet, poor hygiene
- voracious appetite
- dry, sparse hair
- unresponsiveness or indiscriminate
- stays frozen in one position for an unnaturally long time

#### ***Appendix 4***

##### **SEXUAL ABUSE INDICATORS**

- sexually precocious behaviour
- sexualised drawings and play
- sudden poor performance at school
- regression e.g. to bedwetting, soiling
- poor self esteem
- psychosomatic symptoms e.g. headaches, abdominal pain
- suicidal gestures
- self-mutilation
- confusion of affection with sexual behaviour
- promiscuity
- eating disorders
- sleep disturbance
- withdrawal and depression
- running away

## ***Appendix 5***

### **GENERAL INDICATORS**

The following may occur to any children being abused but are particularly important in cases of sexual or emotional abuse where outward physical signs may not be present:

- onset of enuresis – day or night
- sleeping and eating disturbance
- recurrent abdominal pains
- recurrent headaches
- social withdrawal
- restlessness and aimlessness
- inexplicable school failure
- poor trust and secretiveness
- indiscriminate and careless sexual behaviour
- drug abuse
- running away
- self-mutilation and other forms of self-harm
- hysterical fits, faints, etc

## Appendix 6

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

#### WHEN A CHILD TELLS

##### **Possible responses:**

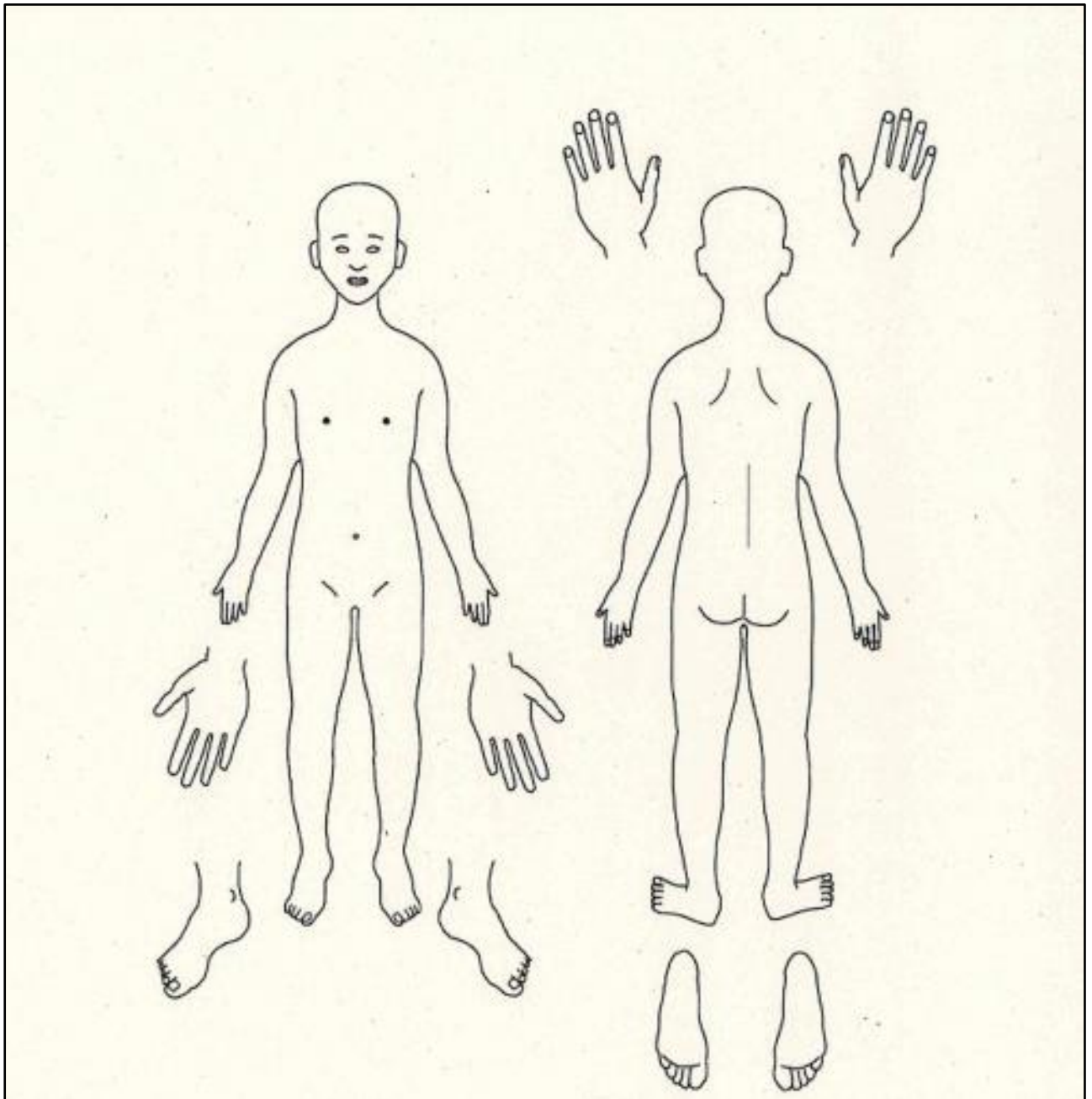
- ✓ What you have told me is very important.
- ✓ I want to help you. To do that I need to tell somebody whose job it is to talk to children about what has happened.
- ✓ Thank you for telling me.
- ✓ You are being very brave.
- ✓ I don't know (better than false assurances).

\* \* \* \* \*

##### **Unsuitable responses:**

- x Did daddy (or Tom or Jane or.....) do it?
- x Mummy did it, didn't she?
- x I don't believe you.
- x Are you sure                   .....you didn't fall?  
   .....you didn't imagine it?  
   .....your brother didn't do it?
- x Daddy will get into a lot of trouble.

## Body Map

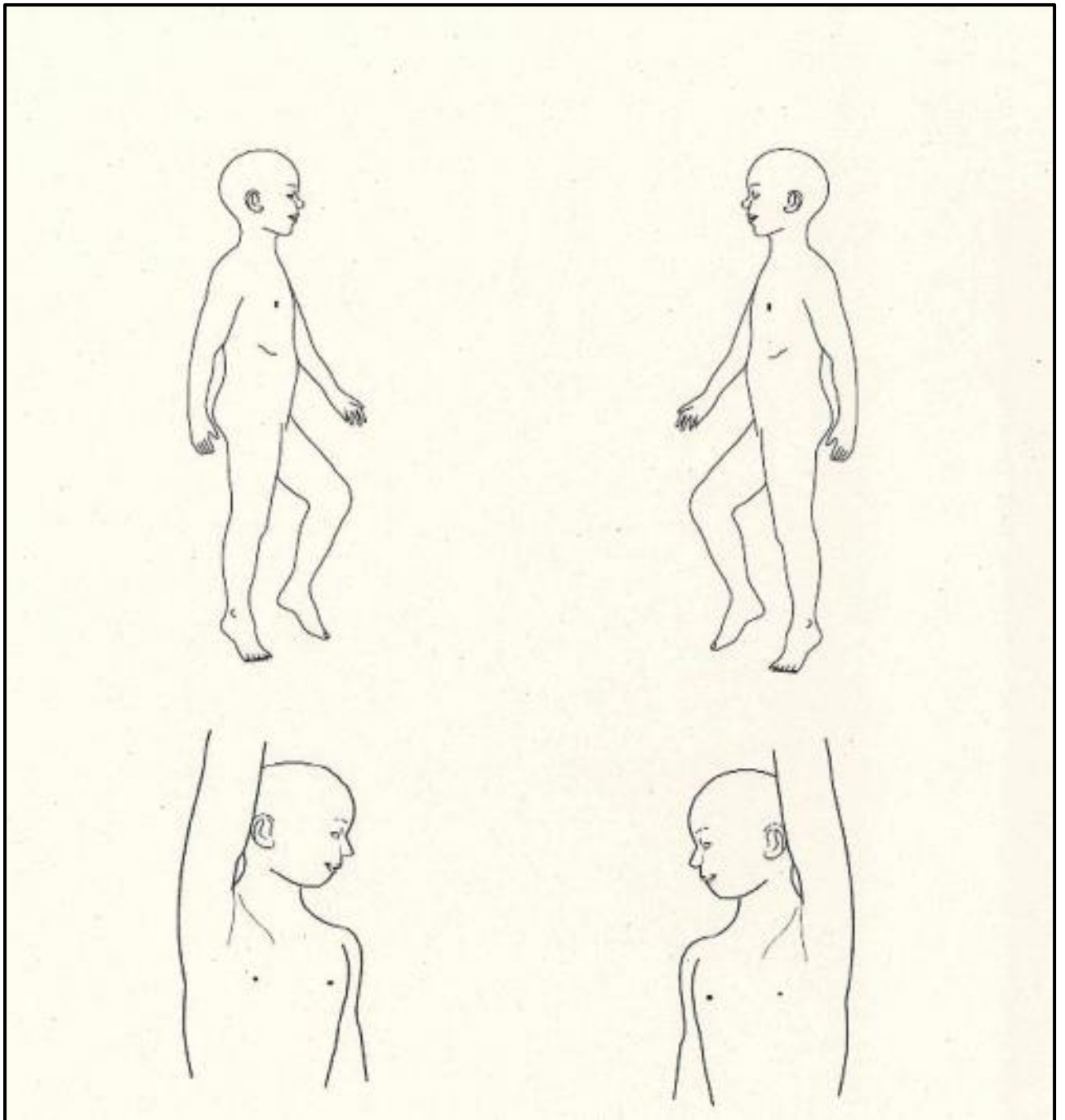


Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Recording: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person completing the Form: \_\_\_\_\_





Any Additional Information: