St Teresa's Catholic Academy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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Safe, Happy and Successful, Together with God

BFC - CONFIDENTIAL

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Safeguarding Policy Statement

The **purpose** and **scope** of our safeguarding and child protection policy is:

A whole-school, child-centred approach is fundamental to all aspects of everyday life at our school. At St Teresa's Catholic Academy, we strive to create a culture which enables children to express their wishes and feelings and talk about anything that is of importance to them. We believe that every child deserves to receive an education within an environment where they feel safe to learn and develop. We want our pupils, staff, parents and carers to have confidence and trust in our goals and know that collaborative working is fundamental to create and maintain a child-centred approach to safeguarding.

In practice this means we endorse the key principle that the welfare of a child is paramount, keeping them at the centre of all decision making in our partnership working with them, their families, and those supporting them.

Throughout our broad and balanced curriculum, we will provide activities and opportunities for children to develop the knowledge, values and skills they need to identify risks, including knowing when and how to ask for help for themselves and others to stay safe (this includes online). The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum) will cover relevant topics in an age and stage appropriate way, enabling pupils to learn about their rights and responsibilities to behave and stay safe in a variety of contexts on and offline. This will provide further reinforcement to help children identify risks, know when to seek support and develop the skills to ask for help from trustworthy, reliable sources.

We shall strive to achieve this by addressing current legislation (and any amendments to the same), policies and guidance surrounding the protection of children in England, including but not limited to:

- The statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023) and the DfE Statutory Guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) 2025.
- Consideration of the Early Years Foundation Statutory Framework
- Berkshire Child Protection procedures are followed in line with Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board (BFSB) expectations.
- Consideration of the Human Rights Act 1998, The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), The Equality Act 2010, Public Sector Equality Duty, statutory guidance on the Prevent duty and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) when making individual decisions about pupils.
- Reflects our whole school approach and commitment to safeguarding and child protection.
- Clear procedures to support safeguarding and child protection.
- The underpinning of other relevant policies including attendance, behaviour, staff code of conduct, online safety, low-level concerns, whistleblowing, and our formal complaints procedure (see appendix B & C).

We recognise that safeguarding is **everybody's** responsibility in our school and the responsibility we have under section 175 (*Section 157 for Independent Schools and Academies)* of the Education Act 2002 (as amended).

We believe that all staff in our school play an important role in identifying concerns early, providing help and support for our pupils, promoting their welfare, and preventing concerns from escalating. We all have a responsibility to support pupils holistically and providing a safe environment in which they can learn.

This policy is publicly available via our website and in the School Office and is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and will be kept up to date throughout the year, as required.

Signed by Headteacher:

Signed by Chair of Governors:

Dated: 3rd September 2025

Key Contacts

Role	Name	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	**Nikki Peters**	**admin@st-teresas.wokingham.sch.uk**
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	**Paris Finnegan**	**admin@st-teresas.wokingham.sch.uk**
Chair of Governors	**Anne-Marie Eden**	**schoolchair@st-teresas.wokingham.sch.uk**
Nominated Safeguarding and Child Protection Governor	**Anne-Marie Eden**	**schoolchair@st-teresas.wokingham.sch.uk**
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Lead (SENCO)	**Krystle Hewitson**	**admin@st-teresas.wokingham.sch.uk**
The Designated Teacher (DT) for Children Looked After	**Paris Finnegan**	**admin@st-teresas.wokingham.sch.uk**
Prevent Lead	**Nikki Peters**	**admin@st-teresas.wokingham.sch.uk**
Mental Health Lead	**Nikki Peters**	**admin@st-teresas.wokingham.sch.uk**
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)		lado@wokingham.gov.uk 01189 746141
Children's Social Care – for reporting concerns	R&A Team	R&ateam@wokingham.gov.uk
	Emergency Duty Service – after hours, weekends and public holidays	01344 786543
Prevent	ACT Early | Prevent radicalisation 0800 011 3764 Channel helpline 020 7340 7264	wsh.wokingham.gov.uk/leadership/prevent 01189 746371

Wokingham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)		01189 088002 triage@wokingham.gov.uk
West Berkshire Safeguarding Team		https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp
Virtual School		https://www.wokinghamvirtualschool.co.uk
Young Carers Service		Young.carers@berkshireyouth.co.uk 07923954741
Police		Emergency 999 Non-emergency 101
NSPCC Helpline		Call: 0808 800 5000 Email help@NSPCC.org.uk

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance. Links to further guidance can be seen in Appendix E

Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) (KCSIE) which sets out the legal duties that all schools and colleges in England must follow to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under the age of 18.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, places a duty on schools and Local Authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, which sets out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least 1 person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques.

The *Academy Trust Governance Guide (2024)* provides guidance for academy trust boards on how to meet their legal and regulatory responsibilities with regards to compliance. It covers a wide range of compliance areas including education standards, financial oversight, health and safety, safeguarding and pupil welfare, data protection and information sharing, inspections, political impartiality, pupil behaviour, admissions and attendance, complaints handling, school day and year arrangements, organisational changes, premises management, community use of facilities, school uniform policies, staffing and performance management, and whistleblowing.

This guidance serves as a reference document for trustees, executive leaders, local committee governors, governance professionals, and academy trust members. It consolidates essential information from various sources to support trust boards in fulfilling their statutory duties and maintaining effective governance across all aspects of academy operations.

This guidance is a reference document for those involved in local-authority-maintained school governance. It brings together essential information from a range of sources on the governing body's roles and legal responsibilities.

This policy also meets requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers (publishing.service.gov.uk)

The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (referred to in this policy as the "2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations") and Childcare Act 2006, which set out who is disqualified from working with children.

Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children

Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) DfE guidance outlines what organisations and agencies must and should do to help, protect and promote the welfare of all children and young people under the age of 18 in England

Serious Crime Act 2015, Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18

Statutory guidance on FGM, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children

Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children

Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"

The Human Rights Act 1998, which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

The Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our governors and headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils regarding these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there is evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination

Escalation of Concerns and Professional Disagreements about Decisions, including Convening an ICPC 4.5.3 Escalation of Concerns and Professional Disagreements about Decisions, including Convening an ICPC (proceduresonline.com)

Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners produced by the DfE, outlines the importance of sharing information about children, young people, and their families in order to safeguard children. It provides clarity on when and how information can be shared legally and professionally to achieve improved outcomes. It also includes the "Seven Golden Rules for Sharing Information", which provide a framework to support information sharing where practitioners have reason to believe failure to share information may result in the child being at risk of harm. It is non-statutory and has been produced to support practitioners in the decisions they take to share information, which reduces the risk of harm to children and young people and promotes their well-being.

Equality Statement, Children with Protected Characteristics

Some children are at greater risk of harm, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. At St Teresa's Catholic Academy, we are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and ensuring that all children are provided with the same protection regardless of any additional needs, barriers or protected characteristics they may have. As stated in the Equality Act 2010, we recognise the protected characteristics that may be applicable to our pupils:

· Age

· Disability

· Gender questioning children

· Marriage and civil partnership

· Pregnancy and maternity

· Race

· Religion or belief

· Sex

· Sexual orientation.

All staff and volunteers understand the importance of recognising that a child may benefit from Early Help intervention, and it is integral to our whole school approach to look and listen out particularly for children:

· who have a special educational need and/or disabilities (SEND) or health conditions

· who are a young carer (children and young people, under the age of 18, who provide care for a family member with illness, disability, mental health issues, or substance misuse.)

· who could experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender questioning or sexuality

· have English as an additional language

· are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence

· are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation

· are asylum seekers

· are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs

· are looked after or previously looked after

· who have ongoing unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education

· whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be provided with elective home education (EHE).

All staff have a responsibility for early identification of young carers which is crucial within the safeguarding framework in schools, as these pupils often face unique vulnerabilities that can significantly impact their wellbeing and development. Young carers - children and young people who provide care for a family member with illness, disability, mental health issues, or substance misuse - may experience social isolation, emotional distress, disrupted education, or increased responsibility beyond their years. These factors can place them at greater risk of harm, neglect, or falling through gaps in support systems. By identifying young carers early, schools are better positioned to understand their individual needs, implement timely interventions, and ensure appropriate safeguarding measures are in place. Early recognition enables staff to work collaboratively with families and external agencies, ensuring that young carers receive the emotional, educational, and practical support necessary to thrive both academically and personally.

All staff hold a key responsibility to identify and assess young carers early, recognising that young carers may be at increased risk of emotional strain, educational disruption, and unrecognised safeguarding concerns. Staff should routinely use pastoral and safeguarding systems to pinpoint pupils exhibiting caring responsibilities, particularly when those responsibilities appear inappropriate for their age or start impacting attendance, wellbeing, or social development. Once potential young carers are identified, we will seek advice and support from Berkshire Youth Service (youngcarers@berkshireyouth.co.uk)

By fulfilling this duty of early recognition, fair assessment, and clear referral pathways, we not only safeguard young carers but open access to timely support. This ensures young carers receive the tailored emotional, educational, and practical help they need, in partnership with statutory services, helping to mitigate risks and promote better outcomes.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We know who our pupils are with special educational needs, disabilities, or additional health needs and recognise that they may face additional barriers, that can include:

· assumptions that indicators of possible abuse, such as behaviour, mood and injury, relate to the child's impairment without further exploration

· these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children

· assumptions that children with SEND can be disproportionally impacted by things like bullying - without outwardly showing any signs

· communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges

· cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

· reluctance to challenge carers (professionals may over-empathise with carers because of the perceived stress of caring for a disabled child)

· disabled children often rely on a wide network of carers to meet their basic needs and therefore the potential risk of exposure to abusive behaviour can be increased

· a disabled child's understanding of abuse

· lack of choice/participation.

Children Looked After: A child is 'looked after' (in care) if they are in the care of the Local Authority for more than 24 hours. Children can be in care by agreement with parents or by order of a court. The placement providing the care can be a connected person to the child or a Local Authority approved foster carer.

Kinship Care refers to a type of care where a child who cannot be looked after by their birth parents is cared for by relatives or friends. The government in England has launched a Kinship Care Strategy to improve kinship carers' financial stability, education, training, and partnership with local authorities and other agencies.

These arrangements can be known as either family and friends care or private fostering.

Sometimes these carers will be given Parental Responsibility for the children through a Child Arrangements or Special Guardianship Order.

- Private Fostering: You're a private foster carer if you're not a close relative and you're looking after a child who's under a plan.

Virtual School Heads have a responsibility for monitoring the educational attendance, promoting education and attainment, and progress of children looked-after.

Virtual School Heads are responsible for ensuring appropriate partnership working to focus on attendance for previously looked after children and children with a social worker – defined as any child who has been assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and currently has a social worker; it also includes those who have been assessed as needing, or previously needing, a social worker within the past 6 years due to safeguarding or welfare reasons.

In line with promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) this has been extended to include the responsibilities for virtual school heads for a strategic leadership role to champion the educational attendance, attainment and progress of children with a social worker. This means that they should be:

- making visible the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience, enhancing partnerships between education settings and local authorities, including with children's social care, to help all agencies hold high aspirations for these children
- promoting practice that supports children's engagement in education, recognising that attending an education setting is an important factor in helping to keep children safe from harm
- levelling up children's outcomes to narrow the attainment gap so every child has the opportunity to reach their potential – including helping to ensure that children with a social worker benefit from support to recover educationally from the impact of the pandemic

In offering advice and information to workforces that have relationships with children with social workers, virtual school heads identify and engage with all key professionals in the Local Authority and beyond, helping them to understand the role they have in improving outcomes for children e.g. DSL and deputies, social workers, headteachers, governors, special educational needs co-ordinators, mental health leads, other Local Authority partners, including Designated Social Care Officers for SEND.

St Teresa's Catholic Academy ensures that our Designated Teacher has the appropriate training, so they are able to take the leadership of this crucial area of our safeguarding arrangements in collaboration with our Designated Safeguarding Lead which includes:

· working closely with virtual school heads to ensure that funding is best used to support the child's educational achievement and development needs that are identified in their personal education plans

· collaborating with the virtual school heads to also promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children.

· appropriate staff made aware of a child's looked after status

· ensure that necessary staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding of the child's needs

· ensure the child's record contains a clear understanding of their legal status and care arrangements, including the levels of authority delegated to their carer and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility

· keep contact details of the child's social worker, carer(s) and name and contact details of the virtual school head for DT to liaise with.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff (including governors) are required to:

- Be able to identify who the Headteacher, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Safeguarding and Child Protection Governor and the Chair of Governors are.
- Contribute to providing a safe environment where our pupils can learn and flourish.
- Contribute to supporting the pupils' best outcomes.
- Recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends, and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help to protect our pupils.
- Contribute to the preventative and safeguarding education embedded throughout our curriculum.
- Respond in accordance with our zero-tolerance approach to any sexual violence and sexual harassment, and to any indirect or direct discrimination of any kind.
- Be aware of indicators of the different forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, and any other safeguarding issues that are prevalent at a local, contextual, or national scale at the time, this includes unexplainable and/or persistence absences from education.
- Respond and take action promptly regarding safeguarding and child protection concerns, and in line with the procedures outlined in this policy and local child protection procedures, ensuring good quality and secure record keeping and effective collaboration with other agencies takes place.
- Always remain professionally curious about signs and indicators – keeping in mind that it could happen here.

St Teresa's Catholic Academy will always know where a child is based during school hours. This includes having records of the address of any alternative providers and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend. We will obtain written information from the provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at their own establishment.
As a school, we will take the lead responsibility for those pupils we place in an Alternative Provision and ensure our approach is in line with Wokingham Borough Council Alternative Provision Guidance.

All staff who work directly with pupils will read and understand Part 1 and Annex A & B of KCSIE 2025 guidance. This also applies to the governing body who should also read part 2. Staff who do not work directly with pupils will also read and understand part 1 and Annex A & B of this guidance. All staff will read and understand our staff code of conduct.

St Teresa's Catholic Academy plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by our:

· Behaviour Policy

· pastoral support system

· planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly, tackling issues such as:

· healthy and respectful relationships

· boundaries and consent

· stereotyping, prejudice, and equality

· body confidence and self-esteem

· how to recognise an abusive relationship (including coercive and controlling behaviour)

· the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and FGM and how to access support

· what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why they're always unacceptable.

The DSL will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and our systems for filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks to keep pupils safe online). Whilst one of the DSLs is referred to as the 'lead' and will coordinate the DSL team, they are all trained at the same level to always ensure that one or more of them are available to carry out all of their designated functions in safeguarding.

· Whilst all our staff are part of our safeguarding culture, it is the role of our DSL to receive information, review and make decisions about any necessary further considerations or actions needed to respond to any safeguarding matters that arise.

· The DSL will act as the main contact in our school when a child and their family are receiving support from the school, external agencies and statutory services.

· During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. DSLs can work outside of these hours when matters of support or a child protection matter arises.

· In the event that non-urgent matters arise out of school hours, our DSL can be contacted, if necessary via admin@st-teresas.wokingham.sch.uk

· When the DSL is absent, please contact school's Deputy DSL, Paris Finnegan via admin@st-teresas.wokingham.sch.uk

· If the school's DSL and deputy are not available or cannot be reached, our Safeguarding Governor, Anne-Marie Eden, can be contacted via schoolchair@st-teresas.wokingham.sch.uk

· During school holiday period the DSL will check emails and messages regularly to ensure that any safeguarding requests or queries are responded to as soon as possible

The full responsibilities of the DSL are set out in their job description, this includes:

- A good understanding of referral processes and threshold criteria, including how our local arrangements at Wokingham Borough Council work (see Appendix D).
- Making sure all staff are aware of how to raise safeguarding concerns.
- Ensuring all staff understand the indicators of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Acting as a source of support, advice, and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- A good understanding of local, contextual, and national safeguarding issues including child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and the local response and support available to support all pupils involved in sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- Take part in and/or lead early help support which may include a Families First Assessment and thereafter attend/chair Team Around the Child meetings
- Take part in strategy discussions organised by the Local Authority's Children's Social Care and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so when required
- Contribute to the assessment of children (when a child may have suffered harm or is at risk of harm)
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (Local Authority Children's Social Care, Channel Programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or Police), and support staff who make such referrals directly
- Have a good understanding of behaviours that may impact on a child's engagement and learning that may require consideration through safety/support planning, this includes the impact on themselves but also to other children
- Have a good understanding of harmful behaviours that may require risk management, safety planning and/or support in school, this includes those presented by children within the setting, their parents/carer or associated adults where necessary
- Have a good understanding of the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at our school
- Assist the Headteacher to review and respond to low-level concerns that may arise regarding staff
- Share information and/or take part in statutory processes that involve reviewing and analysing of safeguarding practice and policies. This can include meetings held by Wokingham Borough Safeguarding Board in response to significant safeguarding incidences, child death and/or where a safeguarding practice review is required to determine learning and practice analysis.
- The DSL will also:
- Keep the Headteacher informed of any issues, the conversations with children and their families,

- Liaise with universal, targeted and statutory agencies, Local Authority workers (Children's Services and other key practitioners) when there are safeguarding concerns as appropriate (includes early help and child protection)
- Share information about incidences of sexual violence and sexual harassment with statutory colleagues such as Police and Children's Social Care colleagues in order to prepare and implement the school's policies
- Be confident about what local specialist support is available to support all children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Be aware that children are entitled to have an 'Appropriate Adult' to support and help them in Police investigations or if there is threshold met for them to be searched. The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputy(s) are set out in their job description, see Annex C KCSiE

The DSL is supported by the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and the DDSL will fulfil the role of DSL in their absence.

The Governing Body

Our Governing Body and Trustee Board have a strategic role within our leadership and management team and must ensure that all staff comply with legislation and local guidance at all times.

The Governing Body/Trustee Board will:

· Facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of, and underpin, all relevant aspects of process and policy development for the setting

· Evaluate and approve this child protection policy along with other policies related to safeguarding at each review, ensuring they comply with the law, and hold the Headteacher to account for their implementation

· Evaluate and approve recommendations/action plans identified through quality assurance activity that the DSL undertakes to review safeguarding practice through audits and termly governing reports to ensure that they have regular oversight and hold the Headteacher accountable for the practice improvement

· Be aware of its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and our school's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

· Appoint a senior body level (or equivalent) lead (or link governor) to monitor the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements including policies and their implementation, in conjunction with the full governing body. This is always a different person from the DSL

· Ensure all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety according to their roles, and that such training is regularly updated and is in line with statutory guidance and Wokingham Borough Forest Safeguarding Board

· Ensure that all governors/trustees: have read Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety, and review compliance of this task at least annually and sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year to say that they have reviewed the above guidance

· Ensure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and review their effectiveness. This includes making sure that the leadership team and staff are aware of the provisions in place, and that they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training and reviewing the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting these standards.

The Governing Body will make sure:

· The DSL has the appropriate status and authority to carry out their job, including additional time, funding, training, resources and support

· Online safety is a running and interrelated theme within the whole-school approach to safeguarding and related policies

· The DSL has lead authority for safeguarding, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place

· The school has effective procedures to manage any safeguarding concerns that arise. This includes those related to child welfare concerns, low level concerns and allegations made against staff

· That this policy reflects those children with SEND, or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional barriers to any abuse or neglect being recognised

· Where another body is providing services or activities on the school site (regardless of whether or not the children who attend these services/activities are children on the school roll): & seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place and inspect them if needed to make sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the school about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate.

· Make sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the school premises, and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply.

The governing body fully recognises its responsibilities that they have in keeping pupils safe, this is set out in KCSIE (2025) and in the Governance Guide. In summary this includes:

- The safeguarding policies and procedures in our school are effective and comply with current legislation.
- All staff understand their roles and responsibilities and are able to discharge them.
- The board has sufficient knowledge and capacity to fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities.
- Governors will ensure they have strategic oversight of safeguarding and gain assurances that safeguarding is effective.
- A safeguarding governor is appointed to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements in their school. Employees of the school, therefore, *should not* take up this role, nor should associate board members.
- The safeguarding governor will undertake training to support this role.

Training

All staff, including governors receive approved safeguarding training (including online safety) so that everyone understands the expectations, applicable to their role and responsibilities. We ensure that all staff and volunteers continuous professional development (CPD) is maintained and keep a record of this. In addition to statutory training all staff receive regular updates and CPD via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings.

Safeguarding Children Induction:

Aims: To ensure that all staff/volunteers are made aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding children.

Learning Objectives: To ensure that all staff know:

- **Child protection policy:** The process for responding to all forms of harm but in particular child-on-child abuse, directly and online
- **Behaviour policy:** how to prevent prejudice-based discriminatory bullying
- **Code of conduct:** reporting low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing
- Safeguarding children **absent from education:** Looking out for patterns of repeat occasions and prolonged periods
- **Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Who are they and how to share information about concerns.

Part one KCSiE: Copies of this will be issued at induction with expectation that staff read and sign to say they understand their role in accordance with this guidance.

Annual Safeguarding Training :

Aim: To ensure that all staff and volunteers have regard for Part one of KCSiE, when carrying out their role to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Learning objectives:

1. What school and college staff should know and do
2. What school and college staff need to know

3. What school and college staff should look out for
4. What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about a child
5. What school and college staff should do if they have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another staff member
6. What school or college staff should do if they have concerns about safeguarding practices within the school or college.

Staff roles and responsibilities to keep children safe:

- be aware of their local **early help process**
- aware of **how to make referrals** to Children's Social Care for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989
- **what to do** if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected
- maintain an appropriate level of **confidentiality**
- be able to **reassure victims** that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- staff to **build trusted relationships** which facilitate communication with children, young people and their families
- fulfil all responsibilities as described in KCSIE 2025
- awareness and incorporate signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, specific safeguarding issues and online safety, including filtering and monitoring into briefings
- increasing awareness of key policies and the systems we use at school to support effective safeguarding arrangements.

Universal (Level 1) Safeguarding Training for all staff will take place every three years, formally by an external approved provider but safeguarding training and awareness will take place regularly and at least annually throughout the academic year. This will include dissemination of key information from the DSL and DDSL, such as from DSL network meetings and briefings. Staff will complete and keep up to date with other key safeguarding training including, Prevent, FGM and online safety.

The DSL and DDSL will have undertaken, as a minimum, the 'Targeted (Level 3) Designated Safeguarding Lead Training' by an external approved provider. This will be updated every two years in accordance with guidance. Our governors will complete the Safeguarding for Governors every three years, Prevent and Safer Recruitment training.

Designated Safeguarding Lead Training:

Aim: To ensure that DSL (and deputies) have regard for Annex C, Keeping Children Safe in Education when carrying out their role to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Learning objectives: To ensure that DSL/DDSL understands their duties in accordance with their job specification in relation to:

1. Availability
2. Manage referrals
3. Working with others

4. Information sharing and managing the child protection file
5. Raising awareness
6. Training, knowledge, and skills
7. Providing support to staff
8. Understanding the views of children
9. Holding and sharing information.

Procedures

Our procedures are in accordance with the relevant statutory guidance including:

- KCSIE (2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- The Prevent Duty
- The Pan Berkshire Child Protection Procedures
- EYFS Foundation Statutory Framework

To support our safeguarding and child protection procedures the key contacts information is regularly communicated to our pupils, staff, parents/carers, and governors.

Procedures in this policy are supported by other school policies (appendix B & E) and our approach to safeguarding of **"it could happen here".** We recognise that some children have an increased risk of abuse and additional barriers and vulnerabilities including SEND children and those with a social worker or those who have had a social worker previously. Our procedures and school ethos are child-centred, and decisions are made in the best interests of the child, as we strive to protect, and raise educational outcomes and aspirations for each child equally regardless of any barriers they may face.

In all cases, if staff are unsure, they should always speak to the DSL or DDSL

Our commitment to safeguarding our pupils and supporting our staff in their safeguarding responsibility applies during the school day, before and after school activities (on or off school site), and when our school facilities are used by another provider, such as a football coach.

Activities directly run under the supervision or management of school staff, the school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection as written in this policy apply.

Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, the governing body will seek assurances that the provider concerned meets the requirements of keeping children safe in after-school clubs, community activities and tuition guidance (also referred to as out-of-school settings). This will include making sure that they have appropriate policies and procedures in place for safeguarding children and child protection and that there are arrangements to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate. This will be included in a lease/licence or hire agreement, and any failure to comply would lead to termination of the agreement. If we receive an allegation of an incident happening while an individual or organisation was using the school premises to run activities for children, we will follow our safeguarding policies and procedures and inform our LADO.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Trusted relationships are at the heart of working with children and their families at St Teresa's Catholic Academy. We strive to uphold good practice and work in partnership with children and families, communicating effectively and listening well so that we have sufficient information to understand and be able to meet their needs.

An open culture is imperative when deciding whether to share information and it is important to get the lawful basis right. The legal framework can appear complex, and a lack of clarity can lead practitioners to assume, incorrectly, that no information can be shared because consent has not been provided. Our school understands the lawful basis in which our DSLs can share information with other people, agencies and organisations about the children and families we are supporting.

In line with our principles of working with families outlined above, we strive to be transparent, open and clear when we need to discuss any information or concerns that worry us about a child's wellbeing. If we feel that we need to share information, we will explain how information will be shared or used so that families can make an informed choice about whether to consent.

If we feel that we need to share information with services due to concerns about a child's safety or welfare to provide the family with specific support, we will be upfront, transparent and honest about our concerns and the ways in which such services could help the family. We will endeavour to support and encourage the family to consent and engage with such support. We believe that this collaborative approach will support children to have the confidence to speak up and share their views as well as encouraging parents and carers of children at our school to have a willingness to engage with services that provide support.

We recognise that the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and UK GDPR does not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and that timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.

We will ensure that our confidentiality protocols are in line with the following guidance:

For organisations | ICO and DfE non statutory information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents/carers do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parents/carers to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the DSL or Headteacher.

We will ensure that the information is only shared on a 'need to know' basis, including Domestic Abuse notifications and Operation Encompass. Operation Encompass supports communication between the Police and School regarding where a child has experienced

a domestic abuse incident, ensuring that as a school we are able to put in place support for the child, as appropriate.

In situations where our professional or legal duty is exercised to share certain information in the absence of consent, we will inform them as soon as possible if it is safe and appropriate to do so. We will be clear about what we have shared, with whom, the reasons why and how the information will be used.

In any situation where a child or their parent/carer object to consent or particular information sharing and we decide that it is proportionate to do so, a clear rationale, outlining our decisions and the reasons why, will be recorded on the child's file.

In situations where there are allegations of child-on-child abuse, we will notify the parents or carers of all the children involved. If a child or group of children have suffered significant harm or are considered at risk of harm either directly or online we will have a duty to consider making a referral to Children's Social Care and the Police if a crime has been committed.

In addition to sharing information, our DSLs will endeavour to arrange a meeting with the parents and carers of all children to share information about the incident, plan safety strategies and/or risk management plans. Our DSLs will endeavour to keep families up to date and provide reassurance on any measures being taken, whilst respecting the privacy of each individual child involved.

The **seven golden rules of information sharing** are:

1. **Data Protection Laws Are Not a Barrier**: Understand that sharing information is essential and lawful under data protection laws.
2. **Be Open and Transparent**: Communicate openly about the information sharing process.
3. **Seek Advice When Unsure**: If in doubt, consult with a knowledgeable person or authority.
4. **Share with Consent When Possible**: Always aim to obtain consent before sharing information.
5. **Balance Safety and Privacy**: Consider the safety of individuals while respecting their privacy.
6. **Share Information in a Necessary, Proportionate, Relevant, Timely, and Secure Manner**: Ensure that the information shared is appropriate for the situation.
7. **Document the Sharing Process and Rationale**: Keep a record of what information was shared, with whom, and why.

These rules help ensure that information is shared responsibly and ethically.

The following principles apply to St Teresa's Catholic Academy confidentiality agreement:

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.

- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 does not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe
- if staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent; or if to gain consent would place a child at risk
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment:
- Even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there is another legal basis under the Data Protection Act that applies
- The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children
- The DSL should consider the following points:

· Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the child at greater risk)

· The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care where the child resides

· Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the Police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the Police remains.

- Regarding anonymity, all staff will:

· Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system

·Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved

·Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities

· Have regard for the Government's publication Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information with all relevant parties.

If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they can seek advice from our Headteacher, DSL or any person in a position of senior leadership or wider DSL team.

Record Keeping

We will keep accurate, written records of all concerns about pupils (noting the date, location, details of the incident), details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, actions taken, the rationale for decision making, decisions reached and the outcome.

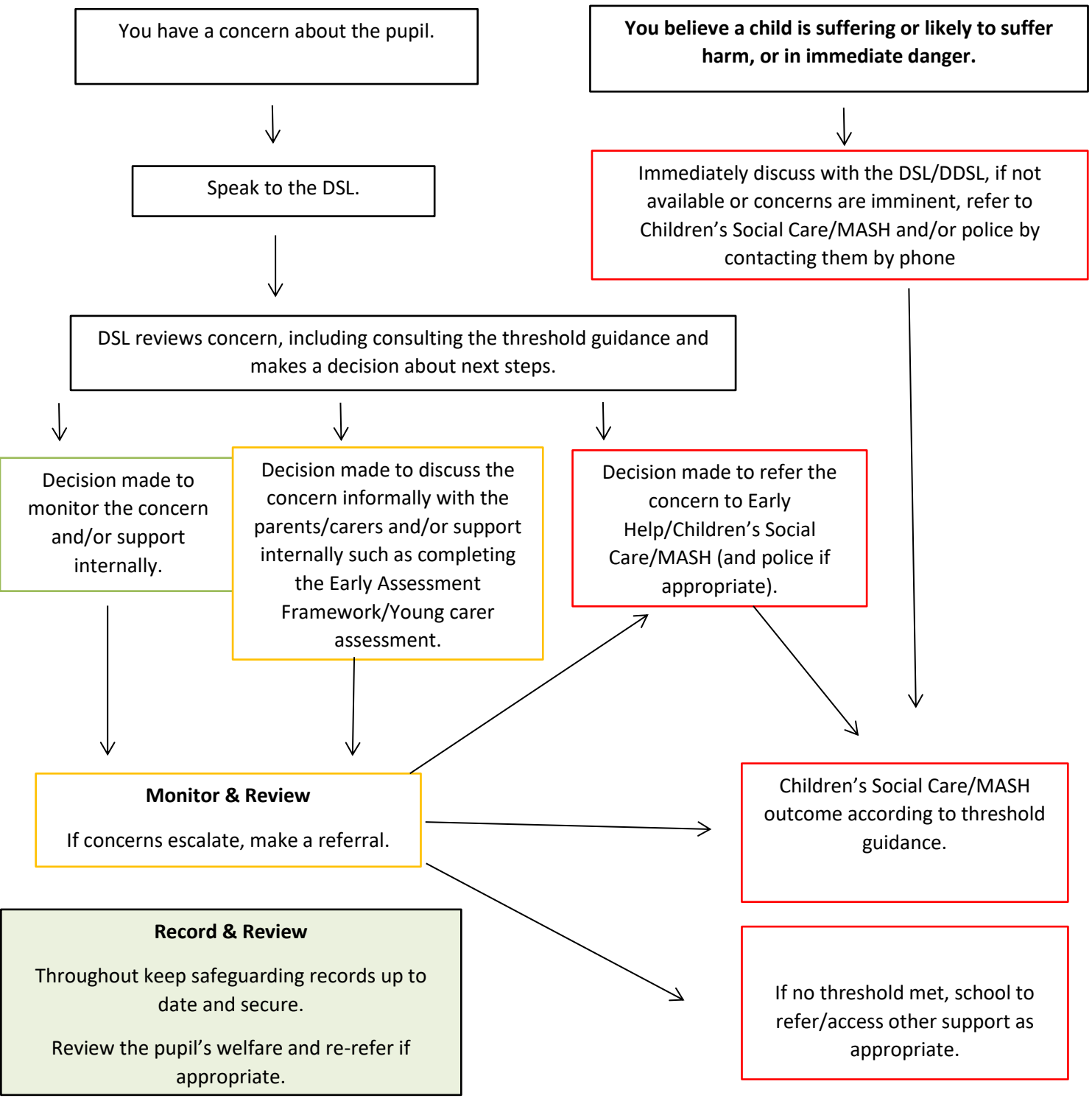
We will ensure concerns and referral records are kept securely, in a separate child protection file for each child. Records will also include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concerns. At St Teresa's we use the online Safeguarding system CPOMs

In all cases of sharing information, we take into consideration sharing only the information that is necessary, proportionate for the intended purpose, relevant, adequate, and accurate.

All relevant child protection records are sent to the receiving school or establishment within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term when a pupil moves schools. These will be sent securely and separately from the main pupil file, and a confirmation receipt will be obtained. These records will include details of all referrals and involvement including as a minimum, from Children's Social Care, the Youth Justice Team, and Early Help (regardless of the outcome of these referrals).

Procedure for when you are concerned about a pupil

We define safeguarding as: protecting children from maltreatment (including within and outside of the home and online), ensuring they can develop mentally, physically, and socially in a safe environment, further enabling them to have the best outcomes. Staff will take action immediately and appropriately if they have any concerns about a child, providing help and support as soon as problems emerge. (Also reference figure 1 KCSIE 2025)



Procedure for FGM, Preventing Radicalisation and Mental Health

There is an FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015). FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse.

The Prevent Duty (2023) (under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015)) requires schools to have due to regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, extremist ideology, and racialisation.

Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils. Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

FGM	**Radicalisation**	**Mental Health**
If you discover that FGM has taken place, or a pupil is at risk of FGM **any teacher must immediately report this to the police.** Following this, contact will then be made to Children's Social Care. Unless they have been specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate. **Any other member of staff** who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out they must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedure. **Any member of staff** who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out should speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.	If there is an immediate threat, call 999. If you have concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation, discuss this with the DSL immediately. This may then include making a Prevent referral preventreferralswokinghaml@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk.	If you have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern and/or the wider safeguarding concern is further impacting on the pupil's mental health, follow the process. If you have a mental health concern that is **not** also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL to agree a course of action.

Child-on-Child Abuse

Our zero-tolerance approach to any form of child-on-child abuse is supported by our pastoral curriculum, PSHE curriculum, relationships, sex and health education, behaviour policy and our On-line safety Policy.

All staff recognise that children can abuse their peers (both online and offline) including, bullying, abuse in intimate personal relationships between children, physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual violence and harassment, consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, upskirting, initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Children can report abuse confidentially via the 'Can I tell you' box that is in every classroom or by speaking to a trusted adult in school.

If a concern is raised relating to the nudes/semi nudes, we will respond in accordance with Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

We recognise that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning their gender are at greater risk. Pupils with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and are 3 times more likely to be abused than their peers and we offer additional support for these pupils when necessary.

Safeguarding concerns involving pupils with SEND will require close liaison with the DSL and/or DDSL and the SENCo.

Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Harmful Sexual Behaviour

We will respond appropriately to all reports and concerns about sexual violence and/or sexual harassment both online and offline, including those that have happened outside of the school/college. We are clear that sexual abuse, violence, and harassment is not acceptable, and will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.

Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment should be taken seriously, staff are aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys.

Procedure for child-on-child abuse

We will follow the procedure, but we will ensure in all cases:

- The DSL is informed.
- All staff understand and will challenge inappropriate behaviour between children.
- Our response to child-on-child abuse will be immediate and supportive for all involved, and we will work with key agencies if appropriate to mitigate any further risks (such as; parents/carers, Police, Children's Social Care).
- All allegations will be thoroughly investigated by the DSL/DDSL are their findings will be recorded on CPOMs.
- We will reassure victims that they are taken seriously and will be supported and kept safe. A risk assessment if appropriate will be created for all involved.

Online Safety and Filtering

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the four categories of risk:

1. **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, and extremism. Exposure to misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
2. **Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
3. **Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g., consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
4. **Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.

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

Online Safety Procedure

- If staff have safeguarding concerns linked with online safety and/or filtering and monitoring, they must report these to the DSL promptly.
- This will then be recorded appropriately on CPOMs.
- St Teresa's Catholic Academy will take the appropriate action to meet the cyber security standards and apply guidance about Generative AI

Our online safety procedure is further supported by:

- The DSL, SLT, Governors, and IT provider have a lead role in the effectiveness of our filtering and monitoring, but this is supported by our whole school community.
- We have robust processes (including filtering and monitoring systems).
- We protect and educate the whole school community in its responsible and safe use of technology, including mobile and smart technology.
- We set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community.
- We establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate.
- We regularly reviewing our filtering and monitoring systems (at least annually).
- Meeting the filtering and monitoring standards Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Meeting the cyber security standards Cyber security training for school staff - NCSC.GOV.UK. In addition, we will ensure at least one governor has completed the

cyber security training. - Cyber security and governance | National Governance Association

- Meeting Generative AI guidance and : https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-technology-for-your-school
- Regular staff training (at induction and throughout the year) on online safety, safeguarding issues linked to the online world and filtering and monitoring.
- Regular online safety education for staff, pupils and parents/carers.
- We communicate to our parents/carers on online safety and filtering and monitoring.

Attendance

Through our **Attendance Policy**, we have a robust system for monitoring attendance which is in line with the latest national attendance guidance and will act to address absenteeism with parents/carers and pupils promptly and identify any safeguarding issues arising. We involve the local authority Education Welfare Service at appropriate stages.

All children attending our school are required to have a minimum of two identified emergency contacts. Any pupil whose absence is causing concern and where it has not been possible to make contact with a parent/carer, will be reported as a Child Missing in Education (CME) using the Local Authority **CME Protocol**.
Any absence of a pupil who is currently subject to a child protection or child in need plan is immediately referred to their social worker.

Schools should only report a pupil as CME, and failing to return to school following a leave of absence, if they are unable to reach the family or have any communications from the family within the first 24hrs after the pupil should have been back in school. If within the first day of absence the school are unable to locate the family via any means of communication and have conducted an unsuccessful door knock to their home address then the school's safety protocol should be followed, and a MASH referral and Police referral made if appropriate. If the family contact school to confirm they experienced delays and need to extend the absence the pupil should not be reported as CME.
St Teresa's Catholic Academy will refer to the CME guidance CME & School Exit form E-Referral Form Guidance.pdf

St Teresa's Catholic Academy has a mandatory duty to inform the local authority if they become aware that a child under the age of 16 years is living with someone other than their parent, step-parent, aunt, uncle or grandparent for a period of more than 28 days. This is defined as being a private fostering arrangement.

All staff, parents/carers and children are made aware of the school's complaints and Escalation processes, which can be activated in the event of concerns not being resolved after the first point of contact.

- We will closely monitor the attendance of all our pupils, but specifically those pupils with additional vulnerability factors. We will monitor attendance in a continuum for example, those that are absent from school, those with unexplainable absences and/or those children persistently/severely absent from education.
- We will ensure that we follow our attendance policy and procedures set out within the policy. Our attendance policy can be accessed via our website which is in line with Working together to improve school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- We will work closely with Wokingham Borough Education Welfare Service regarding attendance.
- When a child is missing from education, the school will follow the procedure as set out in Wokingham Borough Children Missing Education guidance.
- For those pupils who have a social worker and/or a youth justice worker, if there are any unauthorised absences, suspensions, or a potential of a permanent exclusion we will inform Children's Social Care and any other professionals, as appropriate.

- We will work closely with the Local Authority and ensure that our attendance system flags suspensions and any potential permanent exclusions for those children on a CiN and/or CP plan.
- When a child is accessing an alternative provision, we remain responsible for the safeguarding of that child. St Teresa's Catholic Academy will ensure that the provision has secure and robust safeguarding arrangements in place and meets the needs of the child. A member of staff, from school, will regularly visit the provision and meet with the child to hear their voice and ensure regular attendance. We will follow guidance as noted in Alternative provision - GOV.UK

Exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) are forms of child abuse and if we suspect a pupil is being exploited, we will respond immediately which can include:

- Contacting the Police and/or Children's Social Care

Critical Incidents, including a child death

In the event of a critical incident, we will take immediate action which will include contacting the Wokingham MASH team, to ensure an appropriate, multi-agency response. If we are aware of a child death (whether expected or unexpected), we will contact the MASH team.

Working Together
We will take an active role and work collaboratively with key agencies regarding child protection, safeguarding, education, welfare, and attendance matters. We will provide written reports at child protection conferences and core groups.

Local key agencies include but not limited to:

- Safeguarding our Schools Team
- Education Welfare Service
- Youth Justice Team
- Wokingham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Children's Social Care
- Alternative Provision Providers
- SEMH Inclusion Team
- Wokingham Special Education Needs Department
- Public Health Team
- Virtual School
- Young Carers Service
- Police
- LADO
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Foundry College
- ASSIST
- Emotional Wellbeing Hub

For those pupils who have a social worker and/or youth justice worker, we will notify the Youth Justice Team and/or Children's Social Care if:

- A suspension and/or exclusion is a possible next step.
- If there are unexplainable and/or persistent/severe absences from education, unauthorised absence, or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.
- There is a change in the pupil's behaviour and/or circumstances that raises safeguarding concerns.
- The provision in place requires review.

As a school, we have an appointed Designated Teacher (a senior teaching staff member) and will work collaboratively with the Virtual School to improve the educational outcomes for these pupils by monitoring attendance, progress, and attainment, ensuring the Personal Education Plan's (PEPs) are completed in a timely manner and meetings take place. The DT will act as an advocate for the CLA, PCLA and Kinship and will also work with partners to raise aspirations for this cohort of children. As a school, we will communicate in a timely manner with the Virtual School regarding any concerns and notify of any suspensions or risk of a permanent exclusion in order to discuss next steps.

As a school will be aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult while being questioned or detained by the Police (Police statutory guidance, PACE Code C 2019).

We will follow Resolving Professional Difference of Opinion and Escalation policy as necessary Resolving Professional Difference of Opinion and Escalation (proceduresonline.com) to ensure we can learn and understand the decision-making process of other agencies as well as challenge sensitively to ensure our pupil's welfare and safety is paramount.

Communication with Parents/Carers

When working with parents/carers, our approach will be in line with the four principles set out in the statutory guidance; Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

In addition:

- Ensure that parents/carers are informed of the responsibility placed on the school and staff in relation to child protection.
- Undertake appropriate discussion with parents/carers, including prior to involvement of another agency unless the circumstances preclude this action. If the school believes that notifying parents/carers could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the situation, advice will be sought from Children's Social Care.
- Regularly communicate key safeguarding education relevant to parents/carers, including how to support their child in being safe at school, in the community and online. We will also make them aware of our filtering and monitoring systems.

Our principles include, but are not limited to:

Promoting effective partnership working with parents and carers e.g. build strong, positive, trusting, and co-operative relationships by:

- approaching families and their wider family networks and communities with empathy, respect, compassion, and creativity
- avoiding reinforcing family shame, suffering, and blame
- making efforts to understand the impact of the parental trauma influencing the dynamics and experiences of the family
- using strength-based approaches, working with parents and carers to identify what is working well and how their strengths could support them to effect positive change
- ensuring we work sensitively with parents, carers, and children, to identify and understand the impact of adversity and trauma in their lives; seeking to understand how adversity and trauma might manifest and affect children and parent's engagement and use their expertise to adapt their response with care and compassion
- adapting our responses to meet the diverse needs of parents and carers, including fathers and male carers, and the specific challenges being faced, including parents and carers of disabled children, and where harm is outside the home
- ensuring we understand the family's background, ethnicity, religion, financial situation, ability, education, sex, ages and sexual orientation, and potential barriers these create in seeking and accessing help and support
- being alert and recognising where parents or carers may not be acting in the best interest of the child or where children may be experiencing abuse, neglect, and exploitation as a result of actions by parents, carers, or other individuals in their lives.

Practitioners use their skills and expertise to adapt their response to secure engagement
- being mindful of negative stereotypes when making decisions which might lead to false assumptions.

Communicating effectively verbally and non-verbally by:

- communicating with respect, being clear, curious and inclusive; adapting to parent's and carer's needs
- providing materials to children, parents, carers, and families which are jargon free, developmentally appropriate and in a format that is easily understood
- ensuring any materials, such as minutes or reports, capture the school's contribution but also those from the children, parents and carers which must include their views and wishes
- supporting families to access support to translate information where English is not their first language. Our school will access interpreters where needed including British Sign Language.

Empowering our parents and carers to participate in decision-making to help, support and protect children by:

- creating a safe culture which is an open and accepting forum free from discriminatory or prejudicial judgements
- ensuring the open culture is one which still provides reflection and challenge where the information has the potential to be a risk or influencing factor which may impact on a child's safety and wellbeing
- asking families for their perspective on a situation or issue that arises, ensuring we consider their point of view and factor this in when thinking about support
- promote families' rights to support through use of advocates, family members or a supporter
- ensuring parents and carers are fully aware of who will attend meetings and discussions, if the child will be invited to participate, and the format of the meeting or discussion
- giving parents and carers adequate preparation at every stage, relevant information, a safe and appropriate environment for participation, and suitable access arrangements
- signposting parents and carers to sources of help and support available locally or through the Local Authority
- provide opportunities for feedback and review to ensure acknowledgement of positive progress but also reviewing and discussion of any new or increasing issues to readapt a family's plans
- being transparent about our concerns and why we may need to request support from an outside agency; and the potential actions should our concerns increase for the children

- helping parents and carers to understand what the issues are and how these impact on the child, what decisions could be made, what changes need to be made, why and how, timescales and possible outcomes
- providing information about different types of support, what it involves and expects from parents and carers so they can make an informed choice and decision about which support pathways will be more helpful and effective for them.

Safer Recruitment, low-Level concerns, and allegations against staff and volunteers (ASV)

We will operate safer recruitment practices including ensuring appropriate DBS, identity checks and reference checks for all staff and volunteers are undertaken according to the government statutory guidance in part three and part four of KCSIE (2025) and the **Local Authority's Safer Recruitment Toolkit**. Our recruitment procedures aim to deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment, or volunteering opportunities in our school.

One member of staff on the recruitment panel will have completed Safer Recruitment training and the school will adhere to all checks including online checks of all potential new staff at the shortlisting stage in accordance with Safer Recruitment protocols.

All allegations against staff and volunteers will be managed confidentially and taken seriously. Where necessary, advice will be sought from both the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Human Resources.

We will adhere to the School Low Level Concerns policy where there may be a concern regarding a member of staff, supply staff, volunteer, or contractor when:

- The concern may be inconsistent with the staff code of conduct.
- The concern does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

The purpose of this low level concerns policy is to embed a culture of openness, trust, and transparency in which the school's values and expected behaviour set out in the staff code of conduct are lived, monitored, and reinforced constantly by all staff.

If we are in any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about a member of staff conduct, low-level concern or whether this meets the harm threshold, we will consult with our MAT HR Team and the LADO as appropriate.

We will ensure that all staff read and understand our staff code of conduct, low level concerns policies and whistleblowing policy.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them:

• general advice on whistleblowing can be found at whistleblowing for employees

• the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally, or have

concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their school or college. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – and the line is available from 08:00 to 20:00 Monday to Friday, and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends. The email address is help@nspcc.org.uk.

Low-level concerns should be reported to the DSL or DDSL. Low-level concerns and allegations against staff will be recorded securely and will be managed confidentially, and on a need-to-know basis only.

All staff and volunteers will be aware that sexual relationships with pupils aged under 18 are unlawful and could result in legal proceedings taken against them under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Abuse of Trust).

The school will ensure that communication between pupils and adults, is via school devices and platforms only and that communication is transparent and takes place within clear and explicit professional boundaries and are open to scrutiny.

Procedure for managing safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, volunteers, contractors, and out-of-school setting providers

All staff must know how to recognise an allegation and who to report to.

ALLEGATION

This might arise as a complaint, grievance, suspicion, concern, during discussions from child, parent, member of staff or member of the public.

If an allegation concerns the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors takes action

Report to Headteacher / Chair of Governors

Discussion between Headteacher and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

- Do not tell anyone, particularly the staff involved.
- Take advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) before taking any action.
- Make initial enquiries only.
- Do not investigate or interview.
- Usual principles of confidentiality apply.
- Deal objectively with everything.
- Existing loyalties must be put to one side.
- Think the unthinkable, believe the unbelievable.
- Keep detailed records of actions and statements at all stages.

Refer back to school

(keeping in line with low level concern policy)

Referral form to LADO

The next course of action and timescales are agreed at this point. Consider also:

- information for the adult, witnesses, child/young person, and parents/carers
- on-going support for the member of staff, pupil and parents/carers
- statements, if needed, for the whole staff, community, and press

NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline
0800 028 0285

Appendix A

Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation (extracted from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

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. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

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 the 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.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): Forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal or sexual activity. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CCE and CSE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. Early identification within educational settings is critical, as schools are often the first place where changes in behaviour, attendance, or wellbeing can be noticed. Staff play a vital role in recognising signs of exploitation and ensuring timely intervention and support.

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).

KCSIE -Annex B contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse, exploitation and safeguarding issues. School and college leaders and those staff who work directly with children should read Annex B

Appendix B

Linked policies (this is not intended to be an exhaustive list):

- Attendance policy
- Behaviour policy
- Children absent from education policy and procedures
- Complaints procedure
- Equalities policy
- Health and safety policy and other linked policies and risk assessments, including first aid
- Information governance/data protection policy
- Low level concerns policy
- Medical conditions & administration of medicines policy
- Mobile phone and smart technology policy
- Offsite activities and educational visits policy and risk assessments
- Online safety policy (including filtering and monitoring)
- Personal & intimate care policy
- Physical education and sports guidance
- Positive handling and physical intervention policy and guidance
- Premises inspection checklist
- PSHE policy
- Relationships and sex education policy
- Safer Recruitment
- Special educational needs and disabilities policy
- Staff code of conduct/behaviour policy
- Staff disciplinary policy and procedures/disciplinary rules
- Whistleblowing policy

Appendix C

Specific Safeguarding Issues (this is not an exhaustive list, please refer to Keeping Children Safe in Education, in particular Annex B)

Bullying including cyber bullying

Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Children and the court system

Children missing from Education

Children of substance misusing parents/carers

County lines

Domestic abuse

Substance abuse

Fabricated or induced illness

Formal complaint policy

Children with family members in prison

Faith abuse

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Forced Marriage Gangs and Youth Violence

Gang Activity

Gender based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)

Hate crime

Mental health

Homelessness

Health and well-being

Young Carer

So called 'Honour-based' abuse

Child-on-Child abuse

Consensual and non-consensual sharing of indecent images/nude/semi-nude images/videos

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools

Private fostering

Preventing radicalisation (The Prevent Duty)

Online abuse including indecent images/nude/semi-nude images/videos

Teenage relationship abuse

Trafficking

Missing children and vulnerable adults

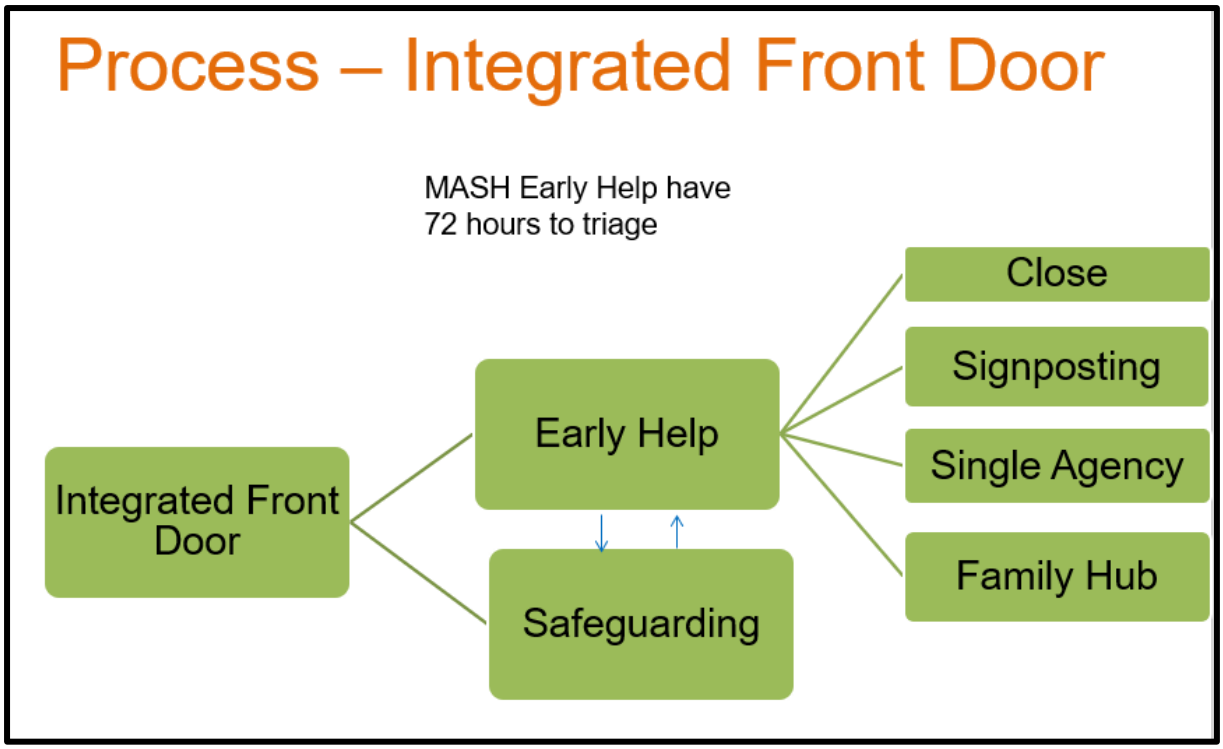
Child sexual abuse within the family

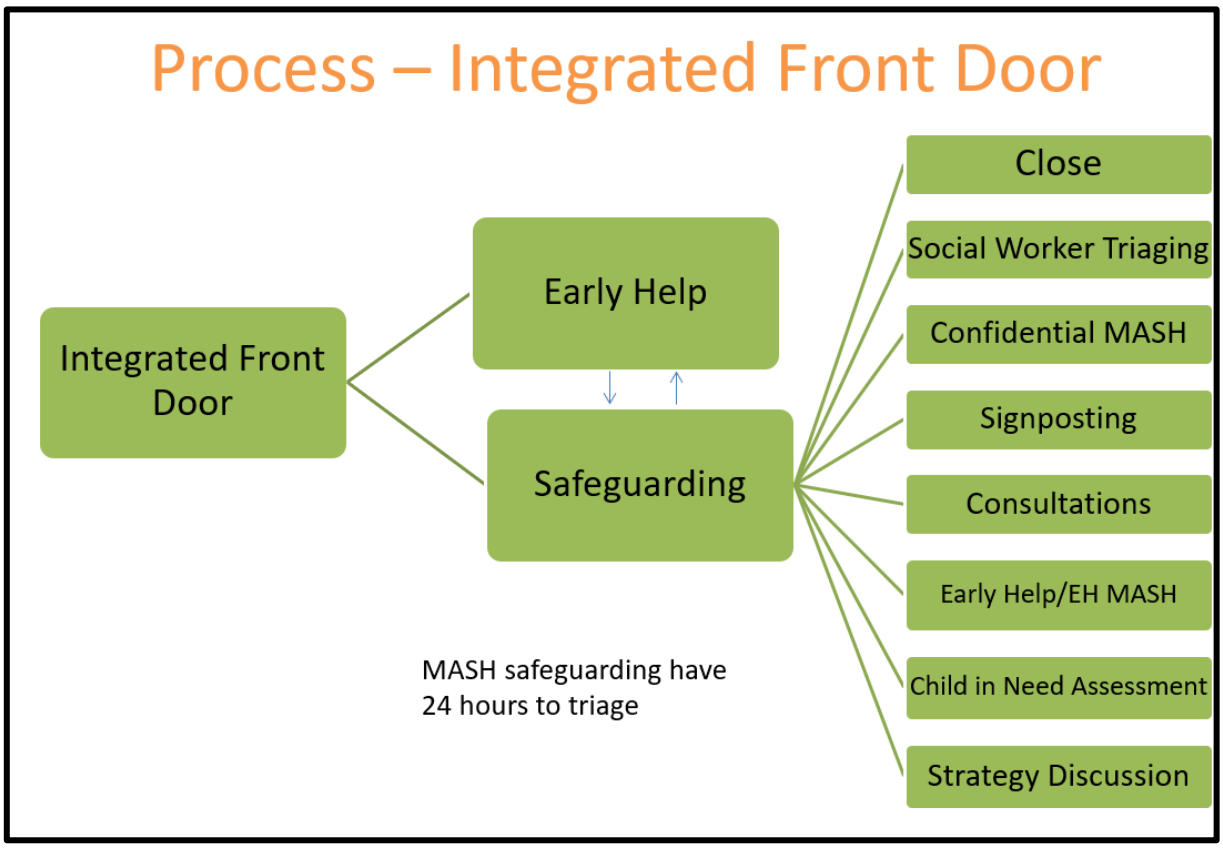
Poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children

Serious violence

Cyber crime

Appendix D


Process – Integrated Front Door
MASH Early Help have
72 hours to triage
Integrated Front Door
Early Help
Safeguarding
Close
Signposting
Single Agency
Family Hub


Process – Integrated Front Door
Integrated Front Door
Early Help
Safeguarding
Close
Social Worker Triaging
Confidential MASH
Signposting
Consultations
Early Help/EH MASH
Child in Need Assessment
Strategy Discussion
MASH safeguarding have
24 hours to triage

Appendix E

Links to Further Guidance:

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education - GOV.UK
Alternative provision - GOV.UK

Behaviour in schools guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Berkshire Child Protection Procedures http://berks.proceduresonline.com/

Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

DfE harmful online challenges and hoaxes Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025) Keeping children safe in education 2025 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

DfE non statutory information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people,parents and carers (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Emotional Wellbeing Hub https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing-services/health-services-and-advice/health-and-wellbeing-children-and-young-people/emotional-wellbeing-hub

Farrer & Co addressing-child-on-child-abuse.pdf (farrer.co.uk)

Governance Guides Maintained schools governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and Academy trust governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

HM Government - Multi-agency statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Keeping children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition: non-statutory guidance for providers running out-of-school settings - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Keeping children safe: code of practice (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Multi Agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (July 2020) – Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/harmful-sexual-behaviour-framework

Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Serious Violence Home Office Strategy https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (updated March 2024) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Home - Shore
Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Teaching online safety in schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Plan technology for your school - GOV.UK

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (Advice for Practitioners, March 2015) - Stat guidance template (publishing.service.gov.uk)
Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Wokingham Alternative Provision Guidance https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/children-families-and-young-people/send-local-offer/help-learning/send-education-options/alternative-provision

Wokingham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/community/community-and-safety/prevent-safeguarding-against-extremism-and-terrorism/safeguarding-and-referral

Wokingham Threshold Guidance https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/threshold-guidance/wokingham-threshold-guidance

Wokingham Carers Guidance https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/children-families-and-young-people/children-and-families/family-support/young-carers

Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)
Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK