Safeguarding Policy

Version 16

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Name of School

NAMED PERSONS IN SCHOOL/UTC WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD PROTECTION

Designated Safeguarding Lead	
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	
Governor responsible for Safeguarding	
Trustee responsible for Safeguarding	**Heather Wain**
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	**Local Authority Officer (LADO)** **Telephone: 01302 737332** **Email: LADO@doncaster.gov.uk**

Contents

1 Introduction and scope of policy....4
2 Roles and responsibilities....6
3 Providing a safe and helpful environment....10
3.2 Safe Practice 11
3.3 Sharing Safeguarding Information with Pupils/ Students 12
3.4 Partnership with Parents 12
3.5 Partnerships with Others 13
3.6 School Training and Staff Induction 13
3.7 Support, Advice and Guidance for Staff 16
3.8 Online Safety 16
3.9 Children who are questioning their gender 18
3.10 Related Policies 20
3.11 Student/Pupil Information 20
3.12 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 22
3.13 Allergies and Anaphylaxis 23
4 Identifying children and young people who may be suffering significant harm....23
4.1 Definitions 26
5 Taking action to ensure that children are safe at school/UTC and at home....33
5.1 Staff will immediately report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead 33
5.2 Responding to Disclosure 33
5.3 Action by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or other senior person in their absence) 34
5.4 Action following a child protection referral 36
5.5 Recording and Monitoring 36
5.6 Supporting the Child and Partnership with Parents/Carers 38
5.7 Allegations regarding Person(s) working in or on behalf of the Trust (Including supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers, agency staff and contractors) 38
5.8 Low level concerns 39
5.9 Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children and those with a Social Worker 40
5.10 Work Experience 41
5.11 Staying with Host Families 42
5.12 Child-on-Child Abuse 42
5.13 Child-on-Child Sexual Violence and Harassment 43
5.14 Physical Intervention and Use of Reasonable Force 44
5.15 Alternative Provision 45
5.16 Private Fostering 45
5.17 Remote Learning and Off-Site Digital Safeguarding 46
APPENDIX A – SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT RECORDING SHEET 47
APPENDIX B – Notification of Suspected, Admitted or Known Abuse of Child(ren) to Children's Social Care 49
APPENDIX C – ACTIONS WHERE THERE ARE CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD 51

APPENDIX D – ALLEGATIONS / CONCERNS ABOUT ADULTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN 53
APPENDIX E – ADULT ACCESS TO STUDENTS 55
APPENDIX F – PREVENT DUTY AND RADICALISATION 57
APPENDIX G – CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE) AND CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) 59
APPENDIX H – HONOUR OR FAITH-BASED ABUSE (HBA) 60
APPENDIX I – ATTENDANCE, CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME) AND SAFEGUARDING 62
APPENDIX J – MAKING OR SHARING NUDES OR SEMI-NUDES, INCLUDING AI-GENERATED OR MANIPULATED IMAGERY 65
APPENDIX K – INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT, SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT 67
APPENDIX L – A CONTINUUM OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS 70
APPENDIX M – IMPORTANT SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS – DONCASTER 71

1 Introduction and scope of policy

The Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust (BFLPT) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Each student's/pupil's welfare is of paramount importance. We recognise that some children may be extremely vulnerable to abuse e.g., those with Special Educational Needs, those living in difficult circumstances. We recognise that children who are abused or neglected may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to reach certain key milestones in their physical, social and emotional development. We acknowledge from research that some children who have experienced abuse may harm others. We will always take a measured approach to ensure that we can support all students. Our ethos prioritises prevention to ensure that children feel safe and comfortable, and that children are aware that there are adults in the school/UTC who can help them if they are frightened or in distress. As a trust, we will strive to ensure that PSHE, SMSC, and RSE are included in the curriculum to teach students with the skills they need to stay safe, which includes our prevent duty. The procedures contained in this policy apply to all employees, visitors, Trustees and Governors of the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust and are consistent with those of Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership (formerly DSCB).

Statutory Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with current legislation, statutory guidance and local safeguarding arrangements, including:

- Education Act 2002, including Sections 157 and 175;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE);
- Children Act 1989 and 2004;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- Academy Trust Handbook 2026 (effective from 1 October 2026)
- Equality Act 2010;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025;
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Prevent Duty;
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003;
- Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, including the statutory information-sharing duty and any associated statutory guidance in force;
- relevant statutory guidance relating to attendance and children missing from education;
- relevant statutory guidance relating to alternative provision;
- relevant statutory guidance relating to safer recruitment and regulated activity;
- Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures;
- South Yorkshire safeguarding procedures and locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust's Designated Safeguarding Leads and updated where necessary to reflect changes to legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements and emerging safeguarding risks.

The Trust will work in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and will work collaboratively with the relevant local safeguarding partners, Children's Social Care, Early Help and Family Help services and other agencies to ensure that children and families receive appropriate help, support and protection.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. The Trust adopts a child-centred approach and works on the principle that "it could happen here".

The best interests of the child should be at the heart of safeguarding practice across the Trust. Staff should remain professionally curious and consider the wider context when responding to safeguarding concerns.

Equality Legislation and Safeguarding
The Trust recognises the significance of the Equality Act 2010 to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
Schools/UTCs within the Trust:

- must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils/students because of their protected characteristics;
- will consider how they are supporting pupils/students with protected characteristics and whether any additional safeguarding risks or barriers exist; and
- will take positive action, where proportionate, to address disadvantages experienced by pupils/students with protected characteristics.

This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled children and taking appropriate action where there is evidence that particular groups of pupils/students are disproportionately affected by safeguarding risks, including sexual violence, sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination or other harmful behaviour.

The Trust will promote an inclusive and anti-discriminatory safeguarding culture. Staff will challenge racism, discrimination, prejudice and derogatory behaviour and will consider whether such behaviour may indicate a wider safeguarding concern.

Staff should recognise that children may experience prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice, faith-targeted abuse and other forms of discriminatory behaviour. Such experiences may have a significant impact on a child's welfare, wellbeing, mental health, sense of safety and willingness to seek help. Staff should be alert to the signs and impact of prejudice-based harm and ensure that concerns are considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate.

This policy is in line with the relevant Safeguarding Partnership's Child Protection Procedures, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and other relevant statutory guidance. The policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust's Designated Safeguarding Leads.

The Trust will work in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) and will support the relevant local authority Early Help and Family Help arrangements to ensure that pupils/students receive the most appropriate support, referral and access to services.

Early Help and Family Help provide support to children and families where this can improve resilience and outcomes, reduce the likelihood of problems escalating and prevent the need for statutory intervention where appropriate. Staff will understand the local arrangements for accessing Early Help and Family Help and will work collaboratively with relevant professionals to improve outcomes for children.

Designated Safeguarding Lead
The school/UTC will ensure it has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who has the appropriate status, authority, skills and experience to undertake the role effectively. The DSL will be given the additional time, funding, training, resources and support needed to carry out the role effectively.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads will be appropriately trained and will be able to provide effective cover for the DSL when required. Whilst activities of the DSL can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL. During school/UTC term time, the DSL or an appropriately trained Deputy DSL will be available during normal school/UTC hours to provide safeguarding advice and respond

to concerns. Appropriate arrangements will also be in place for safeguarding cover during school/UTC holidays, out-of-hours activities and other periods when the DSL is not available. Schools/UTCs will ensure that staff know how to access safeguarding advice and how to report concerns when the DSL or Deputy DSL is unavailable.

The DSL will:

- read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- ensure that staff know the identity of the DSL and Deputy DSLs and understand their roles and responsibilities; and
- ensure that staff understand their individual responsibility to identify and refer safeguarding concerns without delay.

Safeguarding Responsibilities

This policy applies to all adults working in or on behalf of the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust (BFLPT), including staff, supply staff, agency staff, trainee teachers, students on placement, trustees, governors, volunteers, contractors and other adults working with children.

Everyone within the Trust shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe in education by contributing to:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise within their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the child;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes;
- providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn; and
- identifying children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm and taking appropriate action to ensure they are kept safe both at home and in the education setting.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. All adults who come into contact with children and their families and carers have a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should adopt a child-centred approach. The best interests of the child should be at the heart of safeguarding practice and decision-making across every school/UTC in the Trust.

2 Roles and responsibilities

Trust Board

The Trust Board has overall strategic responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children across the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust (BFLPT).

The Trust Board will ensure that effective safeguarding and child protection arrangements are established, implemented, monitored and reviewed across all schools/UTCs within the Trust. This includes ensuring that the Trust has appropriate policies, procedures, resources, training and systems in place to safeguard children and respond effectively to safeguarding concerns.

The Trust Board will provide strategic oversight, support and challenge to ensure that safeguarding remains a priority across the Trust and that identified weaknesses are addressed promptly.

The Trust Board will:

- ensure that the Trust complies with statutory safeguarding requirements and has regard to current statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- ensure that sufficient resources, time, training and support are available to enable effective safeguarding arrangements;
- receive appropriate assurance regarding safeguarding practice across the Trust;

- monitor safeguarding risks, incidents, audits, reviews and external scrutiny and ensure that learning is acted upon and shared appropriately;
- ensure that safeguarding concerns involving senior Trust leaders are managed in accordance with the Trust's allegations, safeguarding and escalation procedures; and
- ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the strategic oversight of filtering and monitoring.

The Trust Board will conduct regular reviews of safeguarding arrangements across the Trust and will provide appropriate challenge and intervention where safeguarding practice requires improvement.

CEO
The CEO is responsible for ensuring that the Trust's safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively and that appropriate procedures are in place to monitor their effectiveness.
The CEO will ensure that significant safeguarding concerns, breaches and areas of weakness are escalated appropriately to the Trust Board and that relevant external agencies are informed where required.

Where concerns involve the CEO, these will be managed in accordance with the Trust's safeguarding, allegations and escalation procedures and referred to the appropriate person within the Trust's governance arrangements.

Local Governing Boards
Local Governing Boards will provide appropriate oversight of safeguarding within their school/UTC in accordance with the Trust's scheme of delegation and governance arrangements.

The Local Governing Board will ensure that the school/UTC has an appropriately trained and supported Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is a member of the senior leadership team and has the appropriate status, authority, skills, experience, training, time and resources to fulfil the role effectively.

Local Governing Boards will receive appropriate safeguarding assurance and undertake monitoring in accordance with Trust governance arrangements. Where monitoring identifies concerns or areas requiring improvement, these will be appropriately challenged, escalated and followed up.

A nominated governor with responsibility for safeguarding will undertake safeguarding monitoring in accordance with the Trust's governance arrangements and will provide appropriate challenge and assurance to the Local Governing Board.

Where an allegation concerns the Headteacher/Principal, the Local Governing Board will ensure that the matter is managed in accordance with the Trust's allegations and safeguarding procedures and escalated to the appropriate Trust leader.

Headteachers/Principals and Senior Leaders
The Headteacher/Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring that safeguarding and child protection arrangements are effectively implemented within the school/UTC.

The Headteacher/Principal will:
- ensure that this policy and the Trust Staff Code of Conduct are fully implemented;
- ensure that the DSL has sufficient time, funding, training, resources and support to carry out their role effectively;
- ensure that the DSL role and safeguarding responsibilities are reflected appropriately in job descriptions;
- ensure that all staff receive appropriate induction, safeguarding training and regular safeguarding updates;

- ensure that appropriate DSL and Deputy DSL cover arrangements are in place whenever the DSL is unavailable;
- ensure that safeguarding arrangements operate effectively during the school day, off-site activities, residential visits, holidays and other Trust activities;
- ensure that staff feel able to raise safeguarding concerns, including concerns about safeguarding practice, through the appropriate safeguarding escalation and whistleblowing arrangements;
- liaise with the LADO where an allegation or concern about an adult working with children meets, or may meet, the harm threshold;
- ensure that appropriate referrals are made to the Disclosure and Barring Service where the statutory conditions for a referral are met. In making safeguarding, referral and other relevant decisions, the Trust will have due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty, and will ensure that decisions are lawful, proportionate and appropriately recorded;
- ensure that safeguarding concerns are recorded, managed and followed up appropriately; and
- work closely with the Trust's Central Team and CEO where Trust-level support, challenge or intervention is required.

Designated Safeguarding Lead
The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the school/UTC, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

The DSL will have appropriate status and authority within the school/UTC and will be given the additional time, funding, training, resources and support needed to carry out the role effectively. The DSL's safeguarding responsibilities will be explicit in their job description.

Whilst safeguarding activities may be delegated to appropriately trained Deputy DSLs, ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL and is not delegated.

The DSL will ensure that:
- staff understand the school's/UTC's safeguarding and child protection arrangements;
- staff know who the DSL and Deputy DSLs are and how to contact them;
- staff understand their individual responsibility to identify and report safeguarding concerns without delay;
- appropriate safeguarding cover arrangements are in place whenever the DSL is unavailable;
- safeguarding records are detailed, accurate, secure and include the rationale for significant decisions;
- safeguarding concerns are appropriately referred and followed up;
- information is shared lawfully, appropriately and proportionately;
- the school/UTC contributes effectively to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements;
- staff receive appropriate safeguarding advice, support and training;
- the school/UTC's filtering and monitoring systems are understood and safeguarding concerns identified through those systems are appropriately considered and acted upon; and
- the school/UTC uses professional challenge and local escalation procedures where safeguarding concerns or responses are not adequately addressed.

Filtering and Monitoring
The Trust and its schools/UTCs will ensure that responsibility for filtering and monitoring is clearly allocated.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will have strategic responsibility for filtering and monitoring within the school/UTC, working closely with the DSL and IT support. A governor will have appropriate oversight and receive assurance that the arrangements are effective.

The Director of IT will provide technical advice, support and assurance in relation to filtering and monitoring systems, working with senior leaders, DSLs and relevant governors.

The DSL will provide safeguarding oversight, including consideration of monitoring reports and alerts and responding to safeguarding concerns identified through filtering and monitoring.

The Trust's filtering and monitoring platform generates safeguarding alerts where online activity may indicate risk of harm, including concerns relating to self-harm, suicide, abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, harmful content or other safeguarding risks. These alerts are routed to the relevant school/UTC DSL or designated safeguarding team for timely review and action in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

All staff will receive appropriate training so that they understand their responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring and know how to report and respond to concerns.

This reflects the DfE's current filtering and monitoring standard, which expects a member of SLT and a governor to have responsibility, with senior leaders working closely with the DSL and IT support.

Holding and Sharing Information
The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be able to:

- understand the importance of information sharing within the school/UTC, with other schools and colleges during transfer, and with safeguarding partners, other agencies and practitioners;
- understand the relevant data protection legislation and statutory information-sharing requirements, including the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR, Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 and applicable provisions of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026; and
- maintain detailed, accurate and secure records of safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions, referrals, information shared and the rationale for significant decisions, including where a decision is made not to refer to another agency.

All Staff and Other Adults Working with Children
All staff and other adults working in or on behalf of the Trust have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

All staff must:

- recognise and report safeguarding concerns without delay;
- follow the Trust's safeguarding and child protection procedures;
- understand that safeguarding concerns may arise inside or outside school/UTC, online or in the wider community;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- contribute to a culture in which children feel safe and able to speak about concerns; and
- seek advice and appropriately challenge safeguarding practice where necessary.

Staff must not assume that another person will report a concern.

Pupils/Students
Pupils/students are encouraged to contribute to a safe school/UTC environment by treating others with respect, following school/UTC expectations and reporting concerns about themselves or others to a trusted adult, the DSL, Deputy DSL or another member of staff.

Further Information
Further detail regarding specific roles and responsibilities is set out throughout Section 3 of this policy and in the relevant Trust policies and procedures.

3 Providing a safe and helpful environment

3.1 Recruitment and Selection

The Trust fully acknowledges and will have regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and will ensure that safer recruitment arrangements comply with current statutory requirements. The Trust will ensure that appropriate safer recruitment measures are applied to all individuals working in or on behalf of the BFLPT who may be perceived by pupils/students as safe and trustworthy adults, including staff, volunteers, agency and supply staff, contractors and other relevant adults.

Safer recruitment practice is detailed within the BFLPT Recruitment Policy and associated procedures and includes appropriate consideration of applications, verification of identity and qualifications, obtaining and scrutinising references, checking employment history and undertaking rigorous selection procedures and the required Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and other pre-employment checks.

The following recruitment arrangements are in place:

- An appropriate DBS check will be obtained for relevant appointments in accordance with the nature of the role and current statutory requirements. Where the role involves regulated activity with children, an Enhanced DBS check including Children's Barred List information will be obtained before the individual undertakes regulated activity.
- The Trust will use the Department for Education's Check a teacher's record service, where applicable, to undertake prohibition checks and verify relevant teacher records, including Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), in accordance with current statutory requirements. The Trust will ensure that all required teacher prohibition and other relevant teacher status checks are completed and recorded before the individual undertakes relevant teaching work.
- Identity and right to work in the UK will be verified before appointment.
- References will be obtained and scrutinised in accordance with the Trust's safer recruitment procedures. References will be used to establish the applicant's suitability to work with children and, where relevant, to identify safeguarding concerns, disciplinary matters or allegations that may affect the individual's suitability to work with children. Any concerns arising from references will be followed up and resolved before an appointment is confirmed.
- Appropriate checks will be undertaken for agency, supply and contracted staff in accordance with current statutory requirements, and the Trust will obtain appropriate confirmation that the required checks have been completed by the relevant employer, agency or contractor where applicable.
- Schools/UTCs will consider online searches as part of their due diligence when shortlisting candidates. Shortlisted candidates will be informed that an online search may be undertaken.
- The Trust will maintain a Single Central Record (SCR) in accordance with KCSIE 2026, containing the required pre-appointment checks for staff, salaried teacher trainees, agency and third-party supply staff, and members and trustees of the academy trust, as applicable. Other safeguarding checks will be undertaken and recorded where required by statutory guidance.

The Trust will undertake all other pre-appointment checks required by current statutory guidance, including, where applicable, Enhanced DBS and Children's Barred List checks, teacher prohibition checks, Section 128 checks for individuals appointed to relevant management positions, right to work checks, identity checks, verification of qualifications, references, appropriate overseas checks and childcare disqualification checks.

The Trust will ensure that safer recruitment arrangements are reviewed and updated whenever statutory requirements or Department for Education guidance changes.

Volunteers

The Trust will assess all volunteer roles against the current definition of regulated activity relating to children.

From 1 September 2026, the previous supervision exemption for regulated activity with children no longer applies. Teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children will constitute regulated activity where the activity is undertaken on more than 3 days in any 30-day period, or once overnight between 2am and 6am where there is an opportunity for face-to-face contact with children.

Where a volunteer is undertaking regulated activity with children, the Trust will obtain an Enhanced DBS check including Children's Barred List information before the individual undertakes the regulated activity, in accordance with current statutory requirements.

Where a volunteer is not undertaking regulated activity, the Trust will consider whether another level of DBS check is appropriate, taking account of the nature, frequency and regularity of the role and the individual's contact with children.

The Trust will review volunteer roles regularly and whenever statutory requirements relating to regulated activity or DBS checks change.

At least one member of every interview or appointment panel will have successfully completed appropriate Safer Recruitment training, in accordance with the Trust's safer recruitment procedures. Further details of safer recruitment checks and procedures are set out in the BFLPT Recruitment Policy.

3.2 Safe Practice

All staff will follow the Trust's Staff Code of Conduct and safeguarding procedures and will maintain professional boundaries in all interactions with children and young people. Staff are expected to work in an open and transparent manner and to avoid any conduct which could reasonably cause concern about their motivation, intentions or suitability to work with children.

Staff must:

- take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour and ensure that their conduct remains professional, appropriate and in accordance with the Trust's Staff Code of Conduct;
- discuss and seek advice from the Headteacher/Principal, DSL, Deputy DSL or other appropriate senior leader about any incident, interaction or concern that may give rise to a safeguarding concern;
- record relevant incidents, decisions and safeguarding concerns accurately and without unnecessary delay;
- apply consistent professional standards to all children and young people, without discrimination;
- understand that breaches of the law, statutory requirements, professional standards or the Trust's policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action and, where appropriate, referral to external agencies;
- recognise that safeguarding concerns may arise outside the school/UTC, outside normal school/UTC hours, online or within the wider community;
- understand that children may be at risk of harm from people outside their family, including through child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, serious violence, abuse within peer relationships and other forms of extra-familial harm;
- report concerns where a child's behaviour, presentation, attendance, relationships, circumstances or other information indicates that they may be in need of help or protection, even where the child has not made a disclosure;
- maintain professional curiosity and consider whether apparently separate concerns form part of a wider safeguarding picture;
- respond appropriately when a child discloses abuse, neglect, exploitation or another safeguarding concern, in accordance with Section 5.2 of this policy; and

- raise concerns promptly where they believe that safeguarding practice, systems or responses are not effective, using the Trust's safeguarding escalation and whistleblowing arrangements where appropriate.

Staff must not investigate safeguarding concerns themselves or attempt to determine whether an allegation is true. Concerns must be reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay and managed in accordance with this policy.

The Trust recognises that some children may have difficulty communicating that they are experiencing harm. A child does not need to make a direct disclosure before staff report a concern. Changes in behaviour, presentation, attendance, relationships or emotional wellbeing may indicate that a child is experiencing difficulties or may be at risk of harm and should be considered alongside the wider safeguarding context.

The Trust will promote a culture in which staff feel confident to raise safeguarding concerns, seek advice and appropriately challenge safeguarding practice. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and staff must not assume that another person will report a concern.

3.3 Sharing Safeguarding Information with Pupils/ Students

The Trust is committed to ensuring that pupils/students are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. All students will be regularly updated with regards to identifying the staff with responsibility for child protection and know who this is. We inform pupils/students of whom they might talk to, both in and out of school/UTC, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm. This is supported through the Trust and school/UTC's statutory relationships, sex and health education requirements and wider PSHE provision.

Information is made available to students, including NSPCC and Childline alongside other localised offers.

The Trust’s provision for listening to pupils/students includes tutor groups, peer support and mentoring schemes, teaching and associate staff and pupil/student voice. We make pupils/students aware of these arrangements regularly through assemblies, information screens, letters and during lessons.

3.4 Partnership with Parents

The Trust is committed to working positively, openly and honestly with parents/carers. We will treat parents/carers with respect, dignity and courtesy and provide reassurance that concerns raised by parents/carers and children will be taken seriously.

The Trust will work in partnership with parents/carers wherever this is consistent with safeguarding the child. Parents/carers will be involved in decisions affecting their child wherever appropriate, taking account of the child's wishes and feelings and their age, understanding and circumstances.

The Trust respects parents'/carers' rights to privacy and confidentiality. Information will only be shared where this is lawful, necessary and proportionate. Safeguarding information may be shared without consent where there is a lawful basis to do so and where sharing is necessary to protect a child, promote their welfare or support an assessment of their needs. Staff will not allow uncertainty about data protection to prevent necessary safeguarding information from being shared.

The Trust will endeavour to discuss safeguarding concerns with parents/carers at the earliest appropriate opportunity. However, there may be circumstances where information should not be shared with parents/carers before a referral or other safeguarding action is taken. This may include where informing them could:

- place the child or another person at increased risk of harm;
- prejudice a Police or Children's Social Care investigation;
- compromise the child's safety or welfare; or
- otherwise be contrary to the child's best interests.

The decision to inform or not inform parents/carers, and the reasons for that decision, will be recorded by the DSL or appropriately trained Deputy DSL.

Where concerns are raised which may require Early Help or Family Help, the Trust will work with the child and family to identify needs, agree appropriate support and review progress. Where safeguarding concerns meet the threshold for statutory intervention, the Trust will work with Children's Social Care, Police and other relevant agencies in accordance with local safeguarding arrangements. Working Together 2026 emphasises partnership with parents/carers alongside a child-centred approach and multi-agency safeguarding.

The Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be made available to parents/carers on request and will be available through the Trust website and the relevant school/UTC website.

3.5 Partnerships with Others

No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who encounters them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action. Although inter agency working and information sharing are vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse, it is clear they are especially important to identify and prevent child sexual exploitation.

The Trust recognises that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies. These include the Local Authority, Social Care, Barnardo's, Police, Health, Childline, NSPCC etc.

Information will be shared in accordance with the Trust's Information Sharing for Safeguarding arrangements, current data protection legislation and statutory safeguarding guidance.

Families First Partnership Programme and Doncaster Family Model

The Trust recognises the development of the Families First Partnership Programme and the Doncaster Family Model and will work with local safeguarding partners to support a family-focused, strengths-based and multi-agency approach to safeguarding and early intervention.

Schools/UTCs will ensure that staff understand the local arrangements for accessing Family Help and other support and will work collaboratively with children, families and relevant professionals to ensure that children and families receive the right help at the right time.

The Trust will keep its safeguarding arrangements under review as the Families First Partnership Programme and Doncaster Family Model develop and will update this policy where necessary to reflect changes to local safeguarding arrangements.

3.6 School Training and Staff Induction

All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, at induction. This training will be regularly updated. All staff will also receive safeguarding and child protection updates, including online safety updates, as required and at least annually, through email, staff briefings, e-bulletins and other appropriate communication.

All staff, including temporary staff, volunteers, associate staff and other adults working in or on behalf of the Trust, will read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 in full and will follow the safeguarding and child protection procedures applicable within their school/UTC.

Staff will be provided with a copy of this Trust Safeguarding Policy and other relevant safeguarding policies and procedures as part of their induction. All staff will confirm annually that they have read and understood Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and are aware of the Trust's safeguarding arrangements.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead with responsibility for Child Protection will undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at least every two years, alongside regular safeguarding updates and continuing professional development, in accordance with current statutory guidance.

The Trust's Headteachers/Principal and all other staff, including associate staff, will undertake appropriate induction and safeguarding training to equip them to carry out their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities effectively.

All staff will understand:

- the safeguarding systems and procedures within their school/UTC;
- the identity and role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads;
- how and when to report safeguarding concerns;
- how to respond appropriately if a child discloses abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- the importance of maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality when responding to safeguarding concerns;
- the signs and indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including online harms;
- how changes in behaviour, attendance, presentation or circumstances may indicate that a child is in need of help or protection;
- the importance of professional curiosity and considering the wider context of a child's circumstances;
- the additional safeguarding barriers that may be experienced by children with SEND or medical conditions;
- how to access support for children who may benefit from Early Help or Family Help; and
- how and when to make or contribute to referrals to Children's Social Care.

Staff will also understand the local arrangements and thresholds for accessing:

- universal services and community-based Early Help and Family Help;
- targeted early help through Family Help, including the relevant local threshold and referral arrangements;
- statutory services under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including services for children in need and disabled children;
- Children's Social Care assessments under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm;
- care and supervision orders under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989; and
- the duty to accommodate a child under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

Staff will know how to access local safeguarding advice and how to escalate concerns where they believe that the response to a safeguarding concern is not appropriate.

Schools/UTCs within the Trust will provide regular training on specific and relevant safeguarding issues, including child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), Prevent, online safety, safe practice, record keeping, child-on-child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, attendance and children missing from education, and other emerging safeguarding risks.

Further training will also be provided on how the Trust provides online safety through effective filtering and monitoring processes. Staff will understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring and how to respond to concerns identified through these systems.
Training will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains relevant to the safeguarding needs of children within the Trust, reflects local and national safeguarding risks and takes account of changes to legislation, statutory guidance and local safeguarding arrangements.

Professional Curiosity
All staff are expected to demonstrate professional curiosity when safeguarding children.

Professional curiosity means respectfully exploring information, seeking clarification where information is incomplete or inconsistent and considering what may be happening in a child's life beyond the information initially presented.

Staff should not accept explanations at face value where there are indicators that a child may be at risk of harm.

Professional curiosity is particularly important where there are:

- repeated or unexplained absences;
- persistent or severe absence;
- significant changes in behaviour or presentation;
- multiple suspensions;
- risk of permanent exclusion;
- unexplained injuries;
- concerns about exploitation;
- concerning peer associations;
- concerning online activity;
- repeated safeguarding concerns from different sources; or
- multiple indicators of vulnerability occurring together.

Where a staff member remains concerned after speaking to the DSL, they should continue to raise the concern and use the appropriate safeguarding escalation process.

Record keeping
All safeguarding concerns must be recorded promptly and accurately, with sufficient detail to demonstrate decision-making, actions taken, and the rationale for those actions. A chronology of significant events must be maintained within each child's safeguarding file, enabling a clear understanding of the child's history.

Safeguarding records should be clear and factual and should distinguish between observed concerns, professional opinion and historic information.

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.
Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern.
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved.
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
- If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

All staff will be made aware that safeguarding concerns can manifest through child-on-child abuse. This may include bullying, including cyberbullying, gender-based violence, sexual assault and the

making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes. Further information is provided in Section 5.12, Section 5.13 and Appendix J.

3.7 Support, Advice and Guidance for Staff

Staff will be supported by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in each school/UTC with responsibility for Child Protection, who will provide guidance and training where appropriate.

Advice and support are always available from the Trust, the Doncaster Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Doncaster Children's Social Care and the Police.

3.8 Online Safety

The Trust recognises that children may face safeguarding risks online as well as offline. Schools/UTCs will take a whole-school/UTC approach to online safety and will consider online risks within safeguarding, curriculum, behaviour, staff training, filtering and monitoring, information sharing and parental engagement.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, including pornography, racism, misogyny, misandry and other gender-based prejudice, self-harm, suicide, radicalisation, extremism, harmful misinformation, manipulated or deceptive media and other harmful material.
- Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, including peer pressure, grooming, exploitation, sexual harassment, coercion, blackmail, financial exploitation or adults posing as children or young people.
- Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, including cyberbullying, sexual harassment, making, sending or receiving explicit images, sharing or threatening to share nudes and semi-nudes, sharing pornography or other explicit material, and participation in harmful online activity.
- Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing, fraud, financial scams and other forms of financial exploitation.

The Trust recognises the increasing risks posed by Artificial Intelligence (AI), including the creation and distribution of indecent, abusive or misleading imagery, including deepfakes and synthetic intimate imagery. Staff must remain vigilant to the use of AI technology to groom, threaten, humiliate, manipulate or exploit children online. All concerns involving AI-generated or manipulated content will be treated as safeguarding concerns and reported through the Trust's safeguarding procedures.

The Trust will provide staff and pupils/students with appropriate education and guidance regarding the safe and responsible use of generative AI. Generative AI will be considered within the Trust's safeguarding, online safety, acceptable use and data protection arrangements.

Emerging Online Safeguarding Risks

The Trust recognises that online safeguarding risks continue to develop rapidly. Schools/UTCs will remain alert to:

- AI-generated and manipulated imagery;
- deepfakes and synthetic intimate imagery;
- sextortion and financial extortion;
- online grooming;
- online sexual harassment;
- harmful online cultures;
- misogyny, misandry and other gender-based prejudice;
- extremist and violent content;
- online criminal networks;

- cybercrime;
- cyber-dependent crime;
- financial exploitation and scams;
- coercion and blackmail; and
- child criminal exploitation through online platforms.

Concerns involving online activity will be considered within the wider safeguarding context and will not be treated solely as IT, behaviour or attendance matters.

Where concerns indicate that a child may be at risk of being drawn into cyber-dependent crime, the DSL will consider whether a referral to Cyber Choices or other appropriate specialist support is required.

Schools/UTCs will provide age-appropriate education about online safety, healthy relationships, consent, privacy, digital footprints, manipulation, exploitation, artificial intelligence and harmful online behaviour.
Online safety will be embedded across the curriculum and reinforced through relationships, sex and health education, PSHE and wider safeguarding education. Schools/UTCs will also consider online safety when reviewing safeguarding policies and procedures, staff training, the role and responsibilities of the DSL and parental engagement.

Schools/UTCs will use communications with parents/carers to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and provide appropriate information about:
- the filtering and monitoring systems in place;
- what children may be asked to do online, including the sites and platforms they may be expected to access; and
- who from the school/UTC, if anyone, their child may be interacting with online.

Filtering and Monitoring
The Trust will ensure that effective filtering and monitoring systems are in place to protect children from harmful and inappropriate online content and activity.

The Director of IT, Headteachers/Principals, DSLs and other relevant staff will understand the filtering and monitoring systems used within each school/UTC and their respective responsibilities.

Filtering and monitoring arrangements will be reviewed at least once every academic year and whenever significant changes occur to technology, online risks, working practices, network configuration, devices or the Trust's digital environment. The annual review will involve relevant senior leaders, the DSL, IT support and the responsible governor and will consider the school's/UTC's risk profile, including SEND, online activity, AI use and other relevant safeguarding risks.

Cyber Security and Information Security
The Trust recognises that effective cyber security and information security form part of its safeguarding arrangements. Schools/UTCs will maintain appropriate cyber security systems and controls to protect children's personal information, safeguarding records and other sensitive information from unauthorised access, loss, compromise or disruption.

The Trust will have regard to the Department for Education's Cyber Security Standards for Schools and Colleges and will work with relevant IT providers and responsible staff to identify, manage and reduce cyber security risks. Any cyber security incident or data breach which may affect the safety or welfare of a child will be considered within the wider safeguarding context and escalated through the Trust's safeguarding and information-security procedures as appropriate

Reviews will consider:

- whether filtering is working appropriately on all internet-connected devices in all relevant locations, including devices used by pupils/students, staff and visitors where applicable, and whether a record of these checks has been maintained
- whether systems meet relevant Department for Education expectations;
- whether illegal, harmful or inappropriate content is appropriately identified and restricted;
- whether monitoring alerts are effective and acted upon promptly;
- whether staff understand their responsibilities and know how to report concerns;
- systems operate effectively across all relevant internet-connected devices, locations and user groups, including following changes to devices, software, network configuration or the introduction of new technologies and AI tools
- whether systems remain effective following changes to devices, software, network configuration or AI tools;
- whether legitimate educational access is maintained; and
- whether identified deficiencies have been addressed.

The Trust will retain evidence of filtering and monitoring reviews, checks undertaken, concerns identified, actions taken and outcomes. Staff and pupils/students will be informed appropriately that filtering and monitoring systems are in place.

Filtering and monitoring will complement, but will not replace, effective supervision, staff vigilance, education and professional curiosity.

Mobile Phones and Smart Technology
The Trust expects schools/UTCs to operate as mobile phone-free environments by default, in accordance with current Department for Education guidance.

Pupils/students should not have access to mobile phones or smart technology during the school/UTC day, including lessons, between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes, except where an agreed exception applies.

Each school/UTC will maintain clear arrangements for the storage, use and permitted exceptions relating to mobile phones and smart technology. These arrangements will take account of safeguarding risks including cyberbullying, sexual harassment, sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, recording or photographing others, access to harmful content, grooming, exploitation and inappropriate communication.

3.9 Children who are questioning their gender
The Trust will safeguard and promote the welfare of all children, including children who are questioning their gender.

Schools/UTCs will respond sensitively and appropriately where a child or their parent/carer raises a request relating to gender or social transition.

The Trust will not initiate social transition. Where a request is made, the school/UTC will follow a clear, documented decision-making process which considers the best interests and welfare of the child and the impact on other children.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be involved where a request raises safeguarding concerns or where there are concerns about the child's vulnerability, wellbeing, mental health, family circumstances or wider context.

Parents/carers should be involved as a matter of priority and their views should be given significant weight and properly considered. Where there are specific safeguarding reasons why involving a parent/carer may place the child at risk of harm, the DSL will determine the appropriate safeguarding response.

Decisions relating to social transition will be documented, including the information considered, the views of the child and parents/carers, relevant professional advice, safeguarding considerations, the impact on other children and the rationale for the decision.

The school/UTC will ensure that information relating to a child's biological sex is recorded accurately where this information is required for safeguarding or other statutory purposes.

Where a child has socially transitioned from an early age and may be living in a way where their biological sex is not known to school/UTC staff or peers, the DSL will consider whether there are additional safeguarding vulnerabilities and whether the child's circumstances require review.

Where a child wishes to reverse or change a previous decision relating to social transition, the school/UTC will consider the child's wishes and welfare, involve parents/carers wherever appropriate and review any safeguarding implications and support required.

The Trust will comply with its duties under safeguarding legislation, the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Schools/UTCs will maintain single-sex toilets, changing facilities and residential accommodation in accordance with the applicable provisions of KCSIE 2026. Children aged 8 and over will not be permitted to use toilets designated for the opposite biological sex. For children aged 11 or older at the start of the school year, changing facilities must not allow them to undress in front of a child of the opposite biological sex, and children must not be given access to changing rooms designated for the opposite biological sex. Overnight accommodation will be arranged on a single-sex basis in accordance with current statutory guidance.

Where a child does not wish to use facilities designated for their biological sex, the school/UTC will consider whether a suitable alternative can be provided. Any alternative arrangements must not compromise the provision of single-sex facilities or the safety, privacy, comfort or dignity of any child.

Any arrangements made in response to a request relating to social transition will be considered on an individual basis, taking account of safeguarding, the best interests of the child, the impact on other children and relevant legal duties. Decisions will be recorded, communicated to relevant staff and reviewed where appropriate.

Single-sex sporting provision will be considered in accordance with current statutory requirements, safeguarding considerations, the Equality Act 2010 and KCSIE 2026. Where sport needs to be organised in single-sex groups to ensure children's safety, no exception will be made. Where safety is not the determining factor, the school/UTC will consider any request relating to participation in sport on a balanced basis, taking account of the circumstances, fairness and the welfare of all children involved.

Any concerns relating to bullying, harassment, discrimination or abuse involving a child who is questioning their gender will be managed through the Trust's safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying and equality procedures as appropriate.

Where a child is considering or has undertaken social transition, the school/UTC will consider whether there are any safeguarding implications for the child or others and will ensure that relevant arrangements are recorded and reviewed.

3.10 Related Policies

Safeguarding covers more than the contribution made to child protection in relation to individual children. It also encompasses issues such as student health and safety and bullying and a range of other issues, for example, arrangements for meeting the medical needs of children, providing first aid, school security, drugs, and substance misuse etc. There may also be other safeguarding issues that are specific to the local area of population.

Other related Policies and Protocols that should be referred to include:

- Health and Safety Policy. (Trust)
- Anti-Bullying Policy. (School/UTC)
- E-Safety. (School/UTC)
- Recruitment Policy (Trust)
- Staff Code of Conduct. (Trust)
- Whistleblowing Policy. (Trust)
- Educational Visits Policy. (Trust)
- Equal Opportunities Policy. (Trust)
- Work Placement/Experience Policy. (School/UTC)
- SEND Policy. (School/UTC)
- RSE Policy. (School/UTC)
- Prevent Policy (School/UTC)
- Volunteers Policy (Trust)

3.11 Student/Pupil Information

To keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them the Trust requires accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Names (including any previous names), address and date of birth of child.
- Names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives.
- Names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above).
- Whether the child is Looked After.
- Emergency contact details.
- Details of any persons authorised to collect the child from the school/UTC.
- Any relevant court orders in place, including orders which affect any person's access to the child or the child's care arrangements (for example, Child Arrangements Orders, Interim or Full Care Orders, Prohibited Steps Orders, Specific Issue Orders, Injunctions or other relevant protective orders).
- Whether the child is currently subject to, or has previously been subject to, a Child Protection Plan.
- Name and contact details of any key persons from other agencies, including GP.
- Any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child.

Information Sharing for Safeguarding
Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.

The Trust and its schools/UTCs will share information with safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies where this is necessary to protect a child or promote their welfare.

The Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 do not prevent information being shared where there is a lawful basis and the sharing is necessary and proportionate for safeguarding purposes.

The Trust will comply with the statutory information-sharing duties introduced by the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and any associated statutory guidance as and when the relevant provisions come into force. Staff will share relevant information where the law requires or permits it and where doing so is necessary and proportionate to safeguard children, promote their welfare, assess their needs or support them.

Where appropriate, information may be shared without consent where:
- it is not possible to obtain consent;
- consent cannot reasonably be expected; or
- seeking consent would place a child or another person at risk.

Information-sharing decisions will be recorded, including the rationale for the decision.

The Trust recognises that apparently minor pieces of information may contribute to a significant safeguarding picture when combined with information held by other agencies.

Transfer of Safeguarding Information
Where a child leaves the school/UTC, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure that the child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term.

The child protection file will be transferred separately from the main pupil file using secure transfer arrangements, and confirmation of receipt will be obtained.

The transferring school/UTC will provide a clear and structured summary identifying:
- current safeguarding concerns;
- relevant context; and
- any ongoing support needs.

Particular care will be taken to distinguish between current safeguarding concerns and historic information, ensuring that past issues are presented with appropriate context.

Where appropriate, information indicating that a child may pose a risk to themselves or others, including concerns relating to serious violence, harmful behaviours or other safeguarding risks, will also be shared with the receiving school/college where this is necessary and proportionate to safeguard the child or others.

The DSL will consider whether additional information should be shared with the receiving school/college in advance of the child's transfer, particularly where this information would support an assessment of risk, enable appropriate support to be put in place or ensure continuity of existing safeguarding arrangements. This may include relevant information about a child who has had a social worker, has been a victim of abuse, has concerns relating to serious violence or harmful behaviours, or is currently receiving support through the Channel programme.

Where safeguarding information indicates that a pupil has previously carried, threatened with or used a knife or other offensive weapon, the receiving school/UTC will undertake an appropriate risk assessment and, where required, put in place a safety and support plan before the pupil starts.

Where there are serious concerns, particularly relating to weapons, intent to seriously harm others, serious violence or significant harmful behaviour, this information will be clearly identified and shared with relevant staff before the pupil begins at the school/UTC.

Where significant safeguarding concerns exist, it is good practice for the DSL at the sending school/UTC to have a direct conversation with the DSL or appropriate safeguarding lead at the receiving setting to support continuity of safeguarding arrangements.

Information shared will be necessary, proportionate and relevant to the safeguarding of the child and others.

The receiving school/college will ensure that transferred safeguarding information is reviewed by an appropriately trained member of staff so that key risks, safeguarding concerns and support needs are clearly understood.

Key staff, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead and SENCO or relevant SEND lead, will be made aware of relevant information as required. The DSL will determine what other information should be shared with other relevant staff and when this should be shared.

Safeguarding information will be used to support the child and will not be used in a way that unnecessarily disadvantages them.

3.12 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The Trust and its schools fully comply with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2026. These requirements apply to all early years provision within the Trust and must be adhered to at all times.

At least one person who has a current Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present. A person with a current PFA certificate must also accompany children on outings. The Trust will ensure that the PFA certificate meets the requirements of the current EYFS statutory framework.

Staff working in early years must remain alert to any signs of abuse, neglect or harm and report any concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL. Staff must ensure that supervision is appropriate to children's age, stage of development and individual needs and that statutory staffing requirements are maintained to support children's safety and welfare.

All individuals who work in, or live on, premises where early years provision takes place must be suitable to do so and must not pose a risk of harm to children. The Trust will undertake the required suitability and criminal record checks in accordance with current statutory requirements. From 1 September 2026, volunteers undertaking regulated activity with children, including roles that were previously exempt because the volunteer was supervised, will require an Enhanced DBS check including Children's Barred List information before undertaking the regulated activity.

In early years provision, new employees will not commence employment before the required criminal record check has been received, in accordance with the EYFS statutory framework.

Where schools are also subject to the EYFS framework, volunteers must not be permitted to begin working within the settings covered by the EYFS framework until the school or maintained nursery

school has received the volunteer's Enhanced DBS certificate, including Children's Barred List information.

The use of mobile phones, cameras and other personal electronic devices must comply with the mobile phone and acceptable use arrangements relevant to each setting, with appropriate measures in place to protect children's privacy, dignity and safety. The Trust will also have regard to the statutory EYFS requirements concerning children's screen use.
Staff working in early years settings will receive appropriate induction, safeguarding and child protection training, regular updates and supervision to ensure they understand and can fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

The Trust is committed to ensuring that all early years provision provides a safe, secure and child-centred environment in which safeguarding is embedded in all aspects of daily practice.

Schools/UTCs with early years provision will implement all other safeguarding and welfare requirements contained within the current EYFS statutory framework, including requirements relating to safer sleep, the use of screens and electronic devices, suitability of persons living or working on the premises, and the management and reporting of allegations concerning children.

3.13 Allergies and Anaphylaxis
The Trust recognises that severe allergies and anaphylaxis can present significant risks to the health, safety and welfare of children and young people. Schools/UTCs will have appropriate arrangements in place to support pupils with allergies in accordance with current statutory requirements and Department for Education guidance.

Each school/UTC will maintain appropriate allergy safety arrangements, including individual healthcare plans where required, access to emergency medication, appropriate staff training and clear procedures for responding to allergic reactions and anaphylaxis.

Staff will be aware of pupils with significant allergies and the actions required in an emergency. Allergy-related incidents and near misses will be recorded and reviewed to identify any learning or improvements required.

Detailed arrangements will be set out in the school's/UTC's Allergy Policy and relevant Supporting Medical Needs arrangements.

4 Identifying children and young people who may be suffering significant harm
Staff and other adults in school or UTC are well placed to observe any physical, emotional, or behavioural signs that indicate that a child may be suffering significant harm. The relationships between staff, students, parents, and the public that foster respect, confidence, and trust can lead to disclosures of abuse and/or trust staff being alerted to concerns. Harm can include ill-treatment that is not physical as well as witnessing the treatment of others, e.g., the impact of domestic abuse.

Multiple and Interconnected Safeguarding Risks
The Trust recognises that children may experience multiple forms of harm or vulnerability simultaneously.

Safeguarding concerns should therefore not be considered in isolation.
Attendance difficulties, changes in behaviour, SEND, mental health concerns, exploitation, domestic abuse, online harms, child-on-child abuse and family difficulties may be interconnected.

Staff should consider the wider context and use professional curiosity to identify whether apparently separate concerns form part of a wider safeguarding picture.

Where there are concerns that a child is experiencing multiple harms, the DSL will consider whether a multi-agency response is required.

Safeguarding children is defined in 'Working together to safeguard children', as:

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

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 (page 6).

Child Protection is defined as:

Part of safeguarding process

- It focuses on protecting a child who has been identified as suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm
- Serious risk of harm may arise from a single event or a series of concerns over time

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It also relates to aspects of school life including:

- pupils' health and safety
- the use of reasonable force
- meeting the needs of children with medical conditions
- providing first aid
- educational visits
- intimate care
- internet or e-safety
- appropriate arrangements to ensure school security, considering the local context
- mental health of students and staff

Safeguarding can involve a range of potential issues such as:

- child-on-child abuse
- serious violence
- bullying, including cyber bullying (by text message, on social networking sites, etc) and prejudice-based bullying
- discriminatory behaviour and abuse, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic abuse and other forms of prejudice-based harm
- sexual harassment, such as casual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may occur as a standalone incident or form part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes
- voyeurism / (up-skirting)
- issues affecting children including domestic abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM), honour or faith-based abuse, including forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing/flattening.
- exploitation

The updated guidance makes it clear that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, may breach children's rights, as set out in the Human Rights Act.

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. Mental Health is now recognised as something that can impact on student attendance. The Trust recognises the important role we all have in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils/students.

Attendance as a Safeguarding Issue

The Trust recognises attendance as an important safeguarding indicator.

Absence from education may be associated with neglect, abuse, exploitation, domestic abuse, mental health difficulties, bullying, serious violence, family difficulties or other safeguarding concerns.
Persistent and severe absence will be considered as potential indicators of harm and will not be considered solely as attendance matters.

Staff should be alert to:

- unexplained or repeated absence;
- persistent or severe absence;
- changes in attendance patterns;
- absence linked to particular individuals, locations or circumstances;
- increasing disengagement from education;
- children missing from education;
- repeated failure to engage with attendance support; and
- attendance concerns occurring alongside behavioural, mental health or safeguarding concerns.

The DSL and relevant attendance lead will work together to consider the wider safeguarding context. Where attendance concerns occur alongside other safeguarding indicators, the DSL will consider whether Early Help, Family Help, Children's Social Care or another agency should be involved.

Children with SEND or Medical Conditions
The Trust recognises that children with SEND or medical conditions may face additional barriers to abuse, neglect or exploitation being recognised.
Staff should consider whether communication difficulties, dependency on adults, social isolation, difficulty recognising inappropriate behaviour or difficulties disclosing concerns may increase a child's vulnerability.

Staff must not assume that a change in behaviour, presentation or emotional wellbeing is solely attributable to a child's SEND or medical condition.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to safeguarding processes where required so that children can communicate concerns and participate meaningfully in safeguarding decisions.

Where a child has multiple vulnerabilities, the DSL will consider how these interact and whether additional safeguarding support is required.

Medical Conditions and Safeguarding
The management of a child's medical condition does not, in itself, constitute a safeguarding concern. However, staff and the DSL should consider whether a medical incident or repeated failure to manage a child's medical needs appropriately may indicate abuse or neglect.

This may include situations where a child is repeatedly sent to school without essential medication or appropriate medical support, where medical needs are deliberately or persistently neglected, or where there are other indicators that the child's health needs are not being appropriately met.

Where a medical incident raises safeguarding concerns, the DSL will consider whether Early Help, Family Help, Children's Social Care or another agency should be involved.

Young Carers
The Trust recognises that young carers may have significant caring responsibilities for a family member with physical or mental health difficulties, disability or substance misuse difficulties.
Caring responsibilities may affect attendance, educational achievement, emotional wellbeing, physical health and relationships.

Staff should be alert to indicators that a child may be a young carer and should discuss concerns with the DSL or appropriate pastoral staff.
Schools/UTCs will work with relevant local young carer services and other agencies where appropriate to ensure that young carers and their families receive appropriate support.

4.1 Definitions
As in the Children Act of 1989 and 2004, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

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

Child protection is part of safeguarding and refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Children may experience more than one form of abuse or harm at the same time. Staff should therefore consider the wider safeguarding context and use professional curiosity when responding to concerns.

Harm means ill treatment or impairment of health and development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. **Development** means physical, intellectual, emotional, social, or behavioural development. **Health** includes physical and mental health. **Ill-treatment** includes sexual abuse and other forms of ill treatment which are not physical.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g., via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Domestic abuse is a significant safeguarding issue which may have a serious and lasting impact on children. It may be psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional and may affect children through seeing, hearing or experiencing its effects, including within their own intimate relationships.

Domestic Abuse and Operation Encompass
The Trust recognises that domestic abuse is harmful to children even where they are not the direct victim.

Children may experience domestic abuse by seeing, hearing or experiencing its effects and may also experience abuse within their own intimate relationships.

Domestic abuse can affect emotional wellbeing, behaviour, attendance, concentration, attainment, physical health and relationships.

Schools/UTCs will work with Children's Social Care, the police, health services and other safeguarding partners to support children affected by domestic abuse.

Schools/UTCs will participate in Operation Encompass in accordance with local arrangements and will respond appropriately and confidentially to notifications received from the Police concerning incidents of domestic abuse involving children. Information received through Operation Encompass will be handled sensitively and shared on a need-to-know basis. Operation Encompass does not replace a referral to Children's Social Care or the Police where there are additional safeguarding concerns.

Where appropriate, schools/UTCs will contribute information to relevant multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Child-to-Parent or Caregiver Abuse
The Trust recognises that children can experience difficulties and vulnerabilities which may result in abusive behaviour towards parents or carers. This may include physical, emotional, psychological, coercive or controlling behaviour.

Staff should be alert to concerns that a child may be experiencing or displaying child-to-parent or caregiver abuse and should consider the wider safeguarding context and the support needs of both the child and their family.

Where concerns are identified, staff should report them to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay. The DSL will consider whether Early Help or Family Help, Children's Social Care, Police or another agency should be involved.

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, 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.

Sexual abuse involves forcing, causing or inciting a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or producing sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by adults or by other children. Children are more likely to know their abuser than not. A child under the age of 13 can never legally consent to sexual activity.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child which has severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, including interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, overprotection, 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 person. It may include serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.
Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. 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 through the use of inadequate caregivers; or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Neglect may also include a failure to respond appropriately to a child's basic emotional needs.

Indicators of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation
The following indicators are intended to support professional curiosity and help staff recognise when a child may be in need of help or protection. No single indicator should be viewed in isolation, and the presence or absence of an indicator does not, in itself, confirm abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff should consider the child's age, developmental stage, presentation, behaviour, attendance, relationships, family circumstances and wider context. Changes in behaviour, presentation or circumstances should be considered alongside other information available to the school/UTC.

Children may experience more than one form of abuse or harm at the same time. Staff should therefore consider whether apparently separate concerns form part of a wider safeguarding picture and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL without delay.

Possible Indicators of Physical Abuse
Indicators may include:
- unexplained or repeated injuries, including bruises, burns, bites, fractures or other injuries;
- injuries that are inconsistent with the explanation given or with the child's age or developmental stage;
- injuries in unusual patterns or locations;
- repeated accidents or explanations that change;
- reluctance to participate in physical activities or appear for medical examination;
- fear of particular adults or anxiety about going home; and
- significant changes in behaviour, emotional wellbeing or presentation.

Possible Indicators of Sexual Abuse
Indicators may include:
- sexualised behaviour or language that is inappropriate for the child's age or developmental stage;
- knowledge of sexual matters that is inappropriate for the child's age;
- sexualised play or behaviour involving other children;
- unexplained injuries, pain or discomfort, particularly where there may be a sexual element;
- changes in behaviour, mood, relationships or emotional wellbeing;
- withdrawal, anxiety, depression, self-harm or other changes in mental health;
- reluctance to be alone with particular people or unexplained fear of a person or place;
- pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections;
- receiving or sending sexual messages, images or videos;
- concerns relating to grooming, exploitation, sexual harassment or sexual violence; and
- disclosures or partial disclosures of sexual abuse.

Possible Indicators of Emotional Abuse
Indicators may include:
- significant changes in behaviour or emotional wellbeing;
- low self-esteem, lack of confidence or persistent feelings of worthlessness;
- anxiety, fearfulness, withdrawal or social isolation;
- difficulty forming or maintaining relationships;
- frequent tearfulness, distress or emotional dysregulation;
- self-harm or thoughts of suicide;
- developmentally inappropriate behaviour or expectations;
- fear of making mistakes or excessive concern about pleasing adults;
- exposure to domestic abuse or other harmful behaviour towards others;
- persistent bullying, humiliation, threats or coercive control; and
- behaviour suggesting that the child feels unsafe at home, in school or within their relationships.

Possible Indicators of Neglect
Indicators may include:
- persistent hunger, tiredness or poor hygiene;
- inadequate clothing, nutrition, heating or living conditions;
- untreated medical, dental or health needs;
- repeated failure to provide prescribed medication or appropriate medical support;
- lack of appropriate supervision;
- persistent or severe absence, repeated lateness or disengagement from education;
- developmental delay or failure to thrive;
- frequent accidents or injuries associated with inadequate supervision;
- being left without appropriate care or being responsible for caring for others beyond their age or capacity;
- signs that a child's basic emotional needs are not being met; and
- a pattern of unmet needs which may indicate wider family difficulties or safeguarding concerns.

Wider Indicators of Exploitation and Other Safeguarding Risk
Staff should also be alert to:
- exploitation or child sexual exploitation;
- controlling or abusive teenage relationships;
- sexual harassment, sexual violence or harmful sexual behaviour;
- online grooming, coercion, sextortion, blackmail or other online exploitation;
- radicalisation or exposure to extremist or terrorist content;
- concerns relating to FGM, forced marriage or other forms of honour or faith-based abuse;
- significant changes in mental health, including self-harm or suicidal ideation;
- concerns arising from domestic abuse;
- concerns relating to trafficking, modern slavery or other forms of exploitation;
- repeated removal from lessons, part-time timetables or other significant disengagement from education; and
- any combination of concerns unexplained gifts, money, possessions or changes in lifestyle;
- concerning associations with adults or other children;
- going missing from home, school or education;
- unexplained or increasingly frequent absence;
- being drawn into gangs, criminal activity or serious violence;
- signs of child criminal which, when considered together, indicate that a child may be in need of help or protection.

Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation
Homelessness, insecure housing or living in temporary accommodation may affect a child's safety, welfare, attendance, education and emotional wellbeing. Staff should be alert to indicators that a child or family may be at risk of homelessness, including housing instability, being asked to leave accommodation, frequent changes of address or other significant housing difficulties.

Concerns should be discussed with the DSL, who will consider appropriate support through Early Help or Family Help, the local housing authority and/or Children's Social Care. Where the school/UTC receives notification that a child has been placed in temporary accommodation, the DSL or appropriate safeguarding lead will ensure that the information is recorded, considered within the child's wider safeguarding and attendance context and, where appropriate, shared with relevant staff and safeguarding partners on a lawful, necessary and proportionate basis. The school/UTC will work with the child, family and relevant agencies to identify and address any safeguarding, welfare, attendance or educational needs arising from the temporary accommodation. Receipt of a notification will not replace the school's existing duty to make a safeguarding referral where there is concern that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, harm.

Making or Sharing Nudes or Semi-Nudes

The Trust uses the term “making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes” in line with current safeguarding guidance. This includes the sending, posting or sharing of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams involving children under the age of 18, including material that has been digitally manipulated or generated using artificial intelligence.

Staff must follow Appendix J – Making or Sharing Nudes or Semi-Nudes, Including AI-Generated or Manipulated Imagery when such concerns arise.

Upskirting
The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. ‘Upskirting’ is where someone takes a picture under a person’s clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their consent or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the young person humiliation, distress, or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

Whilst the above are the legal definitions, staff must also be aware of other forms of harm including forced marriage, radicalisation, honour or faith-based abuse, and female genital mutilation.

Mental Health and Safeguarding
The Trust recognises that mental health concerns can be both a safeguarding concern and an indicator that a child may have suffered, or may be at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff should be alert to significant changes in a child's behaviour, emotional wellbeing, presentation, attendance, relationships or engagement with education.

Particular attention should be given to indicators including:
- significant changes in behaviour or mood;
- withdrawal from social situations;
- changes in sleep or eating patterns;
- loss of interest in activities the child previously enjoyed;
- signs of self-harm;
- expressions of hopelessness;
- suicidal thoughts or suicidal ideation;
- risk of suicide; and
- physical signs of harm or neglect.

Staff should not attempt to diagnose a mental health condition. Where there are concerns, these must be discussed promptly with the DSL and/or appropriate mental health lead.

Where a child is at immediate risk, including where there is an immediate risk of suicide or serious self-harm, emergency safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Mental health concerns will be considered alongside the child's wider safeguarding context and will not automatically be attributed to SEND, medical conditions, behaviour or other factors.

Trauma-informed terminology
The Trust recognises that language used when discussing safeguarding concerns can affect children and young people. Staff should use language that is factual, respectful and proportionate and should avoid unnecessarily labelling children. Where appropriate, terms such as ‘child who has experienced harm’, ‘child displaying harmful behaviour’ or ‘person who has harmed’ may be used, while recognising that terminology should be considered on a case-by-case basis and in a manner that supports the child's welfare and safeguarding needs.

Early Help and Family Help

The Trust recognises that providing help and support as soon as problems emerge is fundamental to effective safeguarding.

Schools/UTCs within the Trust will work in accordance with the relevant Doncaster Early Help and Family Help arrangements, the Doncaster Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and local multi-agency threshold arrangements.

Staff should be alert to children and families who may benefit from Early Help or Family Help and should discuss concerns with the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Early Help or Family Help may be appropriate where a child:

- has additional needs, including SEND or medical needs;
- has a mental health need;
- is a young carer;
- is pregnant and/or is a parent themselves;
- is frequently absent or missing from education;
- is persistently or severely absent;
- is affected by domestic abuse;
- is affected by parental mental health difficulties or substance misuse;
- has a family member in prison or is affected by parental offending;
- has experienced multiple suspensions;
- is at risk of permanent exclusion;
- has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent or other harmful behaviour;
- is attending or has been placed in alternative provision;
- is affected by exploitation or serious violence;
- is at risk of radicalisation;
- is experiencing significant family difficulties; or
- is experiencing housing insecurity, homelessness or other circumstances which may affect their safety or wellbeing.

Accessing Early Help in Doncaster

Where a family has agreed to Early Help and the school/UTC wishes to undertake the Lead Practitioner role, the school/UTC will contact the local Early Help Coordinator directly or via the Early Help Coordinator duty line on 01302 736250 or earlyhco@doncaster.gov.uk.

Where a family has agreed to Early Help but the school/UTC is unsure who the appropriate Lead Practitioner should be, or considers that the family would benefit from support from a specialist service, the school/UTC will contact the Early Help Hub within Doncaster MASH on 01302 734110 or EarlyHelpHub@doncaster.gov.uk.

The school/UTC will work with the child and family to identify needs, agree appropriate support and review outcomes. Where an Early Help Assessment is required, the school/UTC will follow current Doncaster arrangements and obtain the necessary consent.

Family Help combines targeted early help and support provided under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, where applicable. It should be delivered in partnership with the child and family wherever possible, while recognising that statutory duties and responsibilities continue to apply where a child is supported under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Targeted early help is voluntary and normally requires the family's consent. Family Help does not replace child protection procedures where there is a concern that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Where Safeguarding Concerns Arise

If at any stage there is concern that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the DSL will consider an immediate referral to Children's Social Care.

Doncaster Children's Social Care / Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): 01302 737777

Out of hours: 01302 796000
Emergency: 999

A safeguarding referral must not be delayed because Early Help or Family Help is already in place, because consent has not been obtained for Early Help, or because information is incomplete.

Doncaster's current arrangements require professionals to telephone MASH to discuss safeguarding concerns. Where the threshold for a safeguarding response is not met, MASH will consider the most appropriate support and whether Early Help should be explored.

Where a child's needs increase, or an Early Help or Family Help response is not sufficiently reducing risk, the DSL will consider whether the case should be stepped up to Children's Social Care or another appropriate service in accordance with the local threshold arrangements.

Professional Challenge and Escalation
Where the school/UTC considers that the response to a child or family's needs does not adequately address the identified level of need or safeguarding risk, the DSL will use the relevant Doncaster safeguarding escalation and professional challenge procedures.

The school/UTC will contribute relevant information to multi-agency assessments, meetings and plans and will continue to monitor the child's welfare while Early Help or Family Help is in place.

Early Help and Family Help will not be regarded as a reason to close or reduce safeguarding oversight where concerns remain.

Information Sharing for Safeguarding
Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.

The Trust and its schools/UTCs will share information with safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies where this is necessary to protect a child or promote their welfare.

The Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 do not prevent the lawful sharing of information for safeguarding purposes. Information will be shared where there is a lawful basis and the sharing is necessary, relevant and proportionate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Staff must not allow uncertainty about data protection to prevent necessary safeguarding information from being shared.

The Trust will comply with the statutory information-sharing duties introduced by the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and any associated statutory guidance in force from September 2026. Staff will share relevant information where the law requires or permits it and where doing so is necessary and proportionate to safeguard children, promote their welfare, assess their needs or support them.

Where appropriate, information may be shared without consent where:
- it is not possible to obtain consent;
- consent cannot reasonably be expected; or
- seeking consent would place a child or another person at risk.

Information-sharing decisions will be recorded, including the rationale for the decision.

The Trust recognises that apparently minor pieces of information may contribute to a significant safeguarding picture when combined with information held by other agencies.

Child in Need

A Child in Need is defined under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services; whose health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of services; or who is disabled.

5 Taking action to ensure that children are safe at school/UTC and at home

It is not the responsibility of Trust staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly, all concerns regarding the welfare of students will be recorded and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead with responsibility for child protection (or another senior member of staff in the absence of the DSL) prior to any discussion with parents/carers.

5.1 Staff will immediately report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Any suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play.
- Any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious.
- Any behaviour, drawing, writing, disclosure or other presentation that gives rise to a safeguarding concern.
- Any concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment.
- Any concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect.
- Any significant changes in a child's presentation, including non-attendance.
- Any hint or disclosure of abuse from any person.
- Any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g., living in a household with children present).
- Staff should be aware that children with SEND may face additional safeguarding challenges and should ensure that any potential barriers to them reporting concerns are removed.
- If a teacher, in the course of their professional duties, discovers that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must personally report the matter directly to the Police. The teacher should also inform the DSL unless there is a good reason not to do so. The school/UTC will consider whether a referral to Children's Social Care is also required. The mandatory reporting duty does not apply to cases based solely on suspicion, where there has been no disclosure by the child or visual evidence that FGM appears to have been carried out. Staff must not examine a child for FGM.
- Any child they believe may benefit from Early Help or Family Help, including emerging problems where early support may prevent difficulties from escalating.
- Any concerns that a child is at risk of, or involved in, serious violent crime.
- Any concern that a child is carrying or using a knife or other weapon, or expressing an intention to do so. The concern must be reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay so that the risk to the child and others can be assessed and appropriate protective action, including a safety and support plan where required, can be considered.

Concerns will be recorded on CPOMS. If the system is unavailable for any reason, Appendix A should be used, copies of this form can be found on reception, in the staff room or from a member of the safeguarding team.

5.2 Responding to Disclosure

Disclosures or information may be received from pupils/students, parents/carers or other members of the public. The Trust recognises that children and adults may find it difficult to disclose concerns about abuse, neglect or exploitation and may carefully choose the person to whom they speak. Staff will respond sensitively and take all concerns seriously.

Children may not always be ready or able to talk about their experiences of abuse, neglect or exploitation and may not recognise that what they are experiencing constitutes abuse. A child may

also make a partial disclosure or communicate their concerns through behaviour, changes in presentation or other means.

Information raising a safeguarding concern must be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL without delay. Staff must make an accurate record of the information received, using the child's own words wherever possible.

Principles
Staff must not investigate or attempt to establish whether an allegation is true. Staff should obtain only sufficient information to understand the immediate concern and enable the DSL to make an informed safeguarding decision.

The school/UTC will promote a culture in which staff feel able to raise safeguarding concerns promptly and discuss safeguarding matters appropriately, including concerns arising online or outside the workplace.

Staff will:
- Stay calm and remain reassuring and supportive.
- Listen carefully and take the concern seriously, without making assumptions about what has happened.
- Allow the child to speak in their own words and avoid requiring them to repeat their disclosure unnecessarily.
- Use a minimal number of open questions, where clarification is necessary, for example, “Can you tell me what happened?” rather than questions which suggest an answer.
- Avoid leading, probing or investigative questions and do not attempt to test the accuracy of the disclosure.
- Remain neutral and non-judgemental, avoiding expressions of shock, disbelief or criticism of the child or any person alleged to have caused harm.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling someone and that the concern will be passed to an appropriate safeguarding professional so that they can be kept safe.
- Explain that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, but that information will only be shared with those who need it to help keep the child or others safe.
- Explain, where appropriate, what will happen next and involve the child in decisions affecting them in accordance with their age, understanding and circumstances.
- Report the concern to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay, and follow the school's/UTC's safeguarding procedures if the DSL is unavailable.
- Make an accurate written record as soon as possible, including the date, time, circumstances, what was said or observed, the child's own words where possible, and any immediate action taken.

The Trust uses CPOMS to record and monitor safeguarding concerns. Where CPOMS is unavailable, staff should use Appendix A – Safeguarding Incident Recording Sheet and transfer the information to CPOMS or the Trust's approved safeguarding recording system as soon as it becomes available.

5.3 Action by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or other senior person in their absence)
Following any information raising a safeguarding concern, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or appropriately trained Deputy DSL will consider:
- any immediate safeguarding or urgent medical needs of the child;
- the child's wishes and feelings, taking account of their age, understanding, communication needs and circumstances;
- the nature, seriousness and context of the concern, including whether the child may be suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm;
- relevant previous safeguarding information and any patterns, cumulative concerns or changes in the child's presentation or circumstances;

- the child's family circumstances and any contextual or extra-familial safeguarding risks, including risks associated with peers, exploitation, serious violence, online activity or intimate relationships;
- the views and information provided by relevant professionals and agencies involved with the child or family;
- whether Children's Social Care, Police, health or another safeguarding partner should be consulted or involved;
- whether the concern may require Early Help, Family Help, support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, or child protection intervention;
- where there is a concern that FGM may have been carried out or that a child is at risk of FGM, the appropriate safeguarding response, including referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police where required. The statutory mandatory reporting duty will be followed where applicable; and
- whether immediate protective action is required to safeguard the child or any other person.

The DSL will determine the appropriate safeguarding response in consultation with relevant agencies where necessary.

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the DSL will make a referral to Children's Social Care without delay. The school/UTC will provide relevant and timely information to support any subsequent multi-agency assessment, strategy discussion, Section 47 enquiry, child protection conference or child protection planning.

Urgent Child Protection Concerns – Doncaster
If you are worried about a child who may be at immediate risk of harm, or if the situation is an emergency, do not wait to contact the LADO. Contact Children's Social Care and/or the Police immediately. The LADO can be contacted once the child is safe.

Children's Social Care / MASH:	01302 737777
Out of hours Children's Social Care:	01302 796000
Police:	101
Emergency:	999

Where the threshold for significant harm is not met, the DSL will consider whether Early Help, Family Help, Section 17 support, pastoral support or another appropriate service is required. Where support is put in place, the school/UTC will continue to monitor the child's welfare and will consider escalation if the child's needs increase, risks remain or the support provided is not sufficiently reducing concerns.

Parents/carers should normally be informed and involved in safeguarding decisions. However, the DSL will consider whether informing parents/carers could:
- place the child or another person at increased risk;
- prejudice a Police or Children's Social Care investigation;
- compromise the child's safety or welfare; or
- otherwise be contrary to the child's best interests.

The decision to inform or not inform parents/carers, and the reasons for that decision, will be recorded.
The school/UTC will consider all available information, including concerns arising outside the home or education setting. Where a child may be experiencing contextual or extra-familial harm, relevant information will be shared with safeguarding partners to support a wider understanding of the child's circumstances and risks.

Where professionals disagree about the level of need, safeguarding threshold or appropriate response, the school/UTC will use the relevant local safeguarding escalation and professional challenge procedures.

If a safeguarding referral is made by a member of staff other than the DSL, the DSL must be informed as soon as possible and the referral must be recorded within the child's safeguarding record. The DSL will confirm what action has been taken and ensure that relevant follow-up occurs.

All decisions, referrals, consultations, information shared, advice received, actions taken and outcomes will be recorded clearly, including the rationale for significant decisions.

5.4 Action following a child protection referral

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or other appropriate member of staff will:

- Maintain appropriate contact with Children's Social Care and other relevant agencies to support the child's safeguarding and welfare.
- Contribute to multi-agency assessments, strategy discussions, section 47 enquiries, child protection conferences, child protection planning and other safeguarding meetings as required.
- Provide a report for, attend, and contribute to any subsequent Child Protection Conference.
- If the child or children have a Child Protection Plan, contribute to the Child Protection Plan, and attend Core Group Meetings and Review Child Protection Conferences.
- Information will be shared with parents/carers where appropriate and lawful, taking account of the child's welfare, confidentiality and any advice from Children's Social Care, Police or other safeguarding partners.
- Where there is disagreement with a safeguarding decision, including a decision not to initiate child protection procedures or not to convene a Child Protection Conference, the DSL will use the relevant local safeguarding escalation and professional challenge procedures.
- Where a child with a Child Protection Plan moves school or goes missing from education, the DSL will immediately inform the child's allocated social worker or relevant safeguarding professional and provide any information required to support continuity of safeguarding arrangements.

5.5 Recording and Monitoring

Safeguarding Recording

All safeguarding concerns must be recorded promptly and accurately.

Staff should record concerns on CPOMS on the same day wherever possible and without unnecessary delay.

Records should clearly identify:

- the nature of the concern;
- what the child said or what was observed;
- relevant context;
- actions taken;
- discussions held;
- decisions made;
- the rationale for decisions;
- referrals made or considered;
- outcomes and follow-up actions.

Records should distinguish clearly between fact, observation, the child's own words and professional opinion.

The DSL will ensure that significant safeguarding information is incorporated into an appropriate chronology.

Where a decision is made not to refer a concern to another agency, the rationale for that decision will be recorded.

Safeguarding records will be stored securely and accessed only by those with a legitimate safeguarding need.

Each school/UTC will record:

- Information about the child: name, address, D.O.B, those with parental responsibility, primary carers, emergency contacts, names of persons authorised to collect from the school/UTC, any court orders, if a child has been subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- Key contacts in other agencies including GP details.
- Any disclosures/accounts from child or others, including parents/carers (and keep original notes).
- All concerns, discussions, decisions, actions taken (dated, timed, and signed) and arrangements for monitoring/reviewing.

All records should be objective and include:

Statements, facts, and observable things (what was seen/heard).

- Diagram indicating position, size, colour of any injuries.
- Words used by the child, recorded as accurately as possible using the child's own words.
- Non-verbal behaviours.

All child protection documents will be retained in a separate 'Child Protection' file for each child and kept separately from the child's main pupil file. Safeguarding files will be stored securely and accessed only by those with a legitimate safeguarding need, in accordance with the Trust's data protection, records management and safeguarding procedures.

Where a child moves to another school or setting, the child protection file will be transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file in accordance with the detailed arrangements set out in Section 3.11 and current statutory guidance. Confirmation of receipt will be obtained and the transfer recorded.

Where a child becomes missing from education or is removed from the admission register to be educated at home, the school/UTC will follow current local authority notification arrangements and ensure that relevant safeguarding information is shared securely and lawfully with the appropriate local authority and safeguarding partners.

The school/UTC will retain child protection files in accordance with current statutory guidance and the Trust's Records Management and Retention Policy. Child protection files will normally be retained until the child's 25th birthday. Where a child protection file relates to child sexual abuse, the file will be retained until the child's 75th birthday. Records will be securely destroyed at the end of the applicable retention period, subject to any legal hold or other statutory requirement.

The School/UTC will monitor:

- Attendance.
- Changes e.g., mood/academic functioning.
- Relationships.
- Language.
- Behaviour.
- Demeanour and appearance.
- Statements and comments.
- Medicals.
- Stories, 'news', drawings.
- Response to PE/sport.
- Family circumstances.

- Parental behaviours/care of child.

5.6 Supporting the Child and Partnership with Parents/Carers

The Trust recognises that the child's welfare is paramount and that effective safeguarding depends on positive, open and honest working relationships with children and their parents/carers wherever this is consistent with safeguarding.

Children will be given an age- and developmentally appropriate explanation of what action is being taken on their behalf and why and will be given appropriate opportunities to express their wishes and feelings.

The school/UTC will provide appropriate safeguarding, pastoral, educational, SEND, health and specialist support according to the child's needs.

The DSL will determine which members of staff need to know safeguarding information and what information they need in order to support and protect the child.

Parents/carers will normally be informed and involved in safeguarding arrangements unless there is a safeguarding reason not to do so, in accordance with Section 3.4 and the relevant provisions of this policy.

Where a child requires additional support, the school/UTC will work with the child, family and relevant agencies to identify and review appropriate support. This may include Early Help or Family Help, pastoral support, counselling, SEND support, health services or other specialist services.

5.7 Allegations regarding Person(s) working in or on behalf of the Trust (Including supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers, agency staff and contractors)

The Trust will follow the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and local safeguarding partnership procedures whenever an allegation or concern is raised about an adult working or volunteering with children.

This applies where an allegation or concern is made that an adult working in or on behalf of the Trust has:

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

These criteria apply to relevant behaviour that occurs in the workplace, in the community or in the individual's personal life where it may indicate that the individual poses a risk of harm to children.

The Headteacher/Principal or appropriate case manager will consider at an early stage whether the concern meets, or may meet, the harm threshold for referral to the LADO.

Where an allegation meets, or may meet, the harm threshold, the LADO will be informed within one working day of the allegation being made or becoming known to the school/UTC. Where there is uncertainty about whether the threshold is met, advice will be sought from the LADO at the earliest opportunity.

The appropriate case manager will ensure that the matter is referred to the LADO and will follow the LADO's advice and relevant local allegations-management procedures.

Where the allegation concerns a Headteacher/Principal, the concern must be referred to the CEO in accordance with Trust procedures.

Where the allegation concerns a member of the Central Trust Team, the concern must be reported to the CEO and Chair of Trustees in accordance with Trust procedures.

Where the allegation concerns the CEO, the concern must be referred directly to the Chair of Trustees in accordance with Trust procedures.

The Trust will not undertake unnecessary investigation or interview the individual before appropriate consultation with the LADO and/or Police where doing so could prejudice a safeguarding or criminal investigation.

Where there is an immediate safeguarding concern, referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police will not be delayed while LADO advice is obtained.

All decisions, actions, referrals, advice received and outcomes will be appropriately recorded, including the rationale for significant decisions.

The Trust will ensure that appropriate support is provided to children, families and staff affected by allegations, while maintaining appropriate confidentiality and lawful information-sharing arrangements.

Records relating to allegations against adults working with children, including unfounded allegations, will be retained in accordance with current statutory guidance and the Trust's Records Management and Retention Policy, normally until the individual's normal retirement age or 10 years from the date of the allegation, whichever is later.

5.8 Low level concerns
What is a low-level concern?
The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. It refers to behaviour towards a child that does not meet the harm threshold but may indicate a breach of professional boundaries, the Staff Code of Conduct or other expected standards of behaviour.

A low-level concern is any concern, however minor, or even if it is no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt', that an adult working in or on behalf of the school/UTC or Trust may have acted in a way that:

is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct or other relevant professional standards, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
does not meet the harm threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Staff must report all such concerns, however minor, which may indicate a breach of professional boundaries or inappropriate conduct. Concerns must be reported promptly, recorded and managed in accordance with the Trust's low-level concerns procedure, with due regard to confidentiality, data protection and secure record keeping.

A low-level concern should be managed through the Trust's low-level concerns procedure unless, following consideration by the Headteacher/Principal, DSL or appropriate case manager, the concern meets or may meet the harm threshold. Where the harm threshold may be met, the matter must be managed in accordance with Section 5.7 – Allegations regarding Person(s) working in or on behalf of the Trust.

Examples of behaviour that may give rise to a low-level concern include, but are not limited to:
- being over-friendly with children;
- having favourites or treating a child more favourably than others;
- taking photographs of children on a personal mobile phone or other unauthorised device;

- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door without an appropriate reason or agreed safeguarding arrangement; and
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour, or behaviour which may appear inappropriate but may have a reasonable explanation in the circumstances, through to behaviour which may indicate an intention to enable abuse.

Low-level concerns may relate to behaviour occurring within or outside the school/UTC or workplace where the behaviour may be relevant to the individual's suitability to work with children.

It is important that all such concerns are shared appropriately, recorded and dealt with effectively. This supports a culture of openness, trust and transparency and can also help protect those working in or on behalf of the school/UTC or Trust from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Low-level concerns may relate to any adult working in or on behalf of the school/UTC or Trust, including employees, supply and agency staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, contractors and other adults working with children.

The Trust will maintain a culture in which staff feel able to raise concerns about adult behaviour without fear of reprisal and understand that reporting a concern is part of maintaining effective safeguarding arrangements.

All low-level concerns will be recorded, retained securely and reviewed regularly by the appropriate senior leader to identify patterns, cumulative concerns, repeated concerns about an individual or wider cultural issues.

Where a pattern of low-level concerns emerges, the Headteacher/Principal, DSL and/or appropriate Trust leader will consider whether the matter should be referred to the LADO or whether other safeguarding, disciplinary, training or management action is required.

A low-level concern will not automatically result in disciplinary action. The response will be proportionate to the nature, context and frequency of the concern and will take account of any relevant information, patterns or wider safeguarding considerations.

A low-level concern must not be treated as insignificant simply because it does not meet the LADO harm threshold.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – Doncaster
Telephone: 01302 737332
Email: LADO@doncaster.gov.uk
Where a child is in immediate danger or there is an immediate risk of serious harm, contact the Police on 999.
Safeguarding concerns should be discussed with Doncaster Children's Social Care/MASH by telephone in accordance with current local arrangements. The school/UTC should follow the advice and safeguarding procedures provided by Children's Social Care and the Police.

5.9 Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children and those with a Social Worker
The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. Appropriate staff will also have information about the child's care arrangements and, where relevant, the level of authority delegated to the child's carer by the local authority. Information will be shared only with those who need it to safeguard and support the child.

The Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will have appropriate information about the child's social worker, as well as the name and contact details of the Virtual School Head for children in care.

The Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children and DSL will work with the Virtual School Head and relevant professionals to ensure that looked after children receive appropriate support through their Personal Education Plan (PEP).

For children who have or have had a social worker but are not looked after, the school/UTC will consider their individual safeguarding, educational and support needs and will work with the relevant social worker and other professionals as appropriate.

Care Leavers
The school/UTC recognises that care leavers may continue to require safeguarding, pastoral and educational support after leaving care. The DSL will have appropriate information about the local authority Personal Adviser responsible for supporting a care leaver and will liaise with them, where appropriate, regarding any safeguarding, welfare, attendance or educational concerns affecting the young person.

The DSL and relevant staff will consider how safeguarding and welfare circumstances may affect the child's attendance, engagement, learning and educational outcomes and will work with appropriate colleagues and professionals to address identified barriers.

For further information, see the Trust's relevant arrangements for looked after and previously looked after children and current DfE statutory guidance.

5.10 Work Experience
Where schools/UTCs place pupils/students in work experience, they will have detailed procedures to safeguard pupils/students undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking placement providers and people who provide placements or supervise pupils/students. These arrangements will be in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education and other relevant statutory guidance and will be detailed within the school's/UTC's Work Experience Policy.

Before a pupil/student commences a work experience placement, the school/UTC will assess the safeguarding arrangements of the placement provider and ensure that appropriate checks are undertaken, taking account of the nature of the placement, the age and individual circumstances of the pupil/student and the level of contact they will have with adults and other children.

Where a person supervising a pupil/student undertaking work experience may be engaged in regulated activity relating to children, the school/UTC will consider whether an Enhanced DBS check, including Children's Barred List information where required, is necessary in accordance with current statutory requirements. From 1 September 2026, the previous supervision exemption for regulated activity with children no longer applies. Teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children will constitute regulated activity where the activity is undertaken on more than 3 days in any 30-day period, or once overnight between 2am and 6am where there is an opportunity for face-to-face contact with children.

The school/UTC will ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place throughout the placement and will maintain appropriate contact with the pupil/student and placement provider. Any safeguarding concern arising during a work experience placement must be reported to the school's/UTC's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.

Children under the age of 16 cannot obtain a DBS check. Where applicable, the school/UTC will ensure that safeguarding arrangements, supervision and risk assessments are appropriate to the age and circumstances of the child.

5.11 Staying with Host Families

Schools/UTCs may make arrangements for students to stay with host families during foreign exchange trips, sports tours or other residential activities. In such circumstances, the school/UTC will undertake appropriate safeguarding checks and risk assessments in accordance with current statutory guidance and the nature of the arrangement.

The school/UTC will consider whether the arrangement constitutes private fostering and will notify the local authority where required. Appropriate checks will be undertaken for host families and other adults where they are legally required and proportionate to the safeguarding risk.

Where arrangements take place overseas, the school/UTC will work with the relevant partner organisation or school to establish appropriate safeguarding arrangements and recognise that UK DBS checks cannot be obtained for adults overseas.

The school/UTC will ensure that appropriate supervision, emergency contact arrangements and safeguarding reporting procedures are in place for the duration of the stay. Any safeguarding concern arising during a host family arrangement must be reported to the school's/UTC's DSL without delay.

5.12 Child-on-Child Abuse

The Trust recognises that children are capable of abusing other children and that child-on-child abuse can occur online, outside the school/UTC and within the wider community.

Child-on-child abuse may include bullying, cyberbullying, physical abuse, emotional abuse, discriminatory behaviour including racism, faith-targeted abuse, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour, sharing of nude or semi-nude imagery, coercion, exploitation and serious violence.

Abuse will never be dismissed as "banter", "boys being boys", "just joking" or "part of growing up". The needs and welfare of both the child who has experienced harm and the child whose behaviour has caused concern will be considered.

The Trust recognises that children who have experienced abuse may themselves display harmful behaviour. This will not remove the need to safeguard and support them.

The impact of incidents on the wider student/pupil population will also be considered and appropriate support and education will be provided where wider safeguarding risks are identified.

Misogyny, misandry, sexism and other gender-based prejudice may contribute to harmful attitudes and behaviour and will be challenged appropriately.

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

- Bullying, including cyber bullying (by text message, on social networking sites, etc) and prejudice-based bullying.
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Discriminatory behaviour and abuse, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic abuse and other forms of prejudice-based harm.
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.
- Sexual harassment, such as casual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may occur as a standalone incident or form part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- Making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes.

- Upskirting (typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the young person humiliation, distress, or alarm).
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element.

Serious Violence and Youth Violence
Issues may arise which are specific to the local area or population, including gang activity, serious youth violence and other forms of extra-familial harm. Staff should be alert to possible indicators that a child may be at risk of, or involved in, serious or youth violence. These may include:
- unexplained injuries or injuries consistent with violence;
- unexplained money, gifts or new or expensive possessions;
- changes in friendships, peer groups or associations;
- increasing absence, persistent truancy or disengagement from education;
- involvement in criminal activity or concerns about exploitation;
- carrying, possessing or threatening to use a knife or other weapon;
- increased aggression, threats or significant changes in behaviour; and
- information or intelligence indicating a risk of serious violence, exploitation or involvement in criminal groups or networks.

Staff should consider these indicators alongside the child's wider circumstances and any other safeguarding concerns. No single indicator should be considered in isolation.

Upskirting
Upskirting is a criminal offence under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019. It involves taking a photograph or recording beneath a person's clothing without their consent or knowledge in circumstances where the relevant statutory conditions are met. Victims can be of any gender. Any concern relating to upskirting must be reported to the DSL without delay and managed as a safeguarding concern.

The NSPCC Report Abuse in Education helpline (0800 136 663) provides information, advice and support to children and young people, parents/carers and professionals who have concerns about sexual abuse or harassment in education settings.

5.13 Child-on-Child Sexual Violence and Harassment
The Trust recognises that sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour can occur between children, online or offline, within school/UTC, outside school/UTC and within intimate personal relationships.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment will never be dismissed or normalised as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys". The Trust adopts an attitude of "it could happen here" and will take all reports and concerns seriously.

Staff must report any concern about sexual violence, sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay. Staff must not investigate the incident themselves, attempt to mediate between children or promise confidentiality.

The DSL will consider the child's wishes and feelings, the nature and seriousness of the behaviour, age and developmental stage, power imbalance, coercion, consent, whether the behaviour is a one-off or pattern, online and offline factors, intimate relationships, wider contextual safeguarding risks and any risk to other children.

The school/UTC will consider whether the incident requires referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police, whether immediate protective action is required and what support is required for the child who has experienced harm and the child displaying the behaviour.

The Trust will consider the impact on the wider pupil/student population and will provide appropriate pastoral, safeguarding, education and specialist support where required.

Appendix K – Incidents of Sexual Assault, Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment provides the detailed response pathway.

Appendix L – A Continuum of Children and Young People's Sexual Behaviours provides guidance on recognising and responding proportionately to sexual behaviours.

Concerns involving nudes or semi-nudes must also be managed in accordance with **Appendix J** – Making or Sharing Nudes or Semi-Nudes, Including AI-Generated or Manipulated Imagery.

5.14 Physical Intervention and Use of Reasonable Force

All staff are encouraged to use de-escalation techniques and creative alternative strategies that are specific to the child. Restraint will only be used as a last resort and all incidents of this are reviewed, recorded, and monitored. Reasonable force will be used in accordance with government guidance and the school's/UTC 's Positive Handling Policy. Reasonable adjustments will be taken into account when restraint is used on SEND students. With SEND students we will ensure that positive handling strategies are identified within the child's individual support plan, risk assessment, behaviour support plan or other relevant individual plan. Staff will identify key triggers and ensure that de-escalation and positive strategies are explicit in provision maps alongside risk assessment in partnership with students and parents.

Examples of physical intervention that may be used where lawful, necessary and proportionate include:

- leading and guiding a pupil by the hand or arm or shepherding them with a hand in the centre of their back.
- holding a pupil who has lost control until they are calm and safe.
- physically moving between and separating pupils.
- blocking a pupil's path.
- where there is immediate risk of injury, any necessary action that is consistent with the concept of 'reasonable force' - for example to prevent a pupil running into a busy road or hitting or hurting someone.
- The use of more restrictive physical interventions only where lawful, necessary and proportionate to prevent serious harm, and in accordance with the school's/UTC's Positive Handling Policy, relevant training and current government guidance.

5.15 Alternative Provision

Safeguarding Responsibility for Alternative Provision

Where a school/UTC places a child or young person in alternative provision, the school/UTC retains responsibility for the safeguarding and welfare of that child and must satisfy itself that the placement is appropriate, safe and meets the child's individual needs.

Before a placement begins, the school/UTC will undertake appropriate due diligence and obtain information and assurance regarding:

- safeguarding and child protection arrangements;
- safer recruitment and DBS checks;
- staff suitability and qualifications;
- attendance monitoring and arrangements for reporting absence;
- behaviour and incident reporting;
- information sharing;
- emergency and contingency arrangements;
- SEND and medical needs;
- online safety;
- arrangements for reporting safeguarding concerns;
- the location at which the child will receive education;
- any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend; and
- the provider's arrangements for informing the school/UTC of any staffing or other changes that may affect the child's safety.

The school/UTC will obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that the appropriate safeguarding and safer recruitment checks have been carried out on individuals working at the provision, including confirmation that the provider will notify the school/UTC of relevant staffing changes so that appropriate checks on new staff can be assured.

The school/UTC will maintain accurate records of where the child is based during school hours, including the address of the alternative provision and details of any subcontracted provision or satellite sites.

The school/UTC will maintain regular communication with the alternative provision provider and will monitor the child's attendance, behaviour, progress, welfare and safeguarding throughout the placement.

Alternative provision placements will be reviewed at least half-termly to provide assurance that the child is attending regularly, the placement remains safe and appropriate, and the provision continues to meet the child's educational, pastoral, safeguarding and, where relevant, SEND needs.

Where concerns arise during a placement, the school/UTC will act promptly, seek appropriate safeguarding advice and review the suitability and safety of the placement. Where necessary, the placement will be suspended or ended and alternative arrangements considered.

The Trust and school/UTC will ensure that safeguarding concerns arising from alternative provision are managed in accordance with Trust safeguarding procedures, relevant local safeguarding arrangements and current statutory guidance.

5.16 Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is an arrangement made privately, without the involvement of the local authority, for the care and accommodation of a child under the age of 16 years (or under 18 years if the child is disabled) by someone who is not the child's parent or a close relative, where the arrangement is intended to last for 28 days or more.

For the purposes of private fostering, a close relative is a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (including by marriage, civil partnership or half-blood), or a step-parent. Cousins, great-aunts, great-uncles and great-grandparents are not considered close relatives for the purposes of private fostering.

Where a school/UTC becomes aware of a child who is, or may be, privately fostered, it will notify the relevant local authority without delay and work in accordance with current local authority safeguarding procedures. Staff should also inform the DSL or Deputy DSL so that the child's welfare and safeguarding needs can be considered.

5.17 Remote Learning and Off-Site Digital Safeguarding

Safeguarding responsibilities remain the same when learning or communication takes place remotely or outside the school/UTC site. Staff must report safeguarding concerns immediately through the school's/UTC's safeguarding procedures.

Staff will only communicate with pupils/students using approved school/UTC equipment, systems and communication platforms. Communication must be professional and appropriate and should normally take place during agreed working hours, except where a safeguarding concern requires urgent action.

Staff must not use personal social media accounts or unauthorised communication platforms to communicate with pupils/students.

Where online lessons or meetings are recorded, pupils/students and relevant staff will be informed in accordance with the Trust's data protection and digital safeguarding arrangements.

Staff will ensure that online learning environments are appropriate, professional and do not expose pupils/students to avoidable safeguarding risks.

Any safeguarding concern arising from remote learning or online communication must be reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

Trust Safeguarding Policy Version 16 agreed at Trust Board September 2026

APPENDIX A – SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT RECORDING SHEET

Use only when CPOMS / the Trust's approved safeguarding recording system is unavailable.

RECORD → REPORT TO DSL → ASSESS → ACT → TRANSFER TO CPOMS

Temporary record only. Transfer to the approved safeguarding system as soon as available and store securely.

1. CHILD AND INCIDENT DETAILS	
Child / DOB / Year	_____
Date / time / location	_____
Recorded by / role / date-time	_____
2. CONCERN / DISCLOSURE	
Type of concern	☐ Disclosure ☐ Observation ☐ Third party ☐ Online ☐ Child-on-child ☐ Attendance ☐ Other: _____
What happened / observed	_____
Child's own words	_____
DO NOT INVESTIGATE OR PROMISE CONFIDENTIALITY. RECORD FACTS AND REPORT WITHOUT DELAY.	
3. IMMEDIATE SAFEGUARDING ACTION	
DSL / Deputy informed	Name: _____ Date/time: _____
Immediate action / support	_____
Police / Social Care / agency	☐ No ☐ Yes Details: _____
Parents / carers	☐ No ☐ Yes Name / date / time: _____ If not informed, reason: _____
4. DSL ASSESSMENT / DECISION	
Action	☐ Immediate protection ☐ CP referral ☐ Family Help / S17 ☐ Support / monitor ☐ Other: _____
Rationale / risk / context	_____
Child's wishes / feelings	_____
5. REFERRAL / FOLLOW-UP	
Information shared / reason	_____
Advice / action agreed	_____
Outcome / further action	_____
Review / responsible person	_____ Date: _____

6. RECORD COMPLETION	
Transferred to CPOMS / approved system	☐ Yes Date/time: _____ ☐ Not yet – reason: _____
DSL sign-off	Name: _____ Date/time: _____

APPENDIX B – Notification of Suspected, Admitted or Known Abuse of Child(ren) to Children's Social Care

Use this flow chart alongside Appendix C, the Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Doncaster safeguarding procedures.

CONCERN INDICATES THAT A CHILD MAY BE SUFFERING, OR IS LIKELY TO SUFFER, SIGNIFICANT HARM

▼

IMMEDIATE ACTION
The concern must be reported to the DSL without delay. The DSL should assess the information available and must not delay action because information is incomplete. If the DSL/deputy is unavailable, this must not delay appropriate safeguarding action.

▼

DSL ASSESSMENT
Consider the child's immediate safety, the child's wishes and feelings, the nature and severity of the concern, previous safeguarding information, family circumstances, contextual/extra-familial risks and whether the concern indicates significant harm. Consider whether Police, Children's Social Care or another agency should be contacted immediately.

▼

IMMEDIATE RISK / EMERGENCY
If the child is at immediate risk of harm or the situation is an emergency, contact Children's Social Care and/or Police immediately. Call 999 where there is an immediate threat to life or serious harm.

URGENT BUT NOT AN EMERGENCY
Contact Doncaster Children's Social Care promptly for advice/referral. Do not wait for a written referral if doing so would delay safeguarding action.

▼

DONCASTER CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE – SAFEGUARDING REFERRAL
Children's Social Care / MASH: 01302 737777
Out of hours Children's Social Care: 01302 796000
Police: 101
Emergency: 999
Where a child is at immediate risk of significant harm or in immediate danger, contact the Police on 999.

▼

MAKE THE REFERRAL
Provide the information available at the time. The referral should include, where known:
- child's name, date of birth and current location;
- parent/carer details and parental responsibility;
- siblings/co-resident children and relevant household information;
- known professionals/agencies involved;
- the nature of the concern and why significant harm is suspected;
- relevant history and previous safeguarding concerns;
- action already taken and any immediate protective action;
- the child's wishes and feelings where appropriate; and
- whether and when parents/carers have been informed.

▼

DO NOT DELAY THE REFERRAL FOR INCOMPLETE INFORMATION
A safeguarding referral must not be delayed because all information is not yet available. Provide the information known at the time and provide further relevant information as it becomes available.

▼

PARENTS / CARERS
Parents/carers should normally be informed of a referral and involved in safeguarding decisions. However, the DSL should seek advice before informing them where doing so could increase risk to the child or another person,

prejudice a police or social care investigation, or otherwise be contrary to the child's welfare. Record the decision and rationale.

▼

RECORD THE REFERRAL
Record:
• who the referral was made to;
• the date and time;
• the method used to make the referral and any reference number or contact details provided;
• the information provided;
• advice received and actions agreed;
• whether the child and parents/carers were informed and, if not, the reason; and
• the name of the DSL/designated person responsible.

▼

CONFIRM THE OUTCOME AND FOLLOW UP
The DSL will establish what action Children's Social Care will take and contribute relevant information to any assessment. If the response does not adequately address the child's needs or risks, the DSL will use the appropriate local escalation procedure and seek further safeguarding advice.

If acknowledgement of the referral or information about the next steps is not received within the expected timescale, the DSL will follow up with Children's Social Care and, where necessary, use the relevant local safeguarding escalation and professional challenge procedures.

▼

SECTION 47 / CHILD PROTECTION	**FAMILY HELP / OTHER SUPPORT**
Where there is reasonable cause to suspect significant harm, Children's Social Care will determine the appropriate statutory response. The school/UTC will cooperate fully with assessment, enquiries, strategy discussions and child protection planning.	Where the concern does not meet the significant-harm threshold, consider Family Help, including targeted early help and/or Section 17 support, in accordance with local arrangements and the child's needs.

PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE AND ESCALATION

If the school/UTC is dissatisfied with the response, does not receive an expected response, or considers that the child's needs or risks have not been adequately addressed, the DSL must use the relevant local escalation procedure and professionally challenge the response where necessary. Safeguarding concerns must not be closed simply because a referral has been made.

If the concern also involves an allegation about an adult working with children, follow Appendix D immediately.

APPENDIX C – ACTIONS WHERE THERE ARE CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD

Use this flow chart alongside the Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, local safeguarding procedures and current statutory guidance.

A CONCERN, DISCLOSURE, OBSERVATION OR INFORMATION INDICATES THAT A CHILD MAY NEED HELP OR PROTECTION

▼

LISTEN • REASSURE • RECORD • REPORT
Listen carefully and calmly. Do not promise confidentiality. Do not investigate. Record the concern accurately, including the child's own words where possible, and report it to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

▼

DSL / DEPUTY AVAILABLE	**DSL / DEPUTY NOT AVAILABLE**
Pass the concern to the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately.	Do not delay action. Follow the school's/UTC's safeguarding arrangements and contact the appropriate senior safeguarding lead or local safeguarding service.

▼

DSL INITIAL ASSESSMENT
Consider the child's immediate safety, the child's wishes and voice, the nature and level of concern, previous safeguarding information, family circumstances, extra-familial/contextual risks, SEND or medical needs, attendance, exploitation, domestic abuse, serious violence, harmful sexual behaviour and any other relevant factors.

▼

IMMEDIATE DANGER / EMERGENCY	**REASONABLE CAUSE TO SUSPECT SIGNIFICANT HARM**	**CHILD IN NEED / FAMILY HELP REQUIRED**	**NO CURRENT THRESHOLD / MONITOR**
Contact Police/999 and/or Children's Social Care immediately. Take action to protect the child. Do not wait for a referral form or further internal investigation.	Make a child protection referral to Children's Social Care in accordance with local procedures. Consider section 47 enquiries and provide relevant information to support multi-agency assessment.	Consider Family Help, including targeted early help and section 17 Child in Need support, using local thresholds and referral arrangements. Work with the child and family and relevant agencies.	Provide appropriate pastoral or universal support, record the concern and continue to monitor. Escalate if new information or a pattern of concerns changes the level of risk.

▼

IN ALL CASES
The DSL will record the concern, assessment, decision, action taken, referrals, advice received and outcome. Information will be shared on a lawful, necessary and proportionate basis. The child's welfare and best interests remain central to decision-making.

▼

INFORMATION SHARING AND PARENTS/CARERS
The DSL will consider whether and when to inform parents/carers. Parents/carers should normally be involved unless there is a safeguarding reason why doing so may place the child or another person at risk, prejudice an investigation or otherwise be contrary to the child's best interests. Seek advice from Children's Social Care, Police or the LADO where appropriate.

▼

REFERRAL FOLLOW-UP
Where a referral is made, the DSL will provide relevant information and contribute to multi-agency assessment and planning. If the response does not adequately address the child's needs or risk, the DSL will use the appropriate escalation process and seek further safeguarding advice.

▼

CHILD'S VOICE AND ONGOING SUPPORT
The child should be kept informed and involved in decisions affecting them, taking account of age, understanding, communication needs and wishes. Consider advocacy, pastoral support, SEND/medical adjustments, attendance, mental health and other ongoing support needs.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

ALLEGATION ABOUT AN ADULT	CHILD MAY BE AT RISK OUTSIDE THE HOME
If the concern also involves an allegation about a member of staff, volunteer, supply/agency worker, trainee teacher, contractor or other adult working with children, follow Appendix D and section 5.7 immediately.	Consider extra-familial harm, exploitation, serious violence, harmful sexual behaviour, trafficking, online harms, peer abuse and contextual safeguarding. Share relevant information with appropriate safeguarding partners.

APPENDIX D – ALLEGATIONS / CONCERNS ABOUT ADULTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Use this flow chart alongside KCSIE 2026, local LADO procedures and Trust allegations procedures.

CONCERN / ALLEGATION RAISED ABOUT AN ADULT WORKING IN OR ON BEHALF OF THE TRUST

▼

Immediately report the concern to the Headteacher/Principal or designated case manager.
If the concern is about the Headteacher/Principal → report to the CEO / appropriate Trust case manager.
If about the CEO → report directly to the Chair of Trustees.
If about a Central Trust Team member → follow Trust escalation arrangements.

▼

DO NOT investigate unnecessarily, interview the child or alleged adult, or disclose information to the alleged adult before appropriate advice has been obtained where this could prejudice a safeguarding or criminal investigation.

Record the concern accurately, using the person's own words where possible, and preserve relevant evidence.

▼

INITIAL SAFEGUARDING TRIAGE
Consider immediate risk to the child, whether a crime may have occurred, whether Children's Social Care or Police need to be contacted immediately, and whether the concern may meet the LADO harm threshold.

▼

IMMEDIATE SAFEGUARDING RISK / POSSIBLE CRIME	MAY MEET / MAY NOT MEET LADO THRESHOLD	DOES NOT MEET LADO THRESHOLD
Contact Children's Social Care and/or Police immediately. Do not wait for LADO advice where this would delay protection. Then contact/consult the LADO as appropriate.	Contact the LADO for advice at an early stage where there is uncertainty. The case manager should not make a final threshold decision without appropriate consultation where the position is unclear. Where an allegation meets, or may meet, the LADO threshold, the LADO will be contacted without delay and normally within one working day. Where there is uncertainty about the threshold, advice will be sought from the LADO at the earliest opportunity.	Consider whether the matter is a low-level concern, disciplinary/conduct matter, training issue, or another safeguarding concern. Record the decision and rationale.

▼

LADO / MULTI-AGENCY DECISION
Where the concern meets, or may meet, the LADO threshold, follow local LADO procedures. The LADO will advise whether the allegation should be managed under the allegations framework and whether Police, Children's Social Care or other agencies need to be involved.

▼

WHERE THE ADULT IS EMPLOYED / ENGAGED BY ANOTHER ORGANISATION
For supply teachers, agency staff, trainee teachers, contractors, volunteers or other adults not directly employed by the school/UTC, work with the relevant employer, agency, training provider or organisation. The school/UTC retains responsibility for safeguarding the child and for appropriate information sharing, while disciplinary/employment action is managed by the appropriate employer/organisation.

▼

MANAGE THE OUTCOME
Follow the agreed LADO / multi-agency / Trust process. This may include investigation, disciplinary action, risk management, referral to the DBS where the legal criteria are met, referral to other agencies, and/or safeguarding support for the child.

▼

SUPPORT THE CHILD AND OTHERS AFFECTED
Provide appropriate safeguarding, pastoral and/or specialist support. Consider the impact on other children and staff, any ongoing risk, and whether additional risk assessments or protective measures are required.

▼

RECORD, REVIEW AND CLOSE
Record all decisions, actions, referrals, advice received and outcomes, including the rationale for decisions. Maintain confidentiality and share information on a need-to-know basis. Review whether further safeguarding action, staff learning, policy change or wider risk management is required.

LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS – IMPORTANT

If the concern does not meet the LADO threshold but indicates that an adult may have acted inconsistently with the Staff Code of Conduct or professional expectations, it must still be reported and recorded as a low-level concern in accordance with the Trust procedure. Low-level concerns must be reviewed for patterns or cumulative concerns. A pattern may require escalation to the LADO or other safeguarding action.

APPENDIX E – ADULT ACCESS TO STUDENTS

Visitor, contractor, former student and other adult access arrangements

NO ADULT SHOULD HAVE UNSUPERVISED ACCESS TO CHILDREN UNLESS THEIR ROLE, CHECKS AND SCHOOL AUTHORISATION PERMIT THIS.

▼

ADULT ARRIVES / REQUESTS ACCESS TO A STUDENT

All visitors report to reception, sign in and follow the school's/UTC's visitor procedures. The purpose of the visit and identity of the visitor must be established before access is permitted.

▼

AUTHORISED / EXPECTED VISITOR

Confirm identity, purpose and appropriate access arrangements. Check whether the visitor requires supervision and whether relevant DBS / safeguarding checks apply to their role.

UNEXPECTED / UNKNOWN / CONCERNING REQUEST

Do not provide access to the student. Refer the request to the Headteacher/Principal or designated senior member of staff. Consider safeguarding, security and information-sharing implications.

▼

VISITOR MANAGEMENT

Visitors must be appropriately signed in and identifiable while on site. Visitors without the required checks must be supervised in accordance with local arrangements and must not be given unsupervised access to children. Regular visitors/contractors will be subject to the relevant pre-employment or safeguarding checks and recording requirements.

▼

REQUEST TO SEE / SPEAK TO A STUDENT

The Headteacher/Principal or authorised senior leader decides whether access is appropriate. Consider the child's welfare, the purpose of the contact, parental/carer involvement where appropriate, confidentiality, any safeguarding plan or court order, and whether contact could place the child or another person at risk.

▼

EDUCATIONAL / SAFEGUARDING PURPOSE

Where access is appropriate, agree who will be present, where the meeting will take place, and any supervision or safeguarding arrangements required.

NOT APPROPRIATE / RISK IDENTIFIED

Do not facilitate contact. Seek advice from the DSL and/or relevant senior leader and record the decision where it is a safeguarding matter.

▼

POLICE / CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE / OTHER STATUTORY AGENCIES

Requests from Police, Children's Social Care or other statutory agencies must be dealt with promptly and sensitively. Staff must not apply a blanket rule that parental consent is always required. The DSL/Headteacher/Principal should liaise with the relevant agency and consider whether informing parents/carers could place the child or another person at risk, prejudice an investigation or otherwise be contrary to the child's welfare.

▼

FORMER STUDENTS / YOUNG ADULTS / PERSONAL CONTACT

Former students and other young adults are not automatically permitted access to current pupils. Any contact must be authorised and risk assessed. Unsupervised contact with current pupils must not occur unless the individual's role, checks and arrangements expressly permit it.

▼

CONTRACTORS / AGENCY STAFF / VOLUNTEERS / WORK EXPERIENCE / OTHER ADULTS

The school/UTC will determine the appropriate safeguarding checks, supervision and access arrangements based on the individual's role and the nature of their contact with children. Relevant DBS requirements will be applied in accordance with current statutory guidance.

▼

IF A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN ARISES

Report immediately to the DSL. If the concern is about an adult working with children, follow Appendix D and section 5.7. If the adult presents an immediate security or safety risk, follow the school's emergency and site security procedures and contact Police where necessary.

APPENDIX F – PREVENT DUTY AND RADICALISATION

IDENTIFY → REPORT TO DSL → ASSESS RISK → SUPPORT / REFER → RECORD → REVIEW

▼

WHAT IS THE PREVENT DUTY?
The Trust has a duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Prevent is part of the Trust's wider safeguarding arrangements and should be applied proportionately and in a child-centred way.

▼

RADICALISATION / EXTREMISM CONCERN	VULNERABILITY / CONTEXT
Concerns may arise from changes in behaviour, language or associations; online activity; exposure to extremist narratives; or information from a child, family, staff member or another agency.	Consider the child's individual circumstances, vulnerabilities, online activity, peer/adult influences, family and community context and any other safeguarding risks.

▼

REPORT THE CONCERN
All staff must report concerns to the DSL without delay and record the information accurately. Staff should not investigate, challenge extremist views themselves or promise confidentiality. If the DSL is unavailable, this must not delay appropriate safeguarding action.

▼

DSL INITIAL ASSESSMENT
The DSL considers the nature and credibility of the concern, the child's views and circumstances, the level of risk, relevant history, online and offline factors, and whether the concern may also involve another safeguarding issue such as exploitation, serious violence, abuse or harmful behaviour.

▼

LOWER-LEVEL / EARLY CONCERN	POTENTIAL PREVENT / TERRORISM RISK
Consider appropriate pastoral, curriculum, Family Help or other support. Monitor and review in line with the child's needs and local arrangements.	Seek appropriate Prevent advice and consider referral through the locally agreed Channel / Prevent pathway where the threshold is met. A Prevent referral does not replace normal safeguarding action.

▼

LOCAL PARTNERSHIP / MULTI-AGENCY WORKING
The Trust will work with the relevant local authority, safeguarding partners, Police and other agencies as appropriate. Information will be shared where there is a lawful basis and it is necessary and proportionate to safeguard the child or others.

▼

CHANNEL / PREVENT SUPPORT
Where a referral is appropriate, the DSL will provide relevant information and contribute to the assessment and support process. The purpose of Channel is voluntary, multi-agency support for people identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. A referral does not mean that a person has committed a criminal offence.

▼

ONLINE SAFETY
The Trust recognises that children may encounter extremist or terrorist content online, including through social media, gaming, messaging platforms and other online communities. Filtering and monitoring, curriculum provision, digital literacy and safeguarding processes will be used to reduce risk and support children to make safer choices.

▼

RECORD, REVIEW AND ESCALATE

Record the concern, assessment, information shared, decisions, rationale, referrals, advice received and outcomes. Continue to monitor risk and review support. If concerns remain or increase, seek further safeguarding advice and escalate through the appropriate local pathway.

APPENDIX G – CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE) AND CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

IDENTIFY → REPORT TO DSL → ASSESS RISK → REFER / SUPPORT → RECORD → REVIEW

▼

CCE AND CSE ARE FORMS OF CHILD ABUSE
The Trust recognises that CCE and CSE are forms of child abuse. They can occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal or sexual activity. Exploitation may occur online or offline and a child may have been exploited even where activity appears consensual.

▼

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)
May involve grooming, inappropriate relationships, older partners, parties, gangs, organised abuse or online exploitation. It may involve sexual activity, coercion, sexual violence or exploitation.

CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE)
May involve coercion or control into criminal activity for something the child wants, financial/other advantage, or through violence or threats. It may occur online or offline.

▼

POSSIBLE INDICATORS
Unexplained gifts or possessions • concerning associations • older partners • changes in emotional wellbeing • alcohol/drug misuse • missing episodes or regularly returning late • persistent absence/disengagement • pregnancy or STIs • coercion, threats or violence.

▼

ONLINE AND CONTEXTUAL RISKS
Exploitation may take place through social media, messaging platforms, gaming and other online communities. Consider links with gangs, organised crime, serious violence, sexual violence, sextortion, blackmail, cybercrime and other harmful online activity.

▼

FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION
Children may be exploited through fraud, scams, theft, money laundering or being required to open/use bank accounts or transfer money for others.

GROUP-BASED CSE
Sexual exploitation may involve an individual, peer group, organised group or network. Consider links with coercion, violence, trafficking and criminal exploitation.

TEENAGE RELATIONSHIP ABUSE
Abuse within intimate/dating relationships may include controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, physical or sexual abuse, monitoring, isolation, threats or financial abuse.

SERIOUS VIOLENCE
Serious violence may be both a consequence and a mechanism of exploitation, including threats, assaults, weapons, drug activity, criminality and coercion.

▼

HOME TAKEOVER / CUCKOOING
Children may be involved in or affected by the criminal exploitation of a home or other property. Indicators may include unfamiliar adults attending a home, increased criminal activity, drug dealing, unexplained visitors, changes in behaviour or associations, or concerns that a child is being used to facilitate criminal activity.

▼

STAFF RESPONSE
Report concerns to the DSL without delay. Record relevant information and the child's own words where appropriate. Staff must not investigate criminal activity or confront suspected perpetrators. The DSL will assess immediate safety and the wider safeguarding picture.

▼

IMMEDIATE RISK	CONCERN ABOUT EXPLOITATION
Take immediate protective action and contact Police and/or Children's Social Care. Use 999 where there is an immediate threat to life or serious harm.	The DSL will make an appropriate safeguarding referral and consider specialist support, multi-agency intervention, trafficking and modern slavery indicators, and whether an NRM referral is appropriate.

▼

COUNTY LINES / ORGANISED CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION
Consider missing episodes, movement between locations, drug or money activity, threats, violence, weapons, coercion or drug debts. If a child may be involved in county lines, the DSL will make a safeguarding referral and consider the National Referral Mechanism and appropriate specialist support.

▼

CHILD TRAFFICKING AND MODERN SLAVERY
Where a child may be a victim of trafficking, slavery, servitude or forced labour, the DSL will make an appropriate referral to Children's Social Care without delay and consider whether further safeguarding procedures, including an NRM referral, are required.

▼

ONLINE CRIMINAL NETWORKS / THIRD-PARTY INTELLIGENCE
Information about suspected criminal activity, exploitation, concerning associations or online criminal networks may contribute to the wider safeguarding and contextual picture. Where appropriate and lawful, relevant information may be shared with Police and safeguarding partners. Staff should report intelligence to the DSL rather than investigate it themselves.

▼

PREVENTION AND SUPPORT
The Trust will promote age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships, consent, exploitation and online safety through PSHE, RSE and wider safeguarding education. Where exploitation is identified or suspected, the Trust will work with the child, family and relevant agencies to reduce risk, protect the child and provide appropriate support.

▼

RECORD • REVIEW • ESCALATE
Record concerns, decisions, referrals, information shared, advice received, actions and outcomes. Continue to monitor risk and review the child's circumstances. If risk increases or the response is insufficient, seek further safeguarding advice and escalate through the appropriate local pathway.

APPENDIX H – HONOUR OR FAITH-BASED ABUSE (HBA)

IDENTIFY → REPORT TO DSL → PROTECT → REFER / ESCALATE → SUPPORT → RECORD / REVIEW

▼

WHAT IS HONOUR OR FAITH-BASED ABUSE?
Honour or faith-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or 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. It may involve a wider family or community network and multiple perpetrators. All forms of HBA are abuse, regardless of the motivation, and must be treated and escalated as safeguarding concerns.

▼

HBA MAY INCLUDE
Female genital mutilation (FGM) • forced marriage and child marriage • breast ironing/flattening • virginity testing • hymenoplasty • dowry-related abuse • spiritual or ritualistic abuse • immigration-related abuse • transnational marriage abandonment • honour-motivated killing or attempted killing • abduction • imprisonment or isolation • controlling or coercive behaviour • threats and serious violence.

▼

POSSIBLE INDICATORS
Fear of family/community members; restrictions on movement, friendships or communication; sudden withdrawal from education; changes in attendance or behaviour; threats linked to marriage or relationships; unexplained injuries; concerns about FGM; pressure to travel overseas; or requests for school records or certificates.

WIDER RISK FACTORS
Previous HBA affecting relatives; coercive control; family/community pressure; financial or immigration concerns; multiple people involved in controlling the child; planned overseas travel; or a child saying they do not want to travel or marry.

▼

TRAVEL / REMOVAL FROM THE UK
Particular care should be taken where there are plans for a child to travel overseas or where there is concern that a child may be taken abroad against their wishes or without adequate safeguards. The DSL will seek urgent safeguarding advice where there are concerns about FGM, forced/child marriage, virginity testing, hymenoplasty or another harmful practice.

▼

REPORT IMMEDIATELY
Staff must report concerns to the DSL/Deputy DSL without delay. Staff must not investigate, mediate with family/community members, contact a suspected perpetrator, or attempt to establish whether the concern is culturally or religiously justified. The safety of the child is the priority.

▼

DO NOT MEDIATE OR 'RESOLVE' THE CONCERN
Staff must not attempt to negotiate or arrange reconciliation between the child and their family or community where HBA is suspected. Staff must not use family members, community representatives or alleged perpetrators to interpret the child's wishes or views.

▼

DSL INITIAL RESPONSE
Assess immediate safety and the wider safeguarding context. Consider whether Police and/or Children's Social Care must be contacted immediately. Do not assume that family members are protective or that the child can safely return home. Seek advice before informing parents/carers where this could increase risk, prejudice an investigation or otherwise be contrary to the child's welfare.

▼

IMMEDIATE DANGER / CRIME
Contact Police and/or Children's Social Care immediately. Use 999 where there is an immediate threat to life or serious harm. Consider protective arrangements and safe accommodation where required.

SIGNIFICANT SAFEGUARDING CONCERN
Make an appropriate safeguarding referral and follow local multi-agency procedures. Share relevant information with Police, Children's Social Care and specialist services where necessary and proportionate.

▼

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)
FGM is child abuse. Where a teacher discovers, through disclosure by a child under 18 or visual evidence, that FGM appears to have been carried out, the teacher has a personal mandatory reporting duty to the Police. Teachers should also follow Trust safeguarding procedures, inform the DSL unless there is a good reason not to, and involve Children's Social Care as appropriate. Staff must not examine a child for FGM.

▼

FORCED MARRIAGE / CHILD MARRIAGE
Forced marriage involves marriage without full and free consent where violence, threats or other coercion are used. Concerns about forced or child marriage must be reported to the DSL and referred through the appropriate safeguarding and specialist support pathway. Where appropriate, the DSL and relevant agencies will consider whether a Forced Marriage Protection Order or other protective legal measure is required.

▼

VIRGINITY TESTING AND HYMENOPLASTY
Virginity testing and hymenoplasty are illegal and may be used to control, shame or punish girls and women and may be associated with forced marriage or other HBA. Any concern that a child may be at risk of, or be subjected to, these practices must be reported to the DSL immediately and referred through the appropriate safeguarding and multi-agency pathway.

▼

SPECIALIST / MULTI-AGENCY SUPPORT
Consider specialist HBA, forced marriage and FGM services, Police, Children's Social Care, health and other safeguarding partners. Where a child may have been trafficked or taken abroad, consider trafficking risks and the National Referral Mechanism where appropriate.

▼

SUPPORT, RECORD AND REVIEW
Listen to the child and consider their wishes and feelings without placing responsibility for resolving the risk on them. The child should not be expected to manage the risk themselves. Provide appropriate safeguarding, pastoral, health and specialist support. Record concerns, decisions, information shared, referrals, advice received and outcomes. Review the child's safety and escalate concerns where risk remains or increases.

APPENDIX I – ATTENDANCE, CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME) AND SAFEGUARDING

ATTENDANCE CONCERN → EXPLORE → SUPPORT → ESCALATE → REFER IF NEEDED → RECORD / REVIEW

▼

ATTENDANCE IS A SAFEGUARDING INDICATOR
Persistent/severe absence, repeated absence, lateness, disengagement or missing education may indicate neglect, abuse, exploitation, serious violence, domestic abuse, mental health difficulties or other safeguarding concerns. Attendance should always be considered alongside the wider safeguarding picture.

▼

LOOK BEYOND THE ABSENCE
Consider behaviour and suspensions • SEND/medical needs • mental health • family circumstances • bullying • exploitation • domestic abuse • serious violence • online activity • missing episodes • changes in presentation • travel concerns • children with a social worker or other known vulnerabilities.

▼

EMERGING / LOWER-LEVEL CONCERN	PERSISTENT / SEVERE ABSENCE
Explore barriers with the pupil and family; consider reasonable adjustments, universal support and Family Help. Monitor attendance and safeguarding indicators.	Escalate attendance support and involve the DSL. Consider neglect, exploitation, CME, serious violence, mental health or other safeguarding risks and whether Children's Social Care should be involved.

▼

CHILDREN WITH EXISTING SAFEGUARDING INVOLVEMENT
For children who have or have had a social worker, are looked after or have other significant vulnerabilities, attendance information should be considered alongside existing safeguarding plans and shared with relevant professionals where necessary and proportionate.

▼

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)
CME are children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. A child becoming absent from education can be a warning sign of abuse, neglect, exploitation or other harm.

▼

CME WARNING SIGNS
Unexplained/prolonged/repeated absence • loss of contact • uncertainty about the child's whereabouts or education • repeated unsuccessful contact • signs of trafficking/exploitation • travel concerns • removal from roll • information suggesting the child is not receiving suitable education.

ATTENDANCE / ABSENCE RETURNS TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY
Where required by current attendance regulations and local authority arrangements, the school/UTC will provide the local authority with information about pupils who fail to attend regularly or who have 10 school days (20 sessions) of continuous unauthorised absence. The school/UTC will follow the local authority's prescribed arrangements for attendance and children missing education returns.

▼

ADMISSION REGISTER / LOCAL AUTHORITY NOTIFICATION
The school/UTC will maintain accurate admission and attendance registers. Where a pupil's name is added to or removed from the admission register outside standard transition points, the school will make the required return to the local authority in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. A new pupil return must be made within 5 days where required.

Where a pupil is removed from the admission register on a prescribed ground, the local authority will be notified as required and within the statutory timescale. Where a parent provides a new normal address, the admission register will be updated with the required address and parent information.

▼

REMOVAL FROM ROLL / OFF-ROLLING
Names must only be removed from the admission register in accordance with the statutory grounds. Off-rolling is unacceptable. The school/UTC must not encourage or pressure a parent/carer to remove a pupil where this is not in the pupil's best interests. Any safeguarding concern must be considered before removal.

▼

TRANSFER / CME INFORMATION SHARING
Safeguarding and educational information must be transferred securely when a pupil moves to another school. Where a child becomes CME, relevant information will be shared with the local authority and safeguarding partners where lawful, necessary and proportionate. The DSL will consider whether additional safeguarding information needs to be shared to protect the child or others.

▼

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION (EHE)
Parents/carers have a legal right to educate their child at home, subject to any School Attendance Order. The school/UTC will follow its EHE procedures and liaise with the local authority as required. Existing safeguarding concerns, vulnerabilities, SEND, social work involvement or unexplained circumstances must be considered before and during any removal from roll. Safeguarding concerns must not be closed simply because EHE is requested.

▼

IMMEDIATE SAFEGUARDING RISK
Contact Children's Social Care and/or Police immediately. Use 999 where there is an immediate threat to life or serious harm. Do not delay because attendance procedures are incomplete.

ATTENDANCE / CME WITHOUT IMMEDIATE HARM
Follow attendance and CME procedures, involve the DSL where safeguarding indicators are present, work with the local authority and consider Family Help or other support.

▼

RECORD • SHARE • REVIEW
Record attendance actions, safeguarding decisions, information shared, referrals, advice and outcomes. Review whether barriers have reduced, whether risk has changed and whether further attendance or safeguarding escalation is required. Attendance and admission register records must be retained in accordance with current statutory requirements.

APPENDIX J – MAKING OR SHARING NUDES OR SEMI-NUDES, INCLUDING AI-GENERATED OR MANIPULATED IMAGERY

IDENTIFY → REPORT TO DSL → INITIAL REVIEW → SAFEGUARD / REFER → REMOVE / REPORT → SUPPORT → RECORD / REVIEW

▼

WHAT DOES 'MAKING OR SHARING NUDES OR SEMI-NUDES' MEAN?
The term describes the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams by a person under 18. This may occur through social media, gaming platforms, chat apps, forums or direct device-to-device sharing. Young people may use terms such as 'sexting'; staff should recognise the terminology used by the child and still apply this safeguarding procedure.

▼

INCIDENTS MAY INVOLVE
Self-generated images; consensual sharing; non-consensual sharing; forwarding another child's image; coercion or pressure; grooming; sexual harassment or violence; blackmail; sextortion; financial exploitation; or image-based sexual abuse.

AI / MANIPULATED IMAGERY
Digitally altered, deepfake, deep-nude or AI-generated imagery of a child must be treated as a safeguarding concern. The child does not have to have created the original image for harm to occur.

▼

IMPORTANT: ALL INCIDENTS ARE SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS
The response must be proportionate and child-centred. Consider the age and developmental stage of those involved, consent, coercion, power imbalance, motivation, who received/shared the imagery, whether an adult is involved and any wider safeguarding concerns.

▼

STEP 1 – STAFF RESPONSE
Report to the DSL/Deputy DSL without delay. Listen calmly, reassure the child, avoid blame or shame, and explain that information may need to be shared to keep them safe. Record the child's account accurately where possible.

▼

STAFF MUST NOT
Ask the child to send/show the imagery • ask them to download or forward it • copy, print, save, store or share it unnecessarily • ask them to delete it • investigate the incident themselves • promise confidentiality • contact or confront the person believed to have shared the image.

▼

STEP 2 – DSL INITIAL REVIEW
The DSL should undertake an initial review with appropriate safeguarding staff and, where appropriate, speak with the children involved. Consider the motivations for creating/sharing the image, whether pressure or coercion was involved, whether the image was shared without consent, the risk of further distribution, and whether the incident is child-on-child or adult-involved.

▼

PEER-TO-PEER / CHILD-ON-CHILD
Consider harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment/violence, consent, power imbalance, coercion, behaviour policy and the support needs of all children involved.

ADULT-INVOLVED / GROOMING / SEXTORTION
Refer to Police and/or Children's Social Care as appropriate. Consider grooming, sexual abuse, financial extortion, blackmail, exploitation and whether the offender has presented as another child online.

▼

PARENTS / CARERS
Parents/carers should normally be informed and involved at an early stage unless doing so would put a child at risk, prejudice a safeguarding or criminal investigation, or otherwise be contrary to the child's welfare. Where parents/carers are not informed, the DSL should record the reason and seek appropriate multi-agency advice.

▼

VIEWING / HANDLING IMAGERY
Staff should not intentionally view nudes or semi-nudes unless there is a clear safeguarding reason and this is necessary. In exceptional circumstances the DSL may decide that viewing is required to safeguard the child or determine appropriate action. Images must not be copied, printed, saved, stored or shared. Staff must follow the Trust's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy and current UKCIS guidance.

▼

DEVICES / SEARCHING
Do not routinely search a child's device as part of the initial safeguarding response. Any search, screening or confiscation must be undertaken by an authorised person in accordance with the Trust's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy and current DfE guidance. Where appropriate, secure the device and seek Police advice rather than examining content unnecessarily.

▼

ONLINE REMOVAL / REPORTING
Where imagery has been shared online, the DSL should consider reporting it to the relevant platform/provider and using appropriate reporting services. Children and families may need support to report content and request removal. Do not negotiate with or threaten people believed to be distributing the imagery.

▼

SEXTORTION / FINANCIAL EXTORTION
Be alert to demands for money, more images or other activity after a child has shared an image, including threats to release images to family/friends. Consider Police referral and specialist advice. Support the child and reassure them that they should not pay or comply with further demands.

▼

RECORD • SUPPORT • REVIEW
Record the concern, decisions, rationale, referrals, information shared, advice received, action to remove/report content and outcome. Provide ongoing pastoral, safeguarding and mental health support. Consider the impact on other children, the wider peer culture and whether education or wider safeguarding action is required.

▼

PREVENTION AND EDUCATION
The Trust will teach age-appropriate online safety, healthy relationships, consent, respectful behaviour, image sharing, digital permanence and how to seek help through RSE/PSHE, computing and wider safeguarding education. The Trust will address victim blaming and reinforce that sharing another person's nude or semi-nude image without consent is harmful and may be unlawful.

APPENDIX K – INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT, SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

IDENTIFY → REPORT TO DSL → INITIAL SAFEGUARDING ASSESSMENT → PROTECT → REFER / ACT → SUPPORT → RECORD / REVIEW

▼

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT
Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between children in school/UTC, online, outside the school/UTC and within intimate personal relationships. Sexual violence includes rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault. Sexual harassment includes unwanted sexual comments, remarks, jokes, gestures, images, messages or other conduct of a sexual nature.

▼

ZERO TOLERANCE AND PROFESSIONAL CURIOSITY
Sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour are never acceptable and will not be dismissed as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'a part of growing up' or 'boys being boys'. The absence of reports does not mean that such behaviour is not happening. Staff should maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and challenge concerning behaviour early.

▼

CONSENT
Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to one type of sexual activity does not mean consent to another type, and consent can be withdrawn at any time. Children and young people may not have the freedom or capacity to give consent where there is coercion, intimidation, exploitation, a significant power imbalance or other circumstances affecting their ability to make a free choice. A child under 13 cannot legally consent to sexual activity. The age of consent to sexual activity is 16. Apparent agreement or participation does not necessarily mean that a child has freely consented.

▼

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR
Incidents may be a single event or part of a wider pattern and may occur online or face-to-face, verbally or physically, or through groups of children. Staff must challenge and report behaviours such as unwanted touching or grabbing, pulling down clothing, sexualised comments or gestures, unwanted sexual images/messages, sharing or threatening to share imagery, and other conduct that causes a child to feel uncomfortable, intimidated, degraded, humiliated or unsafe.

▼

STEP 1 – STAFF RESPONSE

Report the concern to the DSL/Deputy DSL without delay. Listen calmly, allow the child to speak in their own words, reassure them and record the concern accurately. Do not promise confidentiality or anonymity.

▼

STAFF MUST NOT
Investigate the incident themselves • question the child in a way that could prejudice an investigation • confront the alleged perpetrator • arrange mediation or reconciliation • make assumptions about the reliability of a disclosure • dismiss the behaviour • encourage the child to manage the situation themselves • treat the behaviour as 'banter' or normalise it.

▼

STEP 2 – DSL INITIAL ASSESSMENT
Consider the child's wishes and feelings; the nature and seriousness of the behaviour; whether a criminal offence may have been committed; the ages and developmental stages of those involved; any power imbalance; whether it is a one-off or pattern; coercion, grooming, exploitation or manipulation; online/offline context; intimate relationships; group involvement; and wider safeguarding risks.

▼

IMMEDIATE RISK / POSSIBLE CRIME	URGENT SAFEGUARDING CONCERN
Take immediate protective action and contact Police and/or Children's Social Care. Use 999 where there is an immediate threat to life or serious harm.	Make an appropriate referral and agree protective arrangements. Seek multi-agency advice where thresholds or next steps are unclear.

▼

CHILD'S WISHES, FEELINGS AND CONFIDENTIALITY
The child will be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions affecting them. Their wishes and feelings will be given appropriate weight, balanced against the school's/UTC's duty to protect them and others. Where information must be shared, the rationale will be recorded.

ANONYMITY AND SOCIAL MEDIA
The school/UTC will take appropriate steps to protect the confidentiality and, where applicable, the anonymity of children involved in reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment. The DSL will carefully consider which staff and agencies need to know information and will consider the potential impact of social media, including the spreading of rumours or information that could identify those involved.

Where an allegation progresses through the criminal justice system, the school/UTC will comply with the relevant legal requirements relating to anonymity and will seek appropriate advice where necessary.

▼

PARENTS / CARERS
Parents/carers should normally be informed and involved at an appropriate stage unless doing so could place a child or another person at increased risk, prejudice a Police or Children's Social Care investigation, or otherwise be contrary to the child's welfare. Where parents/carers are not informed, the reason will be recorded and advice sought where appropriate.

▼

WHERE A CRIMINAL OFFENCE MAY HAVE OCCURRED
The school/UTC will consider referral to the Police and/or Children's Social Care. Actions that may prejudice an investigation will be avoided. Relevant evidence will be preserved in accordance with Police and safeguarding advice. The school/UTC will cooperate with statutory investigations and share information lawfully, necessarily and proportionately.

▼

SEXUAL VIOLENCE
Where a concern involves rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, it will be treated as a serious safeguarding matter. The school/UTC will consider Police and Children's Social Care involvement, individual risk assessments, protective arrangements and appropriate specialist support.

▼

SEXUAL HARASSMENT
Sexual harassment may include sexual comments, jokes or remarks; sexual gestures; unwanted questions; sexualised bullying; unwanted sexual images or messages; online sexual harassment; sharing or threatening to share sexual imagery; harassment within intimate relationships; unwanted touching or sexualised physical behaviour; and other unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.

▼

HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR
Where a child displays harmful sexual behaviour, the school/UTC will consider both the safety of other children and the safeguarding and support needs of the child displaying the behaviour. Responses will be proportionate and may include specialist assessment, education, intervention and multi-agency support. See Appendix L – Continuum of Sexual Behaviours.

▼

ONLINE / OFF-SITE / INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS
The same safeguarding response applies whether the behaviour occurs online, outside school/UTC or within an intimate personal relationship. Consider links to CSE, CCE, serious violence, coercive control, exploitation, misogyny, misandry, other gender-based prejudice, online harms or other contextual risks.

▼

SUPPORT FOR THE CHILD WHO HAS EXPERIENCED HARM
Provide appropriate safeguarding, pastoral, mental health and specialist support. Consider the impact on

attendance, education, relationships and wellbeing, and whether reasonable adjustments or additional SEND support are required. Review support regularly.

▼

SUPPORT FOR THE CHILD DISPLAYING HARMFUL BEHAVIOUR
The child displaying the behaviour may also have safeguarding or support needs. These should be assessed alongside the need to protect other children. Previous experience of abuse does not remove the need to safeguard others.

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WIDER SAFEGUARDING CONTEXT
Consider whether siblings or other children may be affected and whether the concern connects to CSE/CCE, trafficking, domestic abuse, serious violence, online criminal networks, mental health concerns, misogyny/misandry, or wider contextual safeguarding. Share relevant information with safeguarding partners where lawful, necessary and proportionate.

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RECORD • REVIEW • ESCALATE
Record the concern, decisions, rationale, information shared, referrals, advice received, protective measures, support offered and outcome. Review whether risk has reduced and whether further action or escalation is required.

APPENDIX L – A CONTINUUM OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS

Hackett continuum – recognising, assessing and responding to sexual behaviours

OBSERVE → UNDERSTAND CONTEXT → ASSESS → RESPOND PROPORTIONATELY → SAFEGUARD → RECORD / REVIEW

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PURPOSE
Children and young people display a wide range of sexual behaviours as they develop. Hackett's continuum can help practitioners distinguish between developmentally appropriate, inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent behaviour. Sexual behaviour can move fluidly between categories and must be considered in the context of the individual child and the circumstances.

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IMPORTANT
This continuum is a professional decision-making aid, not a diagnostic tool or a substitute for safeguarding procedures. An isolated incident of problematic or abusive behaviour does not necessarily indicate a child's overall sexual behaviour. The response should be proportionate to behaviour, risk and context.

APPROPRIATE	Developmentally expected behaviour is age-appropriate, voluntary, consensual, private and mutually respectful, without coercion, pressure or harm.
INAPPROPRIATE	Behaviour that is unexpected for the child's age or developmental stage, occurs in an inappropriate context or shows poor boundaries. It may require clear boundaries, education, supervision, pastoral support or monitoring.
PROBLEMATIC	Behaviour that is developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful to self or others, is repetitive, concerning or linked to difficulties with boundaries, emotional regulation, exposure to harmful material or other vulnerabilities. Assessment and targeted support may be required.
ABUSIVE	Behaviour involving coercion, pressure, force, intimidation, exploitation, significant power imbalance, targeting, manipulation or behaviour that causes harm to another child or young person. A safeguarding and potentially multi-agency response may be required.
VIOLENT	Sexual behaviour involving serious violence, rape, assault by penetration or other potentially criminal acts. Immediate safeguarding, Police and/or Children's Social Care involvement may be required.

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FACTORS THAT MAY INCREASE CONCERN	**FACTORS TO CONSIDER**
Coercion or pressure • threat or intimidation • significant age/developmental or power imbalance • secrecy • repetition/escalation • targeting • distress or trauma • grooming/exploitation • recording or sharing imagery • adult involvement • links to CSE/CCE, serious violence, misogyny, misandry and other gender-based prejudice or other harm.	Age and developmental stage • communication, SEND or additional vulnerabilities • understanding and capacity • previous abuse or exposure to sexual content • family/contextual circumstances • relationship between children • online/offline setting • frequency and duration • impact on the child and others • whether behaviour is isolated or a pattern.

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ONLINE AND OFFLINE
Sexual behaviour can take place face-to-face, online or across both contexts. Consider social media, messaging, gaming, image-sharing, pornography, group chats and other digital environments alongside physical interactions.

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CHILD'S VOICE AND DEVELOPMENT
Listen to and value the child's views and feelings. Consider age, developmental stage, understanding, communication needs and any additional vulnerabilities. Do not rely on stereotypes about how a child who has experienced sexual abuse or harmful sexual behaviour will present.

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STAFF RESPONSE
Report concerns to the DSL/Deputy DSL without delay where behaviour is harmful, abusive, coercive, violent, developmentally inappropriate or otherwise raises a safeguarding concern. Staff must not investigate or make their own final judgement. Use Appendix K for sexual assault/sexual violence/sexual harassment incidents and Appendix J for nudes/semi-nudes.

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LOWER-LEVEL / EDUCATION RESPONSE
Where behaviour is appropriate or mildly concerning and there are no wider safeguarding indicators, consider age-appropriate education, clear boundaries, supervision, pastoral support and monitoring. Record and review where appropriate.

SAFEGUARDING / MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSE
Where behaviour is problematic, abusive or violent, or there are significant wider risks, involve the DSL immediately and consider Police, Children's Social Care, specialist assessment and protective action.

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SUPPORT THE CHILD WHO HAS EXPERIENCED HARM
Their safeguarding needs must be assessed separately and given priority. Consider immediate protection, specialist assessment, pastoral and mental health support, attendance/education impact, SEND adjustments and ongoing risk management.

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SUPPORT THE CHILD DISPLAYING THE BEHAVIOUR
A child displaying problematic or harmful sexual behaviour may also have safeguarding needs, including experiences of abuse, trauma, exploitation or harmful sexual exposure. Their needs should be assessed alongside the need to protect other children. A previous experience of abuse does not excuse harmful behaviour or remove the need to safeguard others.

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RECORD • REVIEW • ESCALATE
Record the behaviour, context, assessment, decisions, actions, information shared and outcome. Review whether behaviour stops, escalates or forms a pattern, whether risk changes, whether further assessment/support is needed and whether there are wider safeguarding concerns.

APPENDIX M – IMPORTANT SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS – DONCASTER

Local safeguarding contacts - 2026/27

PURPOSE

This appendix provides key local safeguarding contacts for staff working within the Trust. It should be read alongside the Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and relevant local safeguarding procedures. Contact details should be checked regularly and updated whenever local safeguarding arrangements or contact details change.

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IMMEDIATE SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Children's Social Care / Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
Telephone: 01302 737777
Email: ChildAs@doncaster.gov.uk

Out of Hours Children's Social Care – Emergency Social Services Team (ESST)
Telephone: 01302 796000 / 01302 736000

Police
Non-emergency: 101
Emergency: 999

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ALLEGATIONS AGAINST ADULTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
Telephone: 01302 737332
Email: LADO@doncaster.gov.uk

Safeguarding Adviser – Local Authority
Name: Jo Howe
Telephone: 01302 736975 / 07816353019
Email: Jo.howe@doncaster.gov.uk

Professionals Line – Social Care
Telephone: 01302 737033

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EARLY HELP AND FAMILY HELP

Early Help Hub – Doncaster MASH
Telephone: 01302 734110
Email: EarlyHelpHub@doncaster.gov.uk

Early Help Coordinators
Telephone: 01302 736250
Email: EarlyHCo@doncaster.gov.uk

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PARENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES (PAFSS)

Central
Email: Sammy.Taylor-Brown@doncaster.gov.uk
Telephone: 01302 862680

North
Email: Rebecca.Evertons@doncaster.gov.uk
Telephone: 01302 737994

East
Email: Nicola.paterson@doncaster.gov.uk
Telephone: 01302 737686

South
Email: Charlotte.Brookes@doncaster.gov.uk
Telephone: 01302 735906

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YOUR PLACE, YOUR FAMILY
Local teams
Central: 01302 736409
North: 01302 736787
East: 01302 736336
South: 01302 736644
Email
Team: YourPlaceYourFamilyTeam@doncaster.gov.uk

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CHILDREN IN CARE AND EDUCATION

Virtual School – Children in Care Team
Telephone: 01302 737880

Children Missing Education (CME)
Email: childrenmissingeducation@doncaster.gov.uk

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EXPLOITATION AND SERIOUS HARM

Child Exploitation Team
Telephone: 01302 737200
Email: ceteam@doncaster.gov.uk
Opening hours: Monday–Friday, 9.00am–4.30pm

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PREVENT AND RADICALISATION

Prevent
Emergency: 999
Police non-emergency: 101
Email: comm.safety@doncaster.gov.uk

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HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health Specialist Advice Line
Telephone: 01302 796191

School Nursing Service
Single Point of Contact: 03000 218997
Email: Rdash.doncasterchildrenscaregroup@nhs.net

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HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) Advice Line
Telephone: 01302 734008
Email: CYPFPsychology@doncaster.gov.uk
Please indicate "HSB query" in the subject line

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POLICE / INFORMATION SHARING
Third Party Intelligence – South Yorkshire Police
Purpose: Community partner intelligence-sharing arrangements

Local Police / PCSO link
Local arrangement: The school/UTC will maintain details of its local Police/PCSO link and update these details when local arrangements change.