



SAFEGUARING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & ADULTS

POLICY

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Review Date: 13/02/2026

Review Due: 13/02/2027

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Witham Prospect School
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Statement of Intent

Witham Prospect School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the physical, mental and emotional welfare of every pupil (child and young person), both inside and outside of the school premises. We implement a whole-school preventative approach to managing safeguarding concerns, ensuring that the wellbeing of pupils is at the forefront of all action taken. This policy sets out a clear and consistent framework for delivering this promise, in line with safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children, young people and their families has a role to play. Everyone should make sure that they take a child-centred approach, where they consider at all times what is in the best interests of the child. All staff who work directly with children are required to read **Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) latest version: Part 1 and Annex B**.

Witham Prospect School also recognises that some pupils and residents may be **aged 18 or over** and may meet the definition of a **Vulnerable Adult** under the Care Act 2014. Safeguarding arrangements therefore apply equally to children, young people and vulnerable adults, and concerns relating to adults will be managed in accordance with **Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) procedures**, the **Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014**, and relevant statutory guidance.

Definitions & Acronyms

For the purposes of this policy, “**safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children**” is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of pupils as soon as problems emerge.
- Protecting pupils from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- Preventing the impairment of pupils' mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that pupils grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all pupils to have the best outcomes.

Vulnerable Adult

For the purposes of this policy, a vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting those needs) and who is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect or the risk of it, in line with the Care Act 2014.

This policy applies equally to both the school setting and residential care. All staff and volunteers have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours including activities away from school.

Note: Children and Young people (CYP) and pupils are interchangeable terms.

Updated definitions

For the purposes of this policy, **“consent”** is defined as having the freedom and capacity to choose to engage in sexual activity. Consent may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, and can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. A person only consents to a sexual activity if they agree by choice to that activity, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. Children under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity. The age of consent is 16.

For the purposes of this policy, **“sexual violence”** refers to the following offences as defined under the Sexual Offences Act 2003:

- **Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if they intentionally penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with their penis, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Assault by penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if they intentionally penetrate the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of their body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Sexual assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if they intentionally touch another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent:** A person (A) commits an offence if they intentionally cause another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.

For the purposes of this policy, **“sexual harassment”** refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that occurs online or offline, inside or outside of school. Sexual harassment is likely to violate a pupil’s dignity, make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and create a hostile, offensive, or sexualised environment. If left unchallenged, sexual harassment can create an atmosphere that normalises inappropriate behaviour and may lead to sexual violence. **Sexual harassment can include, but is not limited to:**

- Sexual comments, such as sexual stories, lewd comments, sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and sexualised name-calling.
- Sexual “jokes” and taunting.
- Physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes, and displaying images of a sexual nature.
- Online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. This includes:
 - The consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.
 - Sharing unwanted explicit content.

- Upskirting.
- Sexualised online bullying.
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media.
- Sexual exploitation, coercion, and threats.

For the purposes of this policy, **“upskirting”** refers to the act, as identified the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, of taking a picture or video under another person’s clothing, without their knowledge or consent, with the intention of viewing that person’s genitals or buttocks, with or without clothing, to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Upskirting is a criminal offence. Anyone, including pupils and staff, of any gender can be a victim of upskirting.

For the purposes of this policy, the **“consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos”**, colloquially known as **“sexting”**, and collectively called **“youth-produced sexual imagery”** is defined as the creation of sexually explicit content by a person under the age of 18 that is shared with another person under the age of 18. This definition does not cover persons under the age of 18 sharing adult pornography or exchanging messages that do not contain sexual images.

“Deep fakes” and **“deep nudes”** refer to digitally manipulated and AI-generated nudes and semi-nudes.

For the purposes of this policy, **“indecent imagery”** is defined as an image which meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Nude or semi-nude sexual posing
- A child touching themselves in a sexual way
- Any sexual activity involving a child
- Someone hurting a child sexually
- Sexual activity that involves animals

Indecent images also include indecent **“pseudo-images”**, which are images have been created or manipulated using computer software and/or AI.

Acronyms

CCE – child criminal exploitation

CSE – child sexual exploitation

CSCS – children’s social care services

CSC – customer service centre (i.e. same as above)

DSL – designated safeguarding lead

DDSL – deputy designated safeguarding lead

DoLs – deprivation of liberty safeguards

FGM – female genital mutilation

KCSIE – keeping children safe in education

LAC – looked after child

CiC – child in care

LA – local authority

LSCP – Lincolnshire safeguarding children partnership

SLT – senior leadership team

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored and refined on a continuous basis and reviewed annually by either the Directors, Director of Education or a member of the Senior Leadership Team or earlier if changes in legislation, regulatory requirement or best practice guidelines so require.

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff, parents and, where appropriate, children and young people.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 – UK Gov.
- Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards April 2015 – DFE.
- Social Care Common Inspection Framework SCCIF: children's homes (latest version) – OFSTED.
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (latest available, revised) – UK Gov.
- Education Inspection Framework: EIF (latest version) – OFSTED.
- Non – association independent schools inspection handbook (latest version) – OFSTED.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, statutory guidance for schools and colleges (latest version) – DFE.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, a guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children (revised latest version) – HM Gov.
- Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP): Policy and Procedures – live manual.
- Working together to improve school attendance 2024 – DFE.
- Care Act 2014
- Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) Procedures

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Managing Allegations made against Staff Policy and Procedure
- Prevent Policy
- Safer Recruitment of Staff Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Child on Child Abuse Policy
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The role and responsibilities of staff

Ensure that:

- Children and young people (CYP) feel safe and that they are listened to.
- Create a culture that children and young people feel valued, develop and learn.
- The best interests of the child or young person is always considered and acted upon.
- Act upon any suspicion, concern or disclosure that may suggest that a child is at risk of significant harm or in need of support services.
- Maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.
- Be prepared to identify pupils who may benefit from early help.
- Are aware of and understand the systems at Witham Prospect School that support safeguarding.
- Understand the children and young people with SEND face additional safeguarding challenges.
- Are aware that children can abuse other children.
- They undertake safeguarding training, including online safety training
- They are aware of and understand the procedure to follow in the event that a child confides they are being abused, exploited or neglected.
- Maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality when dealing with individual cases.
- Instances of safeguarding and child protection concerns need to be reported to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the residential home's (DSL), or their respective deputy designated safeguarding lead (DDSL).

Teachers, including the headteacher, have a responsibility to:

- Safeguard pupils' wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties, as outlined in the 'Teachers' Standards'.
- Personally report any cases to the police where it appears that an act of FGM has been carried out, also referred to as 'known' cases, as soon as possible.

The Executive Directors have a duty to:

- Take strategic leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements.

- Ensure that the school complies with its duties under the above child protection and safeguarding legislation.
- Guarantee that the policies, procedures and training opportunities in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times.
- Guarantee that Witham Prospect School contributes to multi-agency working in line with the statutory guidance '[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)'.
- Confirm that the school's safeguarding arrangements take into account the procedures and practices of the local authority as part of the inter-agency safeguarding procedures.
- Understand the local criteria for action and the local protocol for assessment, and ensure these are reflected in the school's policies and procedures.
- Comply with its obligations under section 14B of the Children Act 2004 to supply the local safeguarding arrangements with information to fulfil its functions.
- Ensure that staff working directly with children read at least Part one of KCSIE (latest version) and Annex B.
- Ensure that staff who do not work directly with children read either Part one or Annex A of KCSIE (latest version).
- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities in regard to safeguarding children.
- Ensure a senior board level lead takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements.
- Appoint a member of staff from the SLT to the role of DSL as an explicit part of the role-holder's job description.
- Appoint one or more deputy DSL to provide support to the DSL, and ensure that they are trained to the same standard as the DSL and that the role is explicit in their job descriptions.
- Facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding; this includes ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development.
- Where there is a safeguarding concern, ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.
- Ensure systems are in place, children to confidently report abuse, knowing that their concerns will be treated seriously, and they can safely express their views and give feedback; these systems will be well-promoted, easily understood, and easily accessible (given cognitive levels of understanding).
- Ensure that staff have due regard to relevant data protection principles that allow them to share and withhold personal information.

- Ensure that an Executive Director is nominated to liaise with the LA and/or partner agencies on issues of child protection and in the event of allegations of abuse made against the headteacher, registered manager or another Executive Director.
- Guarantee that there are effective and appropriate policies and procedures in place.
- Ensure all relevant persons are aware of the school's local safeguarding arrangements, including Executive Directors, SLT and DSL/DDSLs.
- Make sure that pupils are taught (relative to cognitive understanding) about safeguarding, including protection against dangers online (including when they are online at home), through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Adhere to statutory responsibilities by conducting pre-employment checks on staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required.
- Ensure that staff are appropriately trained to support pupils to be themselves at school, e.g. if they are LGBTQ+.
- Ensure the school has clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems in pupils, including clear routes to escalate concerns and clear referral and accountability systems.
- Guarantee that volunteers are appropriately supervised.
- Make sure that at least one person on any appointment panel has undertaken safer recruitment training.
- Ensure that all staff receive safeguarding and child protection training updates, e.g. emails, as required, but at least annually.
- Ensure that all Executive Directors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and that this training is updated regularly.
- Certify that there are procedures in place to handle allegations against staff, supply staff, volunteers and contractors.
- Confirm that there are procedures in place to make a referral to the DBS and the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), where appropriate, if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns or would have been had they not resigned.
- Guarantee that there are procedures in place to handle pupils' allegations against other pupils.
- Ensure that appropriate disciplinary procedures are in place, as well as policies pertaining to the behaviour of pupils and staff.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, including those in relation to child-on-child abuse.
- Guarantee that there are systems in place for pupils to express their views and give feedback.

- Establish an early help procedure and ensure all staff understand the procedure and their role in it.
- Appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of LAC/CiC and ensure that this person has undergone appropriate training.
- Ensure that the designated teacher works with virtual schools to discuss how the pupil premium funding (if relevant) can best be used to support LAC/CiC.
- Introduce mechanisms to assist staff in understanding and discharging their roles and responsibilities.
- Make sure that staff members have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep LAC/CiC safe, particularly with regard to the pupil's legal status, contact details and care arrangements.
- Put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for pupils who become absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods, to help identify any risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation, and prevent the risk of their disappearance in future.
- Ensure that all executive directors (governing board) have been subject to an enhanced DBS check.
- Create a culture where staff are confident to challenge senior leaders over any safeguarding concerns.
- Be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR and the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The Headteacher and Registered Manager has a duty to:

- Ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the executive directors, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by staff.
- Provide staff with the appropriate policies and information upon induction and subsequent training.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (DSL) has a duty to:

- Take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.
- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters.
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or support other staff to do so.
- Contribute to the assessment of children, and/or support other staff to do so.

- During term time, the education DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns and within reason and practical, be available outside of school hours and/or ensure that there is sufficient DDSL cover.
- The residential DSL will be available and/or ensure that there is sufficient DDSL cover so that safeguarding responsibilities can be fulfilled throughout the year.
- Arrange, adequate and appropriate cover for any activities outside of school hours or school terms.
- Refer cases:
 - To CSCS where abuse and neglect are suspected, and support staff who make referrals to CSCS (Children's Social Care Services).
 - To the Channel programme where radicalisation concerns arise, and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme.
 - To the DBS where a person is dismissed or has left due to harm, or risk of harm, to a child.
 - To the police where a crime may have been committed, in line with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) guidance.
 - Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff.
- Act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners.
- Liaise with the relevant individual to inform them of issues, especially regarding ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Liaise with the deputy DSLs to ensure effective safeguarding outcomes.
- Liaise with the case manager and the local authority designated officers (LADOs) for child protection concerns in cases concerning staff.
- Liaise with staff on matters of safety, safeguarding and welfare, including online and digital safety.
- Liaise with staff when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children's needs are considered holistically.
- Liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the mental health support team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health.
- Promote supportive engagement with parents/carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances.
- Work with the headteacher and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on their attendance, engagement and achievement at school. This includes:
 - Ensuring that the school knows which pupils have or had a social worker.
 - Understanding the academic progress and attainment of these pupils.

- Maintaining a culture of high aspirations for these pupils.
 - Supporting teachers to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help these pupils reach their potential.
 - Help to promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues these pupils are experiencing with teachers and the SLT.
- Ensure that child protection files are kept up-to-date and only accessed by those who need to do so.
 - Ensure that a pupil's child protection file is transferred as soon as possible, and within five days, when transferring to a new school, and consider any additional information that should be shared.
 - Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's safeguarding (child protection) policy and procedures – this will be discussed during the staff induction process.
 - Work with the executive directors to ensure the school's safeguarding policy is reviewed annually, and the procedures are updated and reviewed regularly.
 - Ensure the school's safeguarding policy is available publicly, and parents are aware that the school may make referrals for suspected cases of abuse or neglect, as well as the role the school plays in these referrals.
 - Link with safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure that staff are aware of the training opportunities available and the latest local policies on safeguarding.
 - Undergo training, and update this training at least every two years.
 - Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses.
 - Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings; this includes understanding the difficulties pupils may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and considering how to build trusted relationships that facilitate communication.
 - Support and advise staff and help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters: specifically, to ensure that staff are supported during the referrals processes; and to support staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked, including to inform the provision of academic and pastoral support.
 - Understand the importance of information sharing, including within school, with other schools, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners.
 - Understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR.
 - Keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of safeguarding concerns, decisions made, and whether or not referrals have been made, and understand the purpose of this record-keeping.

- Evaluate safeguarding practice both within education and residential care.
- Ensure that safeguarding concerns relating to vulnerable adults are referred appropriately to adult safeguarding services and managed in accordance with LSAB procedures.

The designated teacher has a responsibility for: Promoting the educational achievement of LAC/CiC, and for children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.

Purpose of this Policy

This policy explains what action should be taken if there are concerns that a child is or might be suffering harm. A 'child' is a person under 18 years but the principles of these procedures apply to all children and young people at this school and within residential care, including those over 18. Where concerns relate to a pupil or resident aged 18 or over, safeguarding referrals will be made in line with **Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) procedures**.

This policy provides various members of the Senior Leadership Team at Witham Prospect School, including The Director of Children's Services, the Headteacher and all staff and volunteers with the guidance they need to keep children safe and secure in our school and home settings, so they can learn and develop safely. This policy also informs parents/carers, social workers, other key professionals and those who hold parental responsibility how we will safeguard their children whilst in our care.

We understand the importance of children receiving the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. All staff and volunteers must be aware of how to pass on any concerns about other members of staff, volunteers or people providing services to the school and how to conduct themselves to minimise the risk of finding themselves as the subject of any child protection processes. They must also recognise the importance of acting on and referring the early signs of abuse and neglect, radicalisation, keeping records, listening to views of the child, reassessing concerns when situations do not improve, sharing information quickly and challenging inaction.

This policy, including its procedures, along with the related documents is informed by statutory and best practice guidance. Our Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) is the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership:

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/safeguarding/lscp>

The Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership is made up of lead representatives of:

- Lincolnshire County Council Chief Executive
- Clinical Commissioning Group Accountable Officer
- Lincolnshire Police Chief Officer

Our safeguarding policy is in accordance with locally agreed interagency procedures and follows guidance and procedures as set out in the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Policy and Procedure Manual. This manual is regularly updated.

Welcome to the Lincolnshire SCP Policy and Procedures Manual

This policy is set out in alignment with the government's latest version of "Keeping Children Safe in Education" and the governments "Working Together to Safeguard Children, a guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children" (revised latest version).

In line with protecting the children and young people the human resource manager will be required to share information on any safeguarding allegation related to existing employee or ex-employee whether the allegation is substantiated or unsubstantiated to prospective employer requesting a reference.

Multi-agency working

Witham Prospect School contributes to multi-agency working as part of its statutory duty. The school is aware of and will follow the local safeguarding arrangements. We will be fully engaged, involved, and included in the child-centred approach towards local safeguarding arrangements. Once Witham Prospect School is named as a relevant agency by local safeguarding partners, it will follow its statutory duty to cooperate with the published arrangements in the same way as other relevant agencies.

We will develop trusting relationships between families and agencies to protect the welfare of its children and young people, and pupils, through the early help process and by contributing to multi-agency plans to provide additional support.

Where a need for early help is identified, we will allow access for CSCS (Children's Social Care Services) from the host LA and, where appropriate, a placing LA, for that LA to conduct (or consider whether to conduct) a section 17 or 47 assessment. The school will also be mindful of the importance of inter-agency working in identifying and preventing CSE.

The school will reflect the DfE's expectations to secure strong multi-agency working by:

- Collaborating with services to achieve shared goals and share information.
- Learning from evidence and sharing perspective to evaluate provision.
- Prioritising and sharing resources depending on pupils' needs.
- Celebrating inclusivity and diversity and challenging discrimination.
- Mutually and constructively challenging other's assumptions in a respectful manner.

Where safeguarding concerns relate to vulnerable adults, the school and residential home will cooperate with adult safeguarding partners in line with LSAB procedures, ensuring timely information sharing and appropriate referrals.

Information sharing

The school recognises the importance of proactive information sharing between professionals and local agencies in order to effectively meet pupils' needs and identify any need for early help.

Considering the above, staff will be aware that whilst the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 place a duty on schools to process personal information fairly and lawfully, they also allow for information to be stored and shared for safeguarding purposes – data protection regulations do not act as a barrier to sharing information where failure to do so would result in the pupil being placed at risk of harm.

Staff members will be made aware that safeguarding partners may take legal action against them if they do not share specified information when a request is made for the purposes of safeguarding. Staff members will ensure that fear of sharing information does not stand in the way of their responsibility to promote the welfare and safety of pupils. If staff members are in doubt about sharing information, they will speak to the DSL or deputy DSL.

Early help

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. The school will be proactive in ensuring that every pupil is able to access full-time education to aid their development and protect them from harm whilst utilising the unique position of having regular daily contact with pupils to identify concerns as early as possible.

Any pupil may benefit from early help, but in particular, staff will be alert to the potential need for early help for pupils who:

- Are disabled, have certain health conditions, or have specific additional needs.
- Have SEND, regardless of whether they have a statutory EHC plan.
- Are suffering from mental ill health.
- Are young carers.
- Show signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines.
- Are frequently missing or going missing from care or from home.
- Are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, or sexual or criminal exploitation.
- Are at risk of being radicalised.
- Have family members in custody or is affected by parental offending.
- Are in a family circumstance presenting challenges for them, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health problems, or domestic abuse.
- Are misusing drugs or alcohol.
- Are at risk of HBA, such as FGM or forced marriage.
- Are privately fostered.
- Have experienced multiple suspensions and are at risk of, or have been, permanently excluded from school, alternative provision or a PRU.

The school will not limit its support to pupils affected by the above and will be mindful of a variety of additional circumstances in which pupils may benefit from early help, for example, if they are:

- Bereaved.
- Viewing problematic or inappropriate online content or developing inappropriate relationships online.
- Have recently returned home to their family from care.
- Missing education, or are persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education.

The DSL will take the lead where early help is appropriate. This includes liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. The Lincolnshire early help process will be followed as required (see link).

[Welcome to the Lincolnshire SCP Policy and Procedures Manual](#)

Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Any such cases will be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to CSCS for assessment for statutory services if the pupil's situation is not improving or is worsening.

Where early concerns relate to a pupil or resident aged 18 or over, support and intervention will be considered in line with adult safeguarding pathways and, where appropriate, referrals made to adult social care.

<https://trixcms.trixonline.co.uk/api/assets/lincolnshireadults/a71a2fbd-99f6-4563-903e-5c4169e1dd5f/lsab-policy-and-procedures.pdf>

Child Protection Concerns

If you are concerned about a child, you can contact your local Police, or Children's Social Care Office on these numbers: See link to report a concern.

[Report a safeguarding concern – Safeguarding reporting for the public - Lincolnshire County Council](#)

Lincolnshire Children's Services (Children's Social Care Services) CSCS.

- ❖ Telephone our Customer Service Centre (8.00am to 6.00pm): 01522 782 111
Out of hours emergencies call: 01522 782 333

Lincolnshire Police Central Referral Unit on 01522 532 222 or 999

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

- ❖ LADO Office
Tel: 01522 554 674 / 07733307202
E-mail: LSCP.LADO@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Safeguarding Adults (18+)

Concerns relating to a vulnerable adult will be referred to **Adult Social Care** in line with Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board procedures.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm, the police or emergency services will be contacted without delay.

Our Designated Safeguarding Team

Designated Safeguarding Lead.
Residential Care DSL
Joanne Stevens
Director of Children's Services
Tel: 01522 789067
Mb: 07761 502700
joanne@withamprospect.co.uk

Designated Safeguarding Lead
Education DSL
Claire Roberts
Headteacher
Tel: 01522 789067
Mb: 07790 919213
c.roberts@withamprospect.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
Residential Care DDSL
Beverley Cooke & Nicola Proctor
Tel: 01522 789067
beverley@withamprospect.co.uk
n.proctor@withamprospect.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
Education DDSL
Melissa Haynes
Tel: 01522 789067
m.haynes@withamprospect.co.uk

Board Level (Executive Director) DSL
Gemma Collins
Director of Care and RI
Tel: 01522 789067
Mb: 07792 556136
gemma@withamprospect.co.uk

DDSL
Colleen Stevenson
Health & Wellbeing
Tel: 01522 789067
colleen@withamprospect.co.uk

The Legal Framework

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately. See contact numbers above.

Children in Need

May be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Here a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly impaired – without the provision of services; **or a child who is disabled** is entitled to access a range of services by the local authority for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare.

Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Where there are child protection concerns i.e. reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, local authority social care services have a duty to make enquiries and decide if any action needs to be taken under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Local authority duty of response

Within one working day of a referral being made, a local authority social worker should acknowledge receipt of the referral and make a decision about the next steps and type of help that is required. This will include deciding whether:

- The child requires immediate protection.
- The child should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.
- The child should be assessed under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- Any services that are required by the child and family and what type of services.
- Decide if there are any further specialist assessments that may be required.
- See the child as soon as possible if the referral requires further assessments.

Anyone who has a concern about a child's welfare may make a referral to local authority children's social care. However, unless there are extenuating circumstances, all referrals of whatever nature should be discussed with the school's/residential home's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for either education or residential care.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

Under the mental capacity act 2005 any young person who has reached the age of 18 becomes the subject of DoLS and as such Witham Prospect School will prompt the placing authority to put in the necessary application of any given young person, who lacks the mental capacity to consent to their living arrangements, 21 days before their 18th birthday.

This process supports the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and ensures lawful care arrangements under the **Mental Capacity Act 2005**.

Designated Safeguarding Lead and Child Protection File

The DSL will maintain a "marked" confidential child protection file, which will be stored separately from normal pupil or staff records. This is to ensure that staff do not gain accidental access to sensitive material.

When pupils leave the school, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is transferred to the new school, college or organisation as soon as possible. This transfer will

be separate from their main pupil file and best practice would be to pass these directly to the organisation's DSL. If this is not possible then a secure method should be used to send confidential records with a confirmation of receipt being obtained.

In addition to the child protection file, the DSL will also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school, college or organisation before a pupil leaves. This would then facilitate continued support for pupils of abuse and have that support in place for when the pupil arrives.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

As Witham Prospect School it is necessary to have one or more Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). Such deputies will be trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead, however ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection will remain with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (education and residential).

Board Level Lead for Safeguarding Arrangements

At Witham Prospect School there is a senior board level lead (executive director) who is responsible for the school's safeguarding arrangements. This person is there to ensure governance and challenge to our safeguarding arrangements and performance. They will receive the same training as the Designated Safeguarding Lead so that they have a fuller understanding of safeguarding and child protection issues and arrangements.

Staff Concerns about Safeguarding Practices

See whistleblowing policy - All staff and volunteers are able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to the school's safeguarding responsibilities. Staff should know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team and addressed sensitively and effectively.

Where a member of staff or volunteer feels unable to raise a concern with the senior leadership team or that their concerns are not being addressed then "whistleblowing" channels and helplines are available e.g. NSPCC whistleblowing helpline 0800 028 0285 email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Concerns relating to the care, treatment or safeguarding of vulnerable adults may also be raised directly with the **Care Quality Commission**, in line with the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

Types of Abuse and Possible Indicators

For the purposes of this policy, "abuse" is defined as a form of maltreatment of a child which involves inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing the ill treatment of others – this can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family, institutional or community setting by those known to them or by others, e.g. via the internet. Abuse can take place

wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by one or multiple adults or other children.

For the purposes of this policy, **“physical abuse”** is defined as a form of abuse which may involve actions such as hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse can also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

For the purposes of this policy, **“emotional abuse”** is defined as the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. This may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child the opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age- or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, such as interactions that are beyond their developmental capability, overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, including cyberbullying, causing the child to frequently 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, but it may also occur alone.

For the purposes of this policy, **“sexual abuse”** is defined as abuse that involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, and regardless of whether the child is aware of what is happening. This may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration, or non-penetrative acts, such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by people of any gender and age.

For the purposes of this policy, **“neglect”** is defined as the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of a child’s health or development. This may involve a parent or carer failing to provide a child with adequate food, clothing or shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); failing to protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger; failing to ensure adequate supervision (including through the use of inappropriate caregivers); or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Abuse, neglect and exploitation

All staff will be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and will understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school, inside and outside of home, and online. Staff will also be aware that pupils can be affected by seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of abuse.

All staff will understand that abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be given a specific definition or one label alone. Staff will

understand that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap one another; therefore, staff will be vigilant and always raise concerns with the DSL.

All staff, especially the DSL and deputy DSL, will be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside of these environments; this includes being aware that pupils can at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families (extra-familial harms). All staff will be aware of the appropriate action to take following a pupil being identified as at potential risk of abuse and, in all cases, will speak to the DSL if they are unsure.

All staff will be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues, including online abuse, cyberbullying, and the sharing of indecent images.

Specific safeguarding issues

There are certain specific safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm – staff will be aware of these issues.

[Appendix A](#) of this policy sets out details about specific safeguarding issues that pupils may experience and outlines specific actions that would be taken in relation to individual issues.

Child-on-child abuse

For the purposes of this policy, **“child-on-child abuse”** is defined as abuse between children.

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, including child-on-child abuse, as confirmed in the Safeguarding (child protection) Policy’s [statement of intent](#).

All staff will be aware that child-on-child abuse can occur between pupils of any age and gender, both inside and outside of school, as well as online. All staff will be aware of the indicators of child-on-child abuse, how to identify it, and how to respond to reports. All staff will also recognise that even if no cases have been reported, this is not an indicator that child-on-child abuse is not occurring. All staff will speak to the DSL if they have any concerns about child-on-child abuse.

All staff will understand the importance of challenge inappropriate behaviour between peers and will not tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”.

Child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many different ways, including:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying.
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers – sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’.
- Physical abuse – this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse.
- Sexual violence – this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence.
- Sexual harassment, including online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.

- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.
- The consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.
- Upskirting.
- Initiation- and hazing-type violence and rituals, which can 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.

The DSL will ensure they appropriately assess all instances of child-on-child abuse, including in cases of image-based abuse, to help determine whether the alleged perpetrator(s) is under the age of 18 or is an adult posing as a child. The DSL will immediately refer the case if it is found that a so-called child-on-child abuse incident involves an adult, e.g. where an adult poses as a child online to groom a child or young person.

All staff will be clear as to the school's policy and procedures regarding child-on-child abuse and the role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

Children and young people (dependent upon cognitive understanding) will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled. This includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. Pupils will also be reassured that they will be taken seriously, be supported, and kept safe.

The school's procedures for managing allegations of child-on-child abuse are outlined in the child-on-child abuse policy. Staff will follow these procedures, as well as the procedures outlined in the school's anti-bullying policy and suspension and exclusion policy, where relevant.

Online safety and personal electronic devices

The school will adhere to the online safety policy at all times.

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, all pupils will be made aware of online risks and taught how to stay safe online. Through training, all staff members will be made aware of:

- Pupil attitudes and behaviours which may indicate they are at risk of potential harm online.
- The procedure to follow when they have a concern regarding a pupil's online activity.

The school will ensure that appropriate filtering systems are in place on school devices and school networks to prevent children accessing inappropriate material, in accordance with the school's cyber-security policy. The school will, however, ensure that the use of filtering and monitoring systems does not cause "over blocking", which may lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what pupils can be taught online. The school will also ensure that it meets the filtering and monitoring standards published by the DfE.

Staff will be aware of the filtering and monitoring systems in place and will know how to escalate concerns where they are identified. Staff will be made aware of their expectations and responsibilities relating to filtering and monitoring systems during their induction.

Further information regarding the school's approach to online safety can be found in the online safety policy.

Reviewing online safety

The school will carry out an annual review of its approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by pupils (see links to reviewing on-line safety page 44).

Personal electronic devices

The use of personal electronic devices, including mobile phones and cameras, by staff and pupils is closely monitored by the school, in accordance with the "e" safety, television and internet use policy and photography, images and personal electronic devices policy.

Photographs and videos of children and young people will be carefully planned before any activity with particular regard to consent and adhering to the school's data protection policy and photography and images policy. The DPO (or equivalent) will oversee the planning of any events where photographs and videos will be taken.

Where photographs and videos will involve children and young people who are LAC/CiC, adopted pupils, or pupils for whom there are security concerns, the headteacher will liaise with the DSL to determine the steps involved. The DSL will, in known cases of pupils who are LAC/CiC or who have been adopted, liaise with the pupils' social workers, carers or adoptive parents to assess the needs and risks associated with the pupils.

Staff will report any concerns about pupils' or other staff members' use of personal electronic devices to the DSL, following the appropriate procedures.

Upskirting

Under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, it is an offence to operate equipment for the purpose of upskirting. "Operating equipment" includes enabling, or securing, activation by another person without that person's knowledge, e.g. a motion-activated camera.

Upskirting will not be tolerated by the school. Any incidents of upskirting will be reported to the DSL, who will then decide on the next steps to take, which may include police involvement.

Consensual and non-consensual sharing of indecent images and videos

The school will ensure that staff are aware to treat the consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as "sexting" or youth-produced sexual images) as a safeguarding concern.

Staff will receive appropriate training regarding child sexual development and will understand the difference between sexual behaviour that is considered normal and expected for the age of the pupil, and sexual behaviour that is inappropriate and harmful. Staff will receive appropriate training around how to deal with instances of sharing nudes and semi-nudes in the school community, including understanding motivations, assessing risks posed to pupils depicted in the images, and how and when to report instances of this behaviour.

Staff will be aware that creating, possessing, and distributing indecent imagery of children is a criminal offence, regardless of whether the imagery is created, possessed, and distributed by the individual depicted; however, staff will ensure that pupils are not unnecessarily criminalised.

Staff will also be made aware that the laws imposed on the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes applies to digitally manipulated and AI-generated imagery.

Where a member of staff becomes aware of an incidence of sharing nudes and/or semi-nudes, they will refer this to the DSL as soon as possible. The DSL will work to support the affected pupils and inform them of the reporting routes to remove a nude or semi-nude that has been shared online or to prevent an image from being shared online.

Context of safeguarding incidents

Safeguarding incidents can occur outside of school and can be associated with outside factors. All staff, particularly the DSL and deputy DSL, will always consider the context of safeguarding incidents. Assessment of pupils' behaviour will consider whether there are wider environmental factors that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. The school will provide as much contextual information as possible when making referrals to CSCS.

Pupils potentially at greater risk of harm

The school recognises that some groups of pupils can face additional safeguarding challenges, both online and offline, and understands that further barriers may exist when determining abuse and neglect in these groups of pupils. Additional considerations for managing safeguarding concerns and incidents amongst these groups are outlined below.

Pupils who need social workers

Pupils may need social workers due to safeguarding or welfare needs. These needs can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm and educational disadvantage.

As a matter of routine, the DSL will hold and use information from the LA about whether a pupil has a social worker in order to make decisions in the best interests of the pupil's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes.

Where a pupil needs a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence, and promoting welfare, e.g. considering the provision pastoral or academic support.

Home-educated children

Parents may choose elective home education (EHE) for their children. In some cases, EHE can mean that children are less visible to the services needed to safeguard and support them.

Where a parent has expressed their intention to remove a pupil from school for EHE, the school, in collaboration with the LA and other key professionals, will coordinate a meeting with the parent, where possible, before the final decision has been made, particularly if the pupil has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker.

LAC/CiC

Children most commonly become looked after because of abuse and/or neglect. Because of this, they can be at potentially greater risk in relation to safeguarding.

The executive directors and SLT will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC/CiC safe. This includes ensuring that the appropriate staff have the information they need, such as:

- Looked after legal status, i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents, or on an interim or full care order.
- Contact arrangements with parents or those with parental responsibility.
- Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the pupil.

The DSL in both education and residential care will be provided with the necessary details of pupils' social workers and virtual schools. This policy will inform all safeguarding procedures for all of our children and young people who are LAC/CiC.

Pupils with SEND

When managing safeguarding in relation to pupils with SEND, staff will be aware of the following:

- Certain indicators of abuse, such as behaviour, mood and injury, may relate to the pupil's disability without further exploration; however, it should never be assumed that a pupil's indicators relate only to their disability
- Pupils with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by issues such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers may exist, as well as difficulties in overcoming these barriers

When reporting concerns or making referrals for children and young people with SEND, the above factors will always be taken into consideration. When managing a safeguarding issue relating to a children and young people with SEND, the DSL will liaise with key school and

residential staff (where appropriate), social workers and the children and young people's parents where appropriate, to ensure that the pupil's needs are met effectively.

LGBTQ+ pupils

The fact that a pupil may be LGBTQ+ is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm; however, staff will be aware that LGBTQ+ pupils can be targeted by other individuals. Staff will also be aware that, in some cases, a pupil who is perceived by others to be LGBTQ+ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as pupils who identify as LGBTQ+.

Staff will also be aware that the risks to these pupils can be compounded when they do not have a trusted adult with whom they can speak openly with. Staff will endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced by these pupils and provide a safe space for them to speak out and share any concerns they have.

Pupils requiring mental health support

All staff will be made aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a pupil has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Use of the school premises for non-school activities

The school does not hire or rent out any of its facilities, as it also is a registered Children's Home on-site.

Work experience

When a pupil is sent on work experience, the school will ensure that the provider has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place. Where the school has pupils conduct work experience at the school, an enhanced DBS check will be obtained if the pupil is over the age of 16.

Concerns about children and young people

If a member of staff has any concern about a child's or young person's welfare, they will act on them immediately by speaking to the DSL or deputy DSL.

Staff will be aware that pupils may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. Staff will be aware that this must not prevent them from having professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL, or deputy DSL, if they have a concern about a pupil.

All staff members are aware of the procedure for reporting concerns and understand their responsibilities in relation to confidentiality and information sharing, as outlined in the communication and confidentiality section of this policy.

Where the DSL is not available to discuss the concern, staff members will contact the deputy DSL with the matter. If a referral is made about a pupil by anyone other than the DSL, the DSL will be informed as soon as possible.

The LA will make a decision regarding what action is required within one working day of the referral being made and will notify the referrer. Staff are required to monitor a referral if they do not receive information from the LA regarding what action is necessary for the child and young person, or pupil. If the situation does not improve after a referral, the DSL will ask for reconsideration to ensure that their concerns have been addressed and that the situation improves for the child and young person, or pupil (note interchangeable terms).

If early help is appropriate, the case will be kept under constant review. If the pupil's situation does not improve, a referral will be considered. All concerns, discussions and decisions made, as well as the reasons for making those decisions, will be recorded in writing by the DSL and kept securely.

If a pupil is in immediate danger, a referral will be made to CSCS (children's social care services) and/or the police immediately. If a pupil has committed a crime, such as sexual violence, the police will be notified without delay.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, the school will ensure that the pupil's wishes are always taken into account, and that there are systems available for pupils to provide feedback and express their views. When responding to safeguarding concerns, staff members will act calmly and supportively, ensuring that the pupil feels like they are being listened to and believed.

An inter-agency assessment will be undertaken where a child and their family could benefit from coordinated support from more than one agency. These assessments will identify what help the child and family require in preventing needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed.

The school will consider whether a family group decision-making forum is appropriate to determine the help and support the family network can provide for a pupil where concerns have been raised about their safety or wellbeing.

Managing referrals

All staff members, in particular the DSL, will be aware of the LA's arrangements in place for managing referrals. The DSL will provide staff members with clarity and support where needed. When making a referral to CSCS or other external agencies, information will be shared in line with confidentiality requirements and will only be shared where necessary to do so.

The DSL will work alongside external agencies, maintaining continuous liaison, including multi-agency liaison where appropriate, in order to ensure the wellbeing of the pupils involved. The DSL will work closely with the police to ensure the school does not jeopardise any criminal proceedings, and to obtain help and support as necessary.

Where a pupil has been harmed or is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, the referrer will be notified of the action that will be taken within one working day of a referral being

made. Where this information is not forthcoming, the referrer will contact the assigned social worker for more information.

The school will not wait for the start or outcome of an investigation before protecting the victim and other pupils: this applies to criminal investigations as well as those made by CSCS. Where CSCS decide that a statutory investigation is not appropriate, the school will consider referring the incident again if it is believed that the pupil is at risk of harm. Where CSCS decide that a statutory investigation is not appropriate and the school agrees with this decision, the school will consider the use of other support mechanisms, such as early help and pastoral support.

At all stages of the reporting and referral process, the pupil (if appropriate due to cognitive level of understanding) will be informed of the decisions made, actions taken and reasons for doing so. Discussions of concerns with parents will only take place where this would not put the pupil or others at potential risk of harm. The school will work closely with parents to ensure that the pupil, as well as their family, understands the arrangements in place, such as in-school interventions, is effectively supported, and knows where they can access additional support.

Concerns about school safeguarding practices

Any concerns regarding the safeguarding practices at the school will be raised with the SLT, and the necessary whistleblowing procedures will be followed, as outlined in the whistleblowing policy. If a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the SLT, they should access other whistleblowing channels such as the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline (0800 028 0285).

Safeguarding concerns and allegations of abuse against staff

All allegations against staff, supply staff, volunteers and contractors will be managed in line with the school's managing allegations of abuse against staff policy, a copy of which will be available to all staff. The school will ensure all allegations against staff, including those who are not employees of the school, are dealt with appropriately and that the school liaises with the relevant parties.

When managing allegations against staff, the school will recognise the distinction between allegations that meet the harms threshold and allegations that do not, also known as "low-level concerns", as defined in the managing allegations of abuse against staff policy.

Allegations that meet the harms threshold include instances where staff have:

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

Low-level concerns will be handled in line with the schools' Low-level safeguarding concerns procedure.

If the concerns in any way involve a member of staff, the matter must be brought to the attention of the headteacher or registered manager immediately. They will act in accordance with advice given by the local authority designated officer (LADO). If the concern involves the headteacher or registered manager, the board director with responsibility for safeguarding will immediately seek advice from the LADO. The appropriate referrer will liaise with the local authority designated officer (LADO) ensuring that all allegations are reported to the LADO within one working day.

Following consultation with the LADO, the named person will advise on all further action to be taken. Please note that the headteacher or registered manager should not seek to interview the child/ren or members of staff involved until advice has been sought. Doing so may compromise any police interviews that may be necessary.

Communication and confidentiality

When recording, holding, using and sharing information, the DSL will ensure that they:

- Understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and with other schools on transfer including in-year and between primary and secondary education, and with safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners.
- Understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, in particular the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR.
- Are able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale of those decisions. This will include instances where referrals were and were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent program.

All child protection and safeguarding concerns will be treated in the strictest of confidence in accordance with school data protection policies.

Where there is an allegation or incident of sexual abuse or sexual violence, the victim is entitled to anonymity by law; therefore, the school will consult its policy and agree on what information will be disclosed to staff and others, in particular the alleged perpetrator and their parents. Where a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system, the school will do all it can to protect the anonymity of the pupil(s) involved in the case.

Concerns will only be reported to those necessary for its progression and reports will only be shared amongst staff members and with external agencies on a need-to-know basis. During the disclosure of a concern by a pupil, staff members will not promise the pupil confidentiality and will ensure that they are aware of what information will be shared, with whom and why.

Where it is in the public interest, and protects pupils from harm, information can be lawfully shared without the victim's consent, e.g. if doing so would assist the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime. Before doing so, the DSL will weigh the victim's wishes

against their duty to protect the victim and others. Where a referral is made against the victim's wishes, it is done so carefully with the reasons for the referral explained to the victim and specialist support offered.

Depending on the nature of a concern, the DSL will discuss the concern with the parents of the pupils involved. Discussions with parents will not take place where they could potentially put a pupil at risk of harm. Discussion with the victim's parents will relate to the arrangements being put in place to safeguard the victim, with the aim of understanding their wishes in terms of support arrangements and the progression of the report. Discussion with the alleged perpetrator's parents will have regards to the arrangements that will impact their child, such as moving classes or rooms, with the reasons behind decisions being explained and the available support discussed. External agencies will be invited to these discussions where necessary.

Where confidentiality or anonymity has been breached, the school will implement the appropriate disciplinary procedures as necessary and will analyse how damage can be minimised and future breaches be prevented.

Where a pupil, child or young person is leaving the school or home, the DSL will consider whether it is appropriate to share any information with the pupil's new provider, in addition to the child protection file, that will allow the new provider to support the pupil, child or young person and arrange appropriate support for their arrival.

Safer recruitment

The school's full policy and procedures for safer recruitment are outlined in the safer recruitment policy.

An enhanced DBS check with barred list information will be undertaken for all staff members engaged in regulated activity. A person will be considered to be in 'regulated activity' if, as a result of their work, they:

- Are responsible on a daily basis for the care or supervision of children.
- Regularly work in the school at times when children are on the premises.
- Regularly come into contact with children under 18 years of age.

The DfE's [DBS Workforce Guides](#) will be consulted when determining whether a position fits the child workforce criteria.

The governing board will conduct the appropriate pre-employment checks for all prospective employees, including internal candidates and candidates who have lived or worked outside the UK.

The appropriate DBS and suitability checks will be carried out for all governors, volunteers, and contractors.

Ongoing suitability

Following appointment, consideration will be given to staff and volunteers' ongoing suitability – to prevent the opportunity for harm to children or placing children at risk.

Referral to the DBS

The school will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed a child or poses a risk of harm to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed an offence and has been removed from working in regulated activity. The duty will also apply in circumstances where an individual is deployed to another area of work that is not in regulated activity or they are suspended.

Single Central Register (SCR)

the school will maintain a Single Central Record (SCR). This document will cover the following people:

- all staff within education and the residential care setting (including supply staff, and teacher trainees on salaried routes) who work at the school.
- all members of the proprietor body.

The information that must be recorded in respect of all staff members mentioned above and whether the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which each check was completed/certificate obtained apply:

- an identity check;
- a barred list check;
- an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check
- a prohibition from teaching check;
- a section 128 check (for management positions as set out in paragraph 99 for independent schools
- further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK: this would include recording checks for those European Economic Area (EEA) teacher sanctions and restrictions;
- a check of professional qualifications; and
- a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.

For supply staff, the school will include whether written confirmation that the employment business supplying the member of supply staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates, whether any enhanced DBS check certificate has been provided in respect of the member of supply staff and the date that confirmation was received.

Where checks are carried out on volunteers, the school will record this on the single central record. Under no circumstances will a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity with a child.

Training

The designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) will undergo county designated safeguarding lead training when initially appointed, and then update this training every two years. The designated safeguarding lead (education) will undertake 'Prevent' awareness training.

In addition to the above DSL and DDSL will update and refresh their knowledge and skills by accessing a variety of on-line learning platforms, accessing e-bulletins and government guidance, meet with other designated safeguarding leads and read around developments in safeguarding.

All newly appointed staff within education and the residential setting will undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online, as part of their induction and all staff will have annual safeguarding awareness refresher training. All staff are required to read **Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) latest version: Part 1 and Annex B.**

As part of the induction process and then on-going safeguarding awareness staff are expected to read, digest and follow various related safeguarding policies and procedures (as directed). It is a requirement for all staff to read this safeguarding (child protection) policy and related “safeguarding” policies.

Staff are required to familiarise themselves with and be able to identify the designated safeguarding lead for education and residential care (and their deputies). Posters of the DSL and DDSL are displayed within all classrooms, in main reception as well as on the safeguarding board which can be located in the staff room.

In addition, all staff members will receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via e-mail, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required. Witham Prospect School staff accesses safeguarding training via a number of on-line platforms e.g. training hub, virtual college as well as identified providers of on-line safeguarding training materials e.g. Dialogue, NASS and NSPCC.

Annex A: Specific safeguarding issues

This appendix sets out details about specific safeguarding issues that pupils may experience and outlines specific actions that would be taken in relation to individual issues.

Here are the issues covered:

- [Domestic abuse](#)
- [Homelessness](#)
- [Children absent from education](#)
- [Child abduction and community safety incidents](#)
- [Child criminal exploitation \(CCE\)](#)
- [Child sexual exploitation \(CSE\)](#)
- [Modern slavery](#)
- [FGM](#)
- [Forced marriage](#)
- [Radicalisation](#)
- [Pupils with family members in prison](#)
- [Mental health](#)
- [Serious violence](#)
- [Adult involvement in youth-produced sexual imagery](#)

Domestic abuse

For the purposes of this policy, and in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, “domestic abuse” is defined as abusive behaviour of a person towards another person (including conduct directed at someone else, e.g. the person’s child) where both are aged 16 or over and are personally connected. “Abusive behaviour” includes physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, or another form of abuse. “Personally connected” includes people who:

- Are, have been, or have agreed to be married to each other.
- Are, have been, or have agreed to be in a civil partnership with each other.
- Are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other.
- Each have, or had, a parental relationship towards the same child.
- Are relatives.

The school will recognise the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse. All staff will be aware of the signs of domestic abuse and follow the appropriate safeguarding procedures where concerns arise.

Homelessness

The DSL and deputy DSL will seek contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so that concerns over homelessness can be raised as early as possible.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include:

- Household debt.
- Rent arrears.
- Domestic abuse.
- Anti-social behaviour.
- Any mention of a family moving home because “they have to”.

Referrals to the Local Housing Authority do not replace referrals to CSCS where a child is being harmed or at risk of harm. For 16- and 17-year-olds, homelessness may not be family-based and referrals to CSCS will be made as necessary where concerns are raised.

Children absent from education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and one that meets their educational and developmental needs. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation and radicalisation.

Children who are absent from education, for prolonged periods of time/or on repeat occasions, can often be an indicator of a range of safeguarding concerns including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important to

recognise that prolonged and regular absence from school can lead to children “missing from education” and therefore being placed at risk of the above safeguarding concerns. By careful monitoring of absenteeism and effective communication with parents/carers this will then help prevent the risk of a pupil becoming a child missing education in the future.

Effective communication, positive relationship development and information sharing between Witham Prospect School, parents/carers and the local authority is vital to ensure that our pupils are safe and receive their full educational entitlement. We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

Making reasonable enquiries

Where a pupil is missing from education and the pupil’s whereabouts is unclear or unknown then the school will complete and record one or more of the following actions (list not exhaustive).

- Make contact with the parents/carers, relatives and neighbours using known contact details.
- Conduct home visit(s), following appropriate risk assessments, and if appropriate make enquires with neighbours and relatives.
- Follow local information sharing arrangements and where possible make enquires via local databases and agencies, including any agencies known to be involved with the family.
- Check with the local authority where the pupil lives, if different from where the school is.

Initial enquiries will be made by the class teacher, if there is no satisfactory response the matter will be escalated to the DSL for education. If, having made these enquires, a pupils’ whereabouts cannot be established then the next course of action to locate a pupil will be to contact children’s social care and/or the police.

Child abduction and community safety incidents

For the purposes of this policy, “child abduction” is defined as the unauthorised removal or retention of a child from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents and other relatives, other people known to the victim, and strangers.

All staff will be alert to community safety incidents taking place in the vicinity of the school that may raise concerns regarding child abduction, e.g. people loitering nearby or unknown adults conversing with pupils.

Pupils will be provided with practical advice and lessons to ensure they can keep themselves safe outdoors.

CCE – Child Criminal Exploitation

CCE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Specific forms of CCE can include:

- Being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines.
- Working in cannabis factories.
- Shoplifting or pickpocketing.
- Committing vehicle crime.
- Committing, or threatening to commit, serious violence to others.

The school will recognise that pupils involved in CCE are victims themselves, regardless of whether they have committed crimes, and even if the criminal activity appears consensual. The school will also recognise that pupils of any gender are at risk of CCE

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

County lines

For the purposes of this policy, “**county lines**” refers to gangs and organised criminal networks exploiting children to move, store or sell drugs and money into one or more areas, locally and/or across the UK.

As well as the general indicators for CCE, school staff will be aware of the specific indicators that a pupil may be involved in county lines, including:

- Going missing and subsequently being found in areas away from their home.
- Having been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence, e.g. knife crime.
- Receiving requests for drugs via a phone line.
- Moving drugs.
- Handing over and collecting money for drugs.
- Being exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection.
- Being found in accommodation they have no connection with or a hotel room where there is drug activity.
- Owning a ‘debt bond’ to their exploiters.
- Having their bank account used to facilitate drug dealing.

Staff will be made aware of pupils with missing episodes who may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs. Staff members who suspect a pupil may be vulnerable to, or involved in, county lines activity will immediately report all concerns to the DSL.

The DSL will consider referral to the National Referral Mechanism on a case-by-case basis and consider involving local services and providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

For the purposes of this policy, “**child sexual exploitation**” is defined as a form of sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, for any of the following reasons:

- In exchange for something the victim needs or wants
- For the financial advantage, increased status or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator
- Through violence or the threat of violence

The school will recognise that CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, and may happen without the pupil’s immediate knowledge, e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. The school will recognise that CSE can affect any pupil who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities, even if the activity appears consensual; this includes pupils aged 16 and above who can legally consent to sexual activity. The school will also recognise that pupils may not realise they are being exploited, e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

School staff will be aware of the key indicators that a pupil is the victim of CSE, including:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions.
- Associating with other children involved in exploitation.
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing.
- Misusing drugs or alcohol.
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late.
- Regularly becoming absent from school or education or not taking part.
- Having older partners.
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections.
- Displaying sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development.
- Becoming pregnant.

All concerns related to CSE will be managed in line with the school’s child sexual exploitation (CSE) policy.

Where CSE, or the risk of it, is suspected, staff will discuss the case with the DSL. If after discussion a concern remains, local safeguarding procedures will be triggered, including referral to the LA. The LA and all other necessary authorities will then handle the matter to conclusion. The school and residential home will cooperate as needed.

Modern slavery

For the purposes of this policy, **“modern slavery”** encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour. This can include CCE, CSE, and other forms of exploitation.

All staff will be aware of and alert to the signs that a pupil may be the victim of modern slavery. DSL and DDSL will also be aware of the support available to victims of modern slavery and how to refer them to the National Referral Mechanism.

FGM: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

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

Risk factors for FGM include:

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

Staff should not assume that FGM only happens outside the UK.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

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

Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regards to any concerns about FGM, The Serious Crime Act 2015 sets out a duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. In schools, this will usually come from a disclosure (unlike in the medical profession where an observation may have been made). Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out; and discuss any such cases with the safeguarding lead and children’s social care. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases.

FGM is included in the definition of so-called **“honour-based’ abuse (HBA)”**, which involves crimes that have been committed to defend the honour of the family and/or community. All

forms of HBA are forms of abuse and will be treated and escalated as such. Staff will be alert to the signs of HBA, including concerns that a child is at risk of HBA, or has already suffered from HBA, and will consult with the DSL who will activate local safeguarding procedures if concerns arise.

HBA So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture to coerce a person into marriage. All schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

Where staff have concerns around forced marriage they will speak to the DSL or Headteacher, who will then activate local safeguarding procedures if necessary. The Forced Marriage Unit has published [Multi-agency guidelines](#). (forced marriage: guidance, Gov.UK). School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fm@fco.gov.uk.

Radicalisation

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools' safeguarding approach.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and

friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media) and settings (such as the internet).

However, it is possible to protect vulnerable people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being radicalised. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may need help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead making a referral to the Channel programme.

The Prevent duty:

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

Where staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalised, they should discuss this with the designated safeguarding lead.

The designated safeguarding lead has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have.

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

Staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may need help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead making a Prevent referral.

Recognising Extremism

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

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

- advocating violence towards others

The Prevent duty is seen as part of our schools wider safeguarding obligations, guidance is set out in terms of four general themes: **risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training, and IT policies.**

Additional support: Both the DFE and the Home Office have published advice for schools on the Prevent duty. The advice is intended to complement Prevent guidance and signposts other sources of advice and support.

Educate Against Hate, is a website launched by the Her Majesty's Government has been developed to support and equip school and college leaders, teachers, and parents with information, tools and resources (including on the promotion of fundamental British values) to help recognise and address extremism and radicalisation in young people. The platform provides information on and access to training resources for teachers, staff and school and college leaders, some of which are free such as Prevent e-learning, via the Prevent Training catalogue.

Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages. Guidance on Channel is available at: *Channel guidance*, and a Channel awareness e-learning programme is available for staff at: *Channel General Awareness*. The school's designated safeguarding lead is aware of local procedures for making a Channel referral.

Serious violence

Through training, all staff will be made aware of the indicators which may signal a pupil is at risk from, or is involved with, serious violent crime. These indicators include, but are not limited to:

- Increased absence from school.
- A change in friendships.
- Relationships with older individuals or groups.
- A significant decline in academic performance.
- Signs of self-harm.
- A significant change in wellbeing.
- Signs of assault.
- Unexplained injuries.
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions.

Staff will be made aware of some of the most significant risk factors that could increase a pupil's vulnerability to becoming involved in serious violence. These risk factors include, but are not limited to:

- Being male.

- Having been frequently absent from school.
- Having been permanently excluded from school.
- Having experienced child maltreatment.
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

Staff members who suspect a pupil may be vulnerable to, or involved in, serious violent crime will immediately report their concerns to the DSL.

Pupils with family members in prison

Pupils with a family member in prison will be offered support as necessary given the child's or young person's level of cognitive understanding.

Mental health

All staff will be made aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a pupil has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff will not attempt to make a diagnosis of mental health problems – the school will ensure this is done by a trained mental health professional. Staff will, however, be encouraged to identify pupils whose behaviour suggests they may be experiencing a mental health problem or may be at risk of developing one. Staff will also be aware of how pupils' experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

Staff who have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern will act in line with this policy and speak to the DSL. The school will access a range of advice to help them identify pupils in need of additional mental health support, including working with external agencies such as CAMHS and our own in-house team of therapists.

Adult involvement in youth-produced sexual imagery (YPSI)

Sexually motivated incidents

The school will remain aware that not all instances of YPSI will be between children and young people, and in some cases may involve adults posing as a child for the purpose of obtaining nude and semi-nude images from persons under 18.

Staff will be aware of the signs that an adult is involved in the sharing the nude or semi-nude images. These include:

- Being contacted by an online account they do not know but appears to be from somebody under the age of 18.
- Quickly being engaged in sexually explicit communications.
- The offender sharing unsolicited sexual images.
- The conversation being moved from a public to a private and/or encrypted platform.
- Being coerced or pressured into doing sexual things, including producing sexual imagery.
- Being offered money or gifts.

- Being threatened or blackmailed into sharing nude or semi-nude images, and/or further sexual activity.

Financially motivated incidents

Financially motivated incidents of YPSI involving adults may also be called “**sextortion**”, where the offender threatens to release nudes or semi-nudes of a child or young person unless they do something to prevent it, e.g. paying money. In these cases, offenders often pose as children and:

- Groom or coerce the victim into sending nudes or semi-nudes in order to blackmail them.
- Use images that have been stolen from the child or young person, e.g. via hacking.
- Use digitally manipulated and/or AI-generated images of the child or young person.

Staff will be aware of the signs of sextortion, which include:

- Being contacted by an online account they do not know but appears to be from somebody under the age of 18.
- Quickly being engaged in sexually explicit communications.
- The offender sharing sexual images first.
- The conversation being moved from a public to a private and/or encrypted platform.
- Told their online accounts have been hacked in order to obtain images, personal information, and contacts.
- Being blackmailed into sending money or sharing bank account details.
- Being shown stolen or digitally manipulated/generated images of the victim.

Online safety (supplement)

At Witham Prospect School all staff are aware of and follow the DfE guidance ‘teaching online safety in school’ (latest version) to ensure our pupils understand how to stay safe and behave online as part of existing curriculum requirements. Staff are aware that safeguarding also relates to broader aspects of care and education including children's health and safety and well-being, including their mental health. The school will adopt appropriate filtering and monitoring systems on school devices.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised into four areas of risk: The “4Cs”.

content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.

contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

conduct: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing

of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying.

commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

As a school we will aim to limit children's exposure to the above risks from our IT system by ensuring that we have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. We will ensure that there is a key senior leader who is responsible for appropriate filtering and monitoring systems on school devices and that staff are aware of and trained in how to keep our children and young people safe when using technology.

We will:

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

Safeguarding on site

Visitors to the school will be asked to sign in on arrival each time they visit the site. It will be mandatory for visitors to wear a visitor badge to hi-light their status within the school. Visitors are only able to be unsupervised if the relevant safeguarding checks have been carried out by HR. Visitors who require supervision will not be left alone on site nor left unsupervised with a child or young person. If a visitor fails to wear their visitors badge, they will be promptly reminded and asked to display it at all times. If they persistently fail to do so they will be asked to leave site.

Allegations of Abuse Made Against Supply Teachers (or Agency Staff)

Where there is an allegation about a supply teacher whilst schools are not the employer of supply teachers, they should ensure allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances should a school decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the local authority designated officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome. The school will usually take the lead in any investigation because agencies do not have direct access to children or other school staff, so they will not be able to collect the facts when an allegation is made, nor do they have all the relevant information required by the LADO as part of the referral process. An identified member of staff for safeguarding from the supply agency will be appropriately informed.

Teaching Children How to Keep Safe

At Witham Prospect School emphasis will be placed on how to educate and encourage young people to keep safe through considering how best to educate children about safeguarding issues, including online issues.

The internet and the use of social media has become a major factor in the sexual exploitation and radicalisation of young people; we ensure that children are safe from inappropriate images, terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in education and in residential care, through appropriate levels of filtering, internet safety rules and e-safety education within the curriculum and in tutor/circle time.

In education pupils will be taught about safeguarding, (including online safety) as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Relevant issues may be covered in citizenship, PSHE, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education; computing & communication; independence skills; health and wellbeing.

Issues surrounding safeguarding will be raised in a sensitive manner and they will be taught in such a way as to consider the level of understanding and stage of development of our pupils. In residential care issues around “keeping safe” will be reinforced as part of the 24-hour curriculum and addressed by staff in areas which focus on bullying, online safety, “stranger danger”, road safety, relationships and wellbeing (list not exhaustive).

EXTERNAL REGULATORS, OMBUDSMAN AND WHISTLEBLOWING

Complainants and others may contact external regulators or oversight bodies at any stage of the complaints process. These routes are available where concerns cannot be resolved internally, where independent oversight is required, or where the concern relates to regulatory compliance, safeguarding, or serious risk.

Regulatory Bodies

Ofsted

Concerns relating to the school's education provision, residential care, safeguarding arrangements or standards of care may be raised with Ofsted:

Telephone: 0300 123 3155

Website: www.gov.uk/ofsted

Email (whistleblowing): whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Concerns relating to health provision delivered under the children's homes CQC registration may be raised with the Care Quality Commission:

Telephone: 03000 616161

Website: www.cqc.org.uk

Whistleblowing – Health Provision (CQC)

Concerns relating specifically to the quality, safety or legality of health provision delivered under the children's homes registration for the regulated activity of *Treatment of disease, disorder or injury* may be raised directly with the Care Quality Commission via its confidential whistleblowing arrangements:

Telephone: 03000 616161

Email: whistleblowing@cqc.org.uk

The CQC whistleblowing process may be used where concerns cannot be raised internally, or where there is concern about risk of harm, unsafe practice, or regulatory non-compliance. Raising a whistleblowing concern will not result in detriment or less favourable treatment.

Department for Education (DfE)

For matters relating to the operation of independent schools, complainants may also contact:

Department for Education: www.gov.uk

Ombudsman – Residential / Social Care Provision

For complaints relating to residential or social care provision, including where a complainant believes the matter has not been handled appropriately through the school's complaints procedure, concerns may be raised with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO):

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

The Ombudsman is independent of the school and may investigate complaints about social care functions where internal procedures have been exhausted or are considered inadequate.

Information about advocacy, independent advice and external escalation routes will be made available to complainants at all stages of the complaints process.

PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW WHEN A PUPIL MAKES A DISCLOSURE

- ❖ **STAY CALM** and do not show that you are shocked or upset.
- ❖ **LISTEN** to what the pupil has to say and take them seriously; allow them time to talk freely; reassure the pupil but advise them that you cannot promise confidentiality as it may be likely that a concern will have to be shared with someone – explain what will happen next. If there is a requirement for immediate medical intervention, assistance should be called for.
- ❖ **RECORD** in detail and in the pupil's own words the circumstances and timings of the disclosure, including the nature and extent of any injuries, explanations given by the pupil and the action taken (which may be used in any subsequent court proceedings), as soon as possible but at the latest within 24 hours of the disclosure. Original notes are to be kept in whatever form. If a member of staff records details after a disclosure has been made by a pupil, then such recordings are to be made to the relevant on-line recording system.
- ❖ **YOU MUST NOT INVESTIGATE THE INCIDENT, ASK LEADING QUESTIONS, OR REPEATEDLY QUESTION/ASK THE PUPIL TO REPEAT THE DISCLOSURE OVER AND OVER OR MAKE ASSUMPTIONS OR OFFER ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS. ONLY RECORD THE FACTS AS THE PUPIL, CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON PRESENTS THEM, NOT YOUR PERSONAL OPINION.**
- ❖ **DO NOT PROMISE CONFIDENTIALITY.**
- ❖ **DO NOT APPROACH/INFORM THE ALLEGED ABUSER**
- ❖ **REPORT** all suspicions, concerns, instances and allegations of actual or suspected child abuse or neglect immediately or as soon as possible to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).
- ❖ **SIGN AND DATE** the write up and pass it to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as soon as possible.

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD (and deputy) PROCEDURAL STEPS

Once a safeguarding concern has been passed to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) by a member of staff or volunteer and there is concern that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately.

Customer Service Centre (CSC) is the point of contact for all referrals to Children's Social Care. (Children's Social Care Services CSCS)

Referrals to the Police should be via the Central Referral Unit.

- ❖ Lincolnshire Children's Social Care Customer Service Centre 01522 782 111.
- ❖ Out of hours Emergency Duty Team 01522 782 333.
- ❖ Lincolnshire Police Central Referral Unit on 01522 532 222 or 999.

Where there are concerns that a child is suffering, or may be likely to suffer significant harm they (CSC) will pass the referral to Children's Social Care or the Central Referral Unit of Lincolnshire Police.

- Begin a case file for the referral, which will hold records of communications and actions with children's social care, the police and other agencies.
- Have information to hand on the pupil's needs, including developmental and capacity of the of the family/carers to meet these needs.
- Key information – name, address, date of birth for the pupil and other children and adults in the family.
- The nature of the concern - how, when, why concern arose.
- Share information responsibly and confidentially with those who need to know.
- Follow up the referral in writing within 24 hours, repeating all relevant information and agreed actions.
- Where a referral does not justify further action monitor the situation, if further concerns arise refer to either Children's Social Care or the Central Referral Unit of Lincolnshire Police.
- Children's Social Care should decide on the next course of action within 24 hours

Medical Attention

If urgent medical attention is required, the pupil will need to be taken to hospital (normally by calling an ambulance) and accompanied by a member(s) of staff. Parents/carers must be informed that the pupil has been taken to hospital (unless otherwise advised against by children's social care or the police).

Parental/carer and social worker (placing authority) contact: once the initial facts surrounding a referral have been established the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is

to contact the parents/carers and placing authority's social worker (if appropriate) of the pupil, unless specifically told not to by children's social care or the police. Thereafter continue to keep them up to date with the referral.

Pupil's Death

In the event of a death of a pupil the Director of Education, Director of Children's Services or a Senior Director must notify the Lincolnshire Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP), OFSTED and the DFE. A decision will be taken by the senior leadership team as to who will inform the parents/carers so that sensitivity and support is paramount.

For the purposes of this and related safeguarding policies, where the phrase children or children and young people is used the reader should assume that this incorporates pupils over the age of 18 who are technically adults. The internal procedures for staff to follow remain the same regardless of whether they are reporting concerns for children, young people or vulnerable adults. The designated safeguarding lead would make their referral to LSCP or LSAB as appropriate.

Links for reviewing on-line safety

DFE link to "plan technology for your school service" <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-technology-for-your-school>

UK Safer Internet Centre: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/teachers-and-school-staff/appropriate-filtering-and-monitoring> The UK Safer Internet Centre produced a series of webinars for teachers on behalf of the Department. These webinars were designed to inform and support schools with their filtering and monitoring responsibilities and can be assessed at Filtering and monitoring webinars available – UK Safer Internet Centre.

South West Grid for Learning <https://swgfl.org.uk/> has created a tool to check whether a school or college's filtering provider is signed up to relevant lists (CSA content, Sexual Content, Terrorist content, Your Internet Connection Blocks Child Abuse & Terrorist Content).

The Department has published Generative AI: product safety expectations to support schools to use generative artificial intelligence safely, and explains how filtering and monitoring requirements apply to the use of generative AI in education.

A free online safety self-review tool for schools can be found via the <https://360safe.org.uk/> (360 safe website) or <https://onlinesafetyaudit.lgfl.net/> (LGfL online safety audit).

Guidance on cyber security resilience can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/cyber-security-standards-for-schools-and-colleges>