



CASTLE COURT
SCHOOL

Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy

Please note that this policy can also be found on the school website

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Key contacts within the Local Authority			
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Dorset's Family Support and Advice Line	For pupils residing in Dorset.	01305 228558	https://pdscp.co.uk/learn-how-to-report-a-safeguarding-concern/
BCP Children's Services First Response	For pupils residing in the Bournemouth, Christchurch,	01202 123334 Out of Hours- 01202 738256	childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

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1. Introduction and Purpose

This policy sets out how Castle Court School is carrying out its statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in accordance with Section 175 of the Education Act 2002. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and Part 2 of “Keeping Children Safe in Education” (2025) sets out the responsibilities of our governing body including the need to remedy without delay any deficiencies or weaknesses regarding child protection arrangements that are brought to the attention of the school management or governing body.

Section 11 of the Children’s Act 2004 sets out the arrangements that education services and schools must make to promote the welfare and safeguarding of children and young people. “All schools and further education institutions have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Consequently, staff in these establishments play an important part in safeguarding children from abuse and neglect by early identification of children who may be vulnerable or at risk of harm and by educating children, about managing risks, and improving their resilience through the curriculum. All schools and further education institutions should create and maintain a safe environment for children and young people and should be able to manage situations where there are child welfare concerns”.

Castle Court School fully recognises our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is one of a range of documents that set out the safeguarding responsibilities of the whole school. We wish to create a safe, welcoming and vigilant environment for children where they feel valued and are respected.

Safeguarding information is published throughout the school and all children know who they can talk to in school and how they can make an anonymous disclosure. We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering harm.

We are also aware that the behaviour of a child may be impacted by their lived experiences and can range from being angry and violent to sad and withdrawn.

We aim to play a significant part in the prevention of harm to our children by providing them with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

This policy links with the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children’s Partnership. These procedures can be found by clicking on the following link- <https://pandorsetscp.trixonline.co.uk/>

2. Definitions.

All staff at Castle Court will follow the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 when using the terminology ‘**victim**’, ‘**perpetrator(s)**’ and ‘**alleged perpetrator(s)**’.

For the purposes of this guidance, we, in places, use the term ‘**victim**’. It is a widely recognised and understood term. It is important that schools and colleges recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way. Ultimately, schools and colleges should be conscious of this when managing any incident and be prepared to use any term with which the individual child is most comfortable.

For the purpose of this advice, we, in places, use the term ‘**alleged perpetrator(s)**’ and where appropriate ‘**perpetrator(s)**’. These are widely used and recognised terms and the most appropriate to aid effective drafting of guidance. However, schools and colleges should think very carefully about terminology, especially when speaking in front of children, not least because in some cases the abusive

behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well. As above, the use of appropriate terminology will be for schools and colleges to determine, as appropriate, on a case-by-case basis.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online. (Working together to safeguard children 2023, P7)

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. 'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. (Keeping Children in Safe in Education 2025, P7)

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

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- Protecting children from maltreatment, **whether that is within or outside the home, including online.**
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Making sure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. (As defined in Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023 [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#))

Wherever the word **"staff"** is used, it covers all staff on site, including ancillary, supply and self-employed staff, contractors, volunteers and Governors.

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example stepparents, foster carers, and adoptive parents.

3. Policy Principles and Aims

This policy aims to demonstrate to staff, Governors/Trustees, pupils, parents, stakeholders and other partners, Castle Court School's commitment to safeguarding and child protection.

The welfare of our children is paramount. Every child - regardless of age, gender, culture, language, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or socioeconomic background – has an equal right to protection, safeguarding and access to opportunities. We are committed to creating an environment where every child feels safe, valued and respected.

We recognise that all adults in our school have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm and have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.

Our school is committed to developing a culture of safeguarding by providing an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected and which promotes their social, physical and moral development. We want children in our school to feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties.

This policy is used in conjunction with staff training and continued professional development to strengthen our whole school approach to safeguarding.

Castle Court School has a culture of prevention and education in order to raise responsible, caring adults of the future. The school encourages respectful behaviour and language to be used to all; a restorative approach to incidents of concern; and a commitment to make reasonable adjustments to encourage students to remain in education and to feel included and that they belong in our school.

There is no tolerance of discriminatory language or abuse towards staff or students.

4. Statutory Framework, Key Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance

To safeguard and promote the welfare of children, Castle Court School will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

[Keeping children safe in education 2025](#)

[Children Act 2004](#)

[Education Act 2002](#)

[Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#)

[Education Inspection Framework](#)

[Teachers' Standards](#)

[What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused](#)

[Equality Act 2010: advice for schools](#)

[Information Sharing](#)

[Early Years Foundation Years Statutory Framework for school based providers 2025](#)

[Working together to improve school attendance](#)

[ID checking guidelines for Standard/Enhanced DBS check applications from 22 April 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

We take seriously our responsibility to ensure that we have appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which we believe that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Our procedures also cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused of, or suspected of, abuse, including low level concerns.

We will take steps to ensure that any groups or individuals who hire and/or use our building or grounds inside or outside of school hours, follow the local child protection guidelines and are aware of their safeguarding duties and this policy.

We will ensure that all staff read and understand:

- Castle Court School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Castle Court School's online safety policy

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) [Part One] and school leaders and staff that work directly with children will also read Annex B
- Castle Court School's Staff code of conduct
- Castle Court School's Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusion Policy

We will ensure that all staff are aware of:

- The Dorset Continuum of Need [Appendix 2 - Continuum of Need.pdf](#)
- The safeguarding response to children who are absent from education
- The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The identity of Castle Court School's Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy
- The additional vulnerabilities of children who are looked after/previously looked after, children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and children who are young carers

5. Roles, and responsibilities

5.1 The Governing Board

Safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda for every meeting of the full board. The Governing Board of Castle Court School understands and fulfils its responsibilities, namely, to ensure that:

- They liaise with the headteacher and/or designated teachers over safeguarding matters. This is a strategic role rather than operational; governors will not be involved in concerns regarding individual children.
- There is a Safeguarding and Child Protection policy which reflects the whole school approach to child-on-child abuse, reflects the reporting system, describes procedures in accordance with government guidance, and refers to locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangement put in place by the safeguarding partners.
- There is a Staff Behaviour policy/Code of Conduct that includes the process for responding to low level concerns and acceptable use of technology
- Child protection, safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations policies and procedures, including the Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct), are consistent with statutory requirements. They are reviewed when needed (annually as a minimum)
- The Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is publicly available on the school website
- All staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, sign to say they have read, understood and agree to work within Castle Court School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and Staff Behaviour policy (Code of Conduct)
- All staff sign to say they have read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) part 1 and Annex B and that mechanisms are in place to assist staff in understanding and discharging their roles and responsibilities as set out in the guidance
- All Governors/Trustees sign to say they have read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- The school operates a safer recruitment procedure that includes statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and ensure that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel who has completed safer recruitment training within the last five years
- Castle Court School has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff (including the headteacher), volunteers and against other children and that a referral is made

to the DBS if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have been had they not resigned

- The Governing Board has at least one nominated governor responsible for safeguarding who has undertaken appropriate training for the role. The chair of governors is responsible in the event of an allegation of abuse made against the headteacher.
- An annual audit of Castle Court School safeguarding policies, procedures and practices is undertaken with the headteacher and designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and that this is reported to the Local Authority.
- Castle Court School is aware of relevant legislation and local guidance, which has been agreed through the local safeguarding partnership arrangements.
- There are clear lines of accountability for safeguarding within the school's leadership
- A member of the senior leadership team has been appointed as the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and they will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection; the role is explicit in the role holder's job description.
- DSLs and their deputy(ies) undertake multi-agency (Level 3) safeguarding training which is updated every two years.
- There is a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of children looked after who are on the school roll.
- All members of the Governing Board receive safeguarding training.
- At least one member of the Governing Board has completed safer recruitment training to be repeated annually.
- Children are taught about safeguarding (including online safety, Conspiracies, Misinformation and Disinformation) as part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and through relationships education or relationships and sex education (RSE).
- Appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place to respond to children who are absent from education, particularly when absences are repeated. These procedures help identify potential risk of abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, or exploitation, and aim to prevent future incidents of children going missing.
- Ensure appropriate online filtering and monitoring (including awareness of mobile network access) systems are in place and review the effectiveness of these regularly.
- Ensure the Senior Leadership Team and all relevant staff have 'an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring (including awareness of mobile network access). The school's approach to online safety, including appropriate filtering and monitoring (including awareness of mobile network access) on school devices and school networks and which include awareness of the ease of access to mobile phone networks (E safety policy link) and know how to escalate concerns when identified. [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK](#) [Plan technology for your school - GOV.UK](#)
- Governing bodies and proprietors should consider the number of and age range of their children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often they access the IT system along with the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks.

5.2 The Head

The Head will ensure that:

- The safeguarding and child protection policy and related policies and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff
- Sufficient time, training, support, resources, including cover arrangements where necessary, is allocated to the DSL and deputy(ies) to carry out their roles effectively
- Systems are in place for children to express their views and give feedback, which operate with the best interests of the child at heart
- All staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistleblowing/managing allegations against staff procedures
- Pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online, the PSHE curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains relevant and current
- Behaviour expectations around the whole school site will be consistent with the safeguarding and relationship lessons taught in the classroom
- They liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours before taking any action, and then on an ongoing basis, where an allegation is made against a member of staff or a volunteer.

5.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will;

- Hold lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection at Castle Court School, this responsibility will not be delegated
- Acts as a source of support and expertise for the whole school community in regards to our safeguarding duties
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings
- Undertake multi-agency (Level 3) safeguarding training with updates every two years and will refresh their knowledge and skills at regular intervals, but at least annually
- Undertake Prevent awareness training
- Refer a child if there are concerns about possible abuse to Dorset's Family Support and Advice Line and/or the local authority where the child resides and act as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns
- Keep detailed, accurate records, either written or using appropriate online software, of all concerns about a child, even if there is no need to make an immediate referral
- Ensure that all such records are kept confidential, stored securely and are separate from the pupil's general file
- Ensure that an indication of the existence of the additional safeguarding and child protection file is marked on the pupil general file
- Ensure that a copy of the safeguarding and child protection file is retained until such time that the new school acknowledges receipt of the original file. The copy will then be archived on My Concern, the school's safeguarding platform.
- Liaise with the local authority and work with other agencies and professionals in line with Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance

- Have a working knowledge of the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership and Dorset Children’s Social Care processes and procedures
- Ensure that either they, or an appropriate staff member, attend case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contribute to assessments and provide a report, where required, which has been shared with the parents and child (depending on age and understanding)
- Notify Children’s Social Care if a child subject to a child protection plan is absent from school without explanation (Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024))
- Ensure that all staff sign to say they have read, understood and agree to work within name of school’s safeguarding and child protection policy, staff behaviour policy (code of conduct) and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 Part 1 and Annex A (or Part One, as determined by the school for non-direct staff) and ensure that the policies are used appropriately
- Organise child protection and safeguarding induction, regularly updated training and a minimum of annual updates (including online safety) for all school staff, keep a record of attendance and address any absences
- Undertake, with the Head and Governing Board, an annual audit of Castle Court School’s safeguarding policies, procedures and practices and ensure that this is submitted to the Local Authority
- Have an understanding of locally agreed processes for providing early help and intervention and will support members of staff where Early Help is appropriate
- Recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation, conspiracies, disinformation and misinformation
- Help to promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and leadership staff
- Ensure that the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies are clearly advertised in the school and on the website, with a statement explaining the school’s role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse
- Ensure that they, or a deputy, are available during term time school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns
- Ensure that there are adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours or out of term activities.

This list is not exhaustive: please see Annex C of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

5.4 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (DDSL)

A DDSL will;

- Be trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, in the absence of the DSL, carry out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

5.5 All school staff and volunteers

All school staff and volunteers will;

- Understand that it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that they have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action
- Undertake safeguarding and health and safety training appropriate to their role and are familiar with the suite of safeguarding policies including the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and Staff Behaviour policy (Code of Conduct)
- Consider at all times what is in the best interests of the child
- Know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse
- Refer any safeguarding or child protection concerns to the DSL or if necessary, where the child is at immediate risk, to the police or the Front Door for Dorset Children's Social Care (Family Support and Advice Line) or if a child lives out of borough, to the relevant Local Authority
- Provide a safe environment in which children can learn

5.6 EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage)

Whilst most of the safeguarding practises and protocols within this policy are applicable across the whole of Castle Court school, there are some specific measures that need to be adhered to by EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) staff. Below are recent updates in government guidance [Early Years Foundation Years Statutory Framework for school based providers 2025](#) which are worth noting.

Absence

Castle Court School will follow up on absences throughout EYFS in a timely manner. If a child is absent for a prolonged period, or if a child is absent without notification from the parent or carer, attempts are made to contact the child's parents and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts. Castle Court School considers patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances and will use our professional judgement when deciding if the child's absence should be considered as prolonged. Consideration must be given to the child's vulnerability, parent's and/or carer's vulnerability and their home life. Any concerns will be referred to local children's social care services and/or a police welfare check requested.

Castle Court School has an attendance policy that is shared with parents and/or carers. This includes expectations for reporting child absences and the actions the school will take if a child is absent without notification or for a prolonged period of time, for example: implementing the setting's safeguarding procedures, following up with the parents and/or carers and contacting emergency contacts if parents and/or carers are not contactable.

Supervision of staff

Castle Court School has appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families within our EYFS. Effective supervision provides support, coaching, and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children. Supervision fosters a culture of mutual support, teamwork, and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

Supervision provides opportunities for staff to:

- Discuss any issues – particularly concerning children's development or wellbeing, including child protection concerns.
- Identify solutions to address issues as they arise.

- Receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.

Paediatric First Aid

All EYFS staff at Castle Court School hold a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate. At least one person who has this will always be available when EYFS children are present and must accompany children on outings. PFA training is renewed every three years.

Castle Court School will consider the number of children, staff, and layout of premises to ensure that a paediatric first aider is able to respond to emergencies quickly.

All staff who obtained a level 2 and/or level 3 qualification since 30 June 2016 must obtain a PFA qualification within three months of starting work to be included in the required staff: child ratios at level 2 or level 3 in an EYFS setting. All staff who have completed the experience-based route must obtain a PFA qualification before they can be included in the staff: child ratios at level 3. To continue to be included in the ratio requirement, the certificate must be renewed every 3 years.

Castle Court School can make available to parents a list of staff who have current PFA certificates.

Staff: child ratios

Staffing arrangements must meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. Castle Court School will ensure that children in EYFS are adequately supervised, especially whilst eating, and decide how to use staff to ensure children's needs are met. The school informs parents and/or carers about how staff are organised, and, when relevant and practical, aim to involve them in these decisions.

Children in EYFS must usually be within sight and hearing of staff and always within sight or hearing.

The nursery manager must hold an approved qualification at level 3 or above and at least half of all other staff must hold at least an approved level 2 qualification. An approved qualification is defined by the Department for Education as meeting the criteria set out in the Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards document.

The ratio requirements below apply to the total number of staff available to work directly with children. Exceptionally, and where the quality of care and safety and security of children is maintained, changes to the ratios may be made

For children aged under two:

- There must be at least one member of staff for every three children.
- At least one member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification or have received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status and be suitably experienced in working with children under two.
- At least half of all other staff must hold an approved level 2 qualification.
- At least half of all staff must have received training that specifically addresses the care of babies.
- Where there is a room for under two-year-olds, the member of staff in charge of that room must, in the judgement of the provider, have suitable experience of working with under twos

For children aged two:

- There must be at least one member of staff for every five children
- At least one member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification or have received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status.
- At least half of all other staff must hold an approved level 2 qualification.

For children aged three and over in independent schools, where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status, an instructor, or another suitably qualified overseas trained teacher, is working directly with children:

- For classes where the majority of children will reach the age of five or older within the school year, there must be at least one member of staff for every 30 children
- For all other classes there must be at least one other member of staff for every 13 children.
- At least one other member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification, or have received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status.

For children aged three and over in independent schools (including in nursery classes in free schools and academies) where there is no person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status no instructor, and no suitably qualified overseas trained teacher, working directly with children:

- There must be at least one member of staff for every eight children
- At least one member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification, or have received approval to be included in the ratios at level 3 after attaining experience-based route status.
- At least half of all other staff must hold an approved level 2 qualification

When going on trips, higher staff/child ratios can be applied. In Badger cubs, these go down to 1:2, in Badgers to 1:4 whilst in Reception these are also 1:4.

Safer eating

Whilst children are eating there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate.

Before a child is admitted to the setting, Castle Court School will ask for information from parents/carers about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has, and any special health requirements. This information is then shared by the school with all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food. At each mealtime and snack time, the kitchen team are responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.

Castle Court School will have ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop allergy action plans for managing any known allergies and intolerances. This information will be kept up to date and shared with all staff. The school will ensure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis, the differences between allergies and intolerances and that children can develop allergies at any time, especially during the introduction of solid foods which is sometimes called complementary feeding or weaning.

Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating. Choking can be completely silent; therefore, it is important for school staff to be alert to when a child may be starting to choke. Where possible, staff sit facing children whilst they eat, so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and so they can prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.

If a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, the school will record details of where and how the child choked and ensure parents and/or carers are made aware. The records should be reviewed periodically to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking.

Food and drink facilities

Castle Court School provides an area that is adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children as necessary. There are suitable facilities for the hygienic preparation of food for children, if necessary, including separate food preparation for food that will be given to children with allergies and intolerances. All staff involved in preparing and handling food receive training in food hygiene.

6 Safe School, Safe Staff

6.1 Safer Recruitment

Castle Court School pays full regard to the statutory guidance for schools and colleges, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025- Part three, Safer recruitment (KCSiE, 2025, P57.209)

We adopt robust recruitment procedures in relation to anyone who seeks to work at our school and who is therefore likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult. This includes volunteers, supervised volunteers and staff employed by contractors.

These safer recruitment procedures include:

- Ensuring that at least one member of every recruitment panel has completed safer recruitment training within the last five years
- In job adverts, explaining the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, whilst making clear that safeguarding checks will be undertaken.
- Specifying the safeguarding requirements of the role are, i.e. to what extent will the role involve contact with children and will they be engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.
- The safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and personal specification.
- A statement in the application form or elsewhere in the information provided to applicants that it is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.
- A copy of the school's child protection policy or a link to it on our website.
- Asking candidates to provide: personal details, current and former names, current address and national insurance number • details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving
 - full employment history, (since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work) including reasons for any gaps in employment
 - qualifications, the awarding body and date of award
 - details of referees/references (see below for further information), and
 - a statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification. (Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025, P59 .218)

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Self-declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records, further information can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). For example:

- if they have a criminal history
- if they are included on the children's barred list
- if they are prohibited from teaching
- if they are prohibited from taking part in the management of an independent school

- information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales, not the law in their country of origin or where they were convicted
- if they are known to the police and children's local authority social care
- if they have been disqualified from providing childcare and,
- any relevant overseas information.

This information should only be requested from applicants who have been shortlisted. The information should not be requested in the application form to decide who should be shortlisted. Applicants should be asked to sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true. Where there is an electronic signature, the shortlisted candidate should physically sign a hard copy of the application at point of interview.

The school will ensure that

- At least two people carry out the shortlisting exercise (it is recommended that those who shortlist carry out the interview for a consistent approach)
- There is consideration of any inconsistencies and gaps in employment and reasons given for them
- They explore all potential concerns.

In addition, as part of the shortlisting process, Castle Court School will carry out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school might want to explore with the applicant at interview. The school will inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done as part of due diligence checks.

Castle Court School will obtain references before interview, where possible, to allow any concerns raised to be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate. The school will:

- not accept open references e.g. to whom it may concern
- not rely on applicants to obtain their reference
- ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority (if the referee is school or college based, the reference should be confirmed by the head/principal as accurate in respect of any disciplinary investigations)
- obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed
- secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children), if the applicant has never worked with children, then ensure a reference from their current employer
- always verify any information with the person who provided the reference
- ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source
- contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided
- compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate
- establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post, and,
- ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

Castle Court School will follow the guidance given in KCSiE 2025, P62-65 on selection and pre-employment checks. In particular, the interviews should be used to explore potential areas of concern

and to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children. Areas that may be concerning and lead to further probing include:

- implication that adults and children are equal
- lack of recognition and/or understanding of the vulnerability of children
- inappropriate idealisation of children
- inadequate understanding of appropriate boundaries between adults and children, and,
- indicators of negative safeguarding behaviour

Any information about past disciplinary action or substantiated allegations should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Pupils will be involved in the recruitment process in a meaningful way, such as interviews with members of the school council or Year 8 leaders. Observing short listed candidates and appropriately supervised interaction with pupils is common and recognised as good practice (KCSiE 2025, P62)

Pre-employment checks will help identify whether a person may be unsuitable to work with children (and in some cases is legally prohibited from working with children and/or working as a teacher). All offers of appointment should be conditional until satisfactory completion of the mandatory pre-employment checks. Castle Court School will:

- verify a candidate's identity, it is important to be sure that the person is who they claim to be, this includes being aware of the potential for individuals changing their name. Best practice is checking the name on their birth certificate, where this is available.
- obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity with children). This needs to be the original physical certificate.
- obtain a separate children's barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity with children before the DBS certificate is available
- verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- verify the person's right to work in the UK, including EU nationals
- verify professional qualifications, as appropriate. The Teaching Regulation Agency's (TRA) Employer Access Service should be used to verify any award of qualified teacher status (QTS), and the completion of teacher induction or probation

In addition, the school must:

- check that a person taking up a management position is not subject to a section 128 direction made by the Secretary of State
- ensure that an applicant to be employed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State
- ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals employed to work in reception classes, or in wraparound care for children up to the age of 8, are not disqualified from working in these settings under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations

The school will carry out all relevant pre-appointment checks noted above where an individual is engaging in **regulated activity** with children. A person will be engaging in regulated activity with children if, as a result of their work, they:

- will be responsible, on a regular basis, for teaching, training instructing, caring for or supervising children

- will be working on a regular basis in school, where the work gives opportunity for contact with children,
- engage in intimate or personal care, even if this happens only once

6.2 Extended School and Off-Site Arrangements

- Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures apply
- If other organisations provide services or activities on our site, we will ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures
- When our pupils attend off-site activities, we will ensure that effective child protection arrangements are in place, meaning policies such as the school's Safeguarding Policy remain in place during off site activities.
- Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from our school with a view to educating at home, we will work together with the parent/carer, EHE Coordinator and other professionals to ensure that this decision has been made in the best interests of the child. We recognise that this is particularly relevant where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker

6.3 Alternative Provisions

- In accordance with KCSIE 2025, if a pupil who is on role at Castle Court School attends an Alternative Provision, we will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and ensure that we are satisfied that the provision is meeting the needs of the pupil
- Before one of our pupils attends an alternative provision, we will obtain written confirmation that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that we would otherwise perform in respect of our own staff. The School will remind the provider of their duty to notify us of any staff changes or risks.
- We understand that good practice highlights the importance of a member of school staff visiting the setting before placement is confirmed, to meet the provider, carry out visual checks and complete an Individual Placement Agreement
- An accurate record will be kept of where the child is including all sites attended through Alternative Provision.
- When a child who is on role at Castle Court School is attending an alternative provision, half-termly visits will be undertaken by a member of school staff to see that child to ensure the safety and suitability of the provision.
- When possible, we will always look to use an alternative provision that are on Dorset Council's [list of alternative provision providers](#) These can be accessed through the Dorset Council Nexus Site.
- If a safeguarding concern arises for a child within their Alternative Provision, the school will look to immediately review or end the placement.

6.4 Media recordings, audio, image and video (including digital files)

- Most people who take or view images or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so Castle Court School will ensure that we have safeguards in place, to protect

pupils, by seeking their consent and parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications).

7 Procedures for dealing with complaints and allegations about staff

Castle Court School has a whole school approach to safeguarding and we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Despite all efforts to recruit safely, there may be occasions when allegations of abuse against children are reported to have been committed by staff, supply staff, practitioners, other outsider organisations and/or volunteers, who work with pupils in our school.

An allegation is any information which indicates that a member of staff, supply staff or volunteer or other outsider organisations may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she 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 (this includes behaviour that may have happened outside an organisation that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children, this is known as transferable risk)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) Part 4 Section One- Concerns or allegations that may meet the harm threshold P94 states that where the school identifies that a child has been harmed, that there may be an immediate risk of harm to a child or if the situation is an emergency, they should contact local authority children's social care and as appropriate the police immediately.

There are two aspects to consider when an allegation is made:

- Looking after the welfare of the child - the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) is responsible for ensuring that the child is not at risk and referring cases of suspected abuse to the local authority Children's Social Care as described in Part one of this guidance.
- Investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation - the case manager should discuss with the LADO, the nature, content and context of the allegation, and agree a course of action.

When dealing with allegations, schools and colleges should apply common sense and judgement, deal with allegations quickly, fairly and consistently, and provide effective protection for the child and support the person subject to the allegation.

We understand that a staff member may have concerns about another colleague. If such an allegation is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the allegation or aware of the information, will immediately inform the head or the DSL. The head or the DSL on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the local authority designated officer (LADO) within 24 hours before taking any further action.

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the head, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the chair of governors who will consult the LADO as above, without notifying the head first.

Castle Court School will follow the guidance detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 P93 onwards for managing allegations against staff.

7.1. Low level concerns

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out above. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that;

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO, examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to;
- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

The culture of our school is such that staff are encouraged to pass on low level concerns to the DSL or the head. These concerns will be recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively will also protect those working in or on behalf of the school from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

7.2. Whistleblowing

Castle Court School has a whistleblowing policy which is available as a separate document. We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

Our school works hard to encourage a culture of mutual respect and learning. We welcome comments and feedback and provide staff, pupils and parents with a safe mechanism to raise any concerns.

In line with national guidance given in KCSiE 2025 and Early Years Foundation Years Statutory Framework for school based providers 2025 (P23 3.7-3.8) all staff aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of safeguarding, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements.

In the first instance this should be raised with the head, the DSL or the chair of governors. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should speak to the LADO for further guidance and support.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 800 5000 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

8 Training

All staff members and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including induction, which is regularly updated. This includes training on how to recognise signs of abuse

and how to respond to any concerns. In addition, all staff members receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings) as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Staff also receive regular online safety training. The nominated safeguarding Governor(s) undergoes safeguarding training prior to or as soon as appointment to the role and at every two years thereafter.

The DSL attends the multi-agency local safeguarding partnership training within 12 weeks of taking up their responsibilities.

Castle Court School ensures that its DSL attends the Designated Safeguarding Lead training and conferences/networks/forums to keep abreast of child protection learning and developments, at least biannually. We ensure that staff members provided by other agencies and third parties, e.g. supply teachers and contracted staff, such as catering staff, are aware of our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedure and have received appropriate safeguarding training.

9 Teaching and Learning

Castle Court School is dedicated to ensuring that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. We recognise that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all children, and a more personalised or contextualised approach for more vulnerable children, victim's of abuse and some SEND children might be needed. This is part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

This includes:

- Working within statutory guidance in respect to [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk); and [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, to explore key areas such as self-esteem, emotional literacy, assertiveness, power, building resilience to radicalisation, Conspiracies, Misinformation and Disinformation, e-safety and bullying ([personal, social, health and economic education](#))
- Appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to ensure that 'over- blocking' does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught about online teaching and safeguarding
- The curriculum will be shaped to respond to safeguarding incident patterns in the setting identified by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding team (e.g., to respond to an increase in bullying incidents)
- Providing engagement opportunities with parents and carers to consult on key aspects of the curriculum
- Children can inform the curriculum via discussions with the Head, Departmental leads and the school council.

10 Child Protection Overview and Specific Safeguarding Concerns

10.1 Recognising Abuse

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them

or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children (KCSIE 2025).

There are four categories of abuse.

Physical Abuse

- Physical abuse is a form of abuse that may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

Emotional abuse

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

Sexual abuse

- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.
- They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).
- Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- We encourage all pupils to speak out either in person or to report concerns using our reporting systems.

Neglect

- neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

- neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:
- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, it may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs
- Definitions taken from [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: statutory guidance](#).
- Neglect can occur in affluent families, [Engaging Neglectful Parents from Affluent Backgrounds](#) Castle Court is aware of the need to be alert to indicators of 'affluent neglect.' There is a common misconception that neglect results from material poverty when it is possible for a lack of emotional support to occur in homes where material wealth is plentiful. Affluent neglect may take the form of parents being present but 'absent' in a physical and emotional sense or a child being placed under extreme pressure to succeed

10.2 Indicators of Abuse

- Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For those reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse [Spotting the signs of child abuse | NSPCC](#) and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead.
- It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused. It is very important that staff report all of their concerns, however minor or insignificant they may think they are – they do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.

10.3 Impact of abuse

- The sustained abuse or neglect of children physically, emotionally or sexually can have long term effects on the child's health, development and wellbeing. It can impact significantly on a child's self-esteem, self-image and on their perception of self and of others. The effects can extend into adult life and lead to difficulties in forming and sustaining positive and close relationships. In some situations, it can affect parenting ability.

11 Key Safeguarding Areas

These topics are themes that can impact on children and families, there are specific areas of safeguarding that the setting has statutory responsibilities to address (which are hyperlinked.)

11.1 Child-on-Child Abuse

In accordance with Keeping children safe in education 2025, all staff at Castle Court School are aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. All staff understand that even if there are no reports at Castle Court School, it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that abuse is not being reported. As such it is important that when staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

All staff at Castle Court School will challenge inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature.

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

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Castle Court School will seek to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by taking a contextual approach to safeguarding by increasing safety in the contexts of which harm can occur – this can include the school environment itself, peer groups and the neighbourhood. Following any incidents of child-on-child harm, the DSL/Deputies will review and consider whether any practice or environmental changes can be made in relation to any lessons learned. This can include making changes to staffing and supervision, making changes to the physical environment and considering the utilisation and delivery of safeguarding topics on the curriculum.

11.2 Use of Reasonable Force

There are circumstances when it may be appropriate for staff in school to use ‘reasonable force’ to safeguard children. The term ‘reasonable force’ covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a child needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. ‘Reasonable’ in these circumstances means ‘using no more force than is needed’. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil’s path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom. (KCSiE 2025 P45, .163)

The decision on whether or not to use 'reasonable force' to control or restrain a child is down to the professional judgement of the staff concerned within the context of the law and should always depend on individual circumstances such as a child with Special Educational Needs or a disability.

The use of reasonable force will be minimised through positive and proactive behaviour support and de-escalation and will follow government guidance ([Use of Reasonable Force in Schools 2013](#); [Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention, 2019](#)). We do not routinely use any form of physical contact to manage the children however there may be occasions when the school staff have to physically restrain pupils using 'reasonable force' only to prevent them from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. This may include guiding a child to safety by the arm, or breaking up a fight, to prevent violence or injury and this action should be taken using no more force than is needed.

There is robust recording of any incident where positive handling or restraint has been used. Further details can be found in the school [Physical contact and restraint policy](#). A review of any incident is always carried out to reflect on how it could have been avoided.

The process around how the setting manages concerns where a professional may pose a risk to children and our response to low level concerns can be accessed in section [2.8 Allegations of abuse made against professionals](#).

11.3 Mental Health

Mental health difficulties affect at least 1 in 5 children and young people and includes depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, disordered eating, panic attacks, sleep problems and many other conditions and behaviours ([NHS England » One in five children and young people had a probable mental disorder in 2023](#)). They are often a direct response to what is happening in their lives.

Castle Court School recognises that mental health issues can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation and is aware that only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff are however well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health issue or be at risk of developing one.

Castle Court School aims to promote positive mental health for all pupils and will utilise and engage with the support, knowledge and services of the Mental Health in Schools Team when there are concerns for the mental health of a child(ren) within the school. Castle Court School will also ensure that staff, pupils and parents are made aware of the support available in school and in the local community. Useful links: [Mental health and behaviour in schools guidance](#), [NSPCC](#), [Mind](#) and [Kooth](#)

11.4 Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- economic

- emotional
- controlling or coercive behaviour

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs. Castle Court School recognises that exposure to domestic abuse can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Castle Court School acknowledges that domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

Castle Court School has signed up to the police initiative Operation Encompass that helps the school to provide support to children. The system seeks to ensure that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the DSL in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up-to-date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable silent support to be given to the child according to their needs.

[Domestic Abuse Toolkit - BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

11.5 Child Exploitation (including Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, County Lines, Modern Day Slavery and Trafficking)

All staff at Castle Court School have a knowledge and understanding of the exploitation that children and young people are at risk of within the local community, county wide, nationally and online. Staff receive appropriate training to enable them to continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of exploitation and the different signs that a child or young person may be being exploited.

[Extra-Familial Harm - BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

[Dorset Child Exploitation Toolkit - BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

[Criminal Exploitation and County Lines - BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

[Child Trafficking and Modern Slavery - BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

[Child Sexual Exploitation - BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

11.6 Children who are absent from education

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and

need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. Further information and support, includes:

- The department's statutory guidance on school attendance [Working together to improve school attendance](#) which sets out how schools must work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.
- Information regarding schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the department's statutory guidance: [Children Missing Education](#)

11.7 Children with special educational needs and disabilities

All schools have a duty to use their 'best endeavours' to identify and support pupils with SEN and meet their educational needs. Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges, including online and offline. SEND children can be up to four times more likely to be abused due to additional vulnerabilities. In terms of cognitive understanding, some SEND children will be unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so. We will ensure a culture of vigilance that reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's SEND without further exploration.
- The potential for children with SEND being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudiced-based bullying), with or without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the DSL (or deputies) and the SENDCO. (KCSiE 2025) Further advice and information for colleagues concerning the SEN needs of pupils in the school is available from the school's SENCO, Mrs Emma Harmer.

11.8 Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning

A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are.

However, the Cass review identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there remain many unknowns about the impact of social transition and children may well have wider vulnerabilities, including having complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases additional diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

It recommended that when families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning children, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. When parents are supporting pre-pubertal children, clinical services should ensure that they can be seen as early as possible by a clinical professional with relevant experience.

As such, when supporting a gender questioning child, Castle Court School will take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with the child's parents (other than in the exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child), including any clinical advice that is available and how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying. Castle Court School will refer to the DfE Guidance for Schools and Colleges in relation to Gender Questioning Children, when deciding how to proceed.

Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where they can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff

11.9 Homelessness

Castle Court School recognises that being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSL is aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

11.10 Children with family members in prison

Castle Court School recognises that children who have a family member in prison are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The school will work with agencies and resources such as [NICCO](#) to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

11.11 So Called Honor based Abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

If a teacher (persons employed or engaged to carry out teaching work at schools and other institutions in England), in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 the teacher must report this to the police via 101. [This is a mandatory reporting duty.](#)

[Female Genital Mutilation - Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership \(pdscp.co.uk\)](#)

[Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage and multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

11.12 Online Safety

Castle Court School has a whole school approach to online safety, which protects and educates pupils and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate. We follow the [DfE guidance regarding teaching online safety in schools \(2023.\)](#) and are committed to addressing online safety issues around content, contact, conduct and commerce. This includes:

- Ensuring that online safety is concerned in relevant policies and procedures.
- Online safety is interwoven in safeguarding training for staff and safeguarding on the curriculum for children.
- Acknowledging that child on child abuse can happen via mobile and smart technology between individuals and groups. This should be approached in the same process outlined in section 11.1 of this policy- Child on Child abuse **and read in conjunction** with Castle Court School's [eSafety policy](#)

- Following guidance from the DfE on mobile phone usage in schools- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools>
- The effectiveness of the setting's ability to safeguard children in respect to filtering and monitoring, information security and access management alongside the above will be reviewed annually in line with the digital and technology standards in schools and colleges [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The DSL is the school's Head of e-Safety, while day-to-day management of the matter is passed to the Head of ICT in his role as e-safety 'champion'. This role is mentioned in the DSL's job description.

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

- content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, 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/>)

The school recognises that its pupils will use mobile phones and computers at some time. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication, and education. However, we know that some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, behaviours, web cam photography or face-to-face meetings. Cyber-bullying by pupils via emails and texts will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

The school has an e-Safety Policy that is known to all staff and pupils, which includes reference to the use of personal mobile phones and smart watches. We are particularly mindful of the multi-functionality of many hand-held devices currently on the market – including but not exclusive to; smartwatches, cameras, mobile phones, e-readers, and video cameras, particularly those with internet capabilities (3G/4G/5G). While there may be opportunities to use school owned equipment of this nature as part of a bona fide school project, all such devices are not to be brought into school or used on the school minibuses to/from school. The only exception to this is if pupils are moving between parental households during the week or are needing to walk home from bus stops. If this is the case, parents must first seek permission from the school's safeguarding lead. Pupils must then hand in their devices to the school office when they arrive on site and collect them at the end of each day.

With regard to EYFS, the school's e-safety Policy also prohibits the use of personal use of personal mobile phones and smart watches by all members of the school community (pupil, parents, staff and visitors) between the School Hall and the Dining Hall (and any other areas of the school where pupils from the EYFS department may be playing or having their sessions). This is due to their capability to take and share images. It is the responsibility of those who have such devices to adhere to these rules. New signage has been installed to make this clearer to all members of the school community.

In the updated [DfE guidance on mobile phone usage in schools](#) (2024), it states that ‘there may be occasions where it is appropriate for a teacher to use a mobile phone to issue rewards and sanctions (P8). At Castle Court, members of our sports and CAVE (Character and Values Education) teams, who are regularly working ‘outside the classroom’ are required to do this to utilise our whole school behaviour management app, Track it Lights.

Pupils may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate material that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behaviour, criminal activity, Conspiracy Theories, Misinformation and Disinformation.

Chatrooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and pupils are not allowed to access those sites in school. Many pupils own or have access to handheld devices and parents are encouraged to consider measures to keep their children safe when using the internet and social media at home and in the community.

The school will carefully consider the use of AI, in line with our Online Safety Policy. We recognise that whilst there are benefits to utilising Generative AI, the safeguarding of children needs to remain the priority when deciding on use. The school recognise the use of Generative AI needs to consider the suitability against the age and needs of the children using this. The school will ensure robust Monitoring and Filtering to reduce the risk of exposure to harm through AI use (including misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories).

Filters and monitoring

Whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, the governing body do all that they reasonably can to limit children’s exposure to the above 4 C’s areas of risk from the school’s IT system. As part of this process, the governing body ensures the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly reviews their effectiveness. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL), supported by the Head of IT, has responsibility for “understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place” while the governing body ensure that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of these, how to manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.

The appropriateness of the school’s filtering and monitoring systems are informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the [Prevent Duty](#)

To support schools and colleges to meet this duty, the Department for Education has published [filtering and monitoring standards](#) which set out that schools and colleges should:

- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
- review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs. (KCSiE, 2025 P40)

All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) at induction. This training is regularly updated in line with advice from local safeguarding partners.

Whilst it is essential that the governing body ensures that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place, they should be careful that “over blocking” does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught about online teaching and safeguarding.

Filtering and monitoring are an important part of the online safety picture for schools and colleges to

consider, but it is only one part. The Governors will consider a whole school approach to online safety which will include a clear policy on the use of mobile technology in the school, as found in the school's e-Safety policy.

Photography and Images

Most of the people who take, or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely understandable and acceptable reasons. However, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have safeguards in place.

Some staff at Castle Court have signed the school's Staff Photography/Videography Declaration and gained permission from the head to use their personal mobile phones for the purposes of uploading images and/or videos to the school's own platforms such as our website or our social media feeds such as Facebook and X.

To protect pupils, we will always:

- Explain explicitly to the pupil(s) why we are using the device and seek consent prior to the taking of any photos/videos. If a pupil expresses unease, the staff member should refrain from doing so.
- Upload content to the school network or social media channel as soon as possible and then delete this from the phone's memory/photo stream (including 'recently deleted'). The school reserves the right to check photo streams on phones to ensure that school related photos have been deleted.
- Check that the pupil(s) are not on the list of children whose parents have specifically asked for their children's images not to be used in school publicity or on social media.
- Use only the pupil's first name with an image.
- Ensure pupils are appropriately dressed.

Policy statements and protocols on Photography/Images are included in the schools e-Safety policy.

11.13 Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts. It applies to children under the age of 16, or under 18 if the child is disabled. Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in a residential school, children's home or hospital are not considered to be privately fostered.

Private fostering occurs in all cultures, including British culture and children may be privately fostered at any age. Castle Court School recognises that most privately fostered children remain safe and well, but safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases. Therefore, all staff are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that a child has been trafficked into the country.

By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify Children's Social Care as soon as possible. When Castle Court School becomes aware of a private fostering arrangement for a pupil that has not been notified to Children's Social Care, we will encourage parents and private foster carers to notify Children's Social Care themselves in the first instance but also alert them to our mandatory duty as a school to inform the local authority of children in such arrangements.

[Looking after someone else's child.](#)

11.14 Radicalisation and Extremism

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation and extremism is part of Castle Court School wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse.

Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on education and other children's services ('specified authorities') to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.

Castle Court School takes seriously our responsibility to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school.

When any member of staff has concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they will speak with the DSL. Castle Court School will discuss any concerns about possible radicalisation identified in school with a pupil's parents and carers as with any other safeguarding or child protection issue unless there is reason to believe that doing so would place the child at risk. They will also support parents and carers who raise concerns about their children being vulnerable to radicalisation.

We will then follow normal safeguarding procedures, which may involve contacting the Single Point of Access for consultation and further advice and/or making appropriate referrals to the police PREVENT team and Channel programme for any pupil whose behaviour or comments suggest that they are vulnerable to being radicalised and drawn into extremism and terrorism in order to ensure that children receive appropriate support.

The Department for Education has also set up a dedicated telephone helpline for staff and governors to raise concerns around Prevent (020 7340 7264).

12. Taking action to ensure that children are safe

Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in **the best interests of the child**. (KCSiE, 2025, P17)

Key points for staff to remember when taking action are:

- in an emergency, take the action necessary to help the child, for example call 999
- report your concern to the DSL as quickly as possible – immediately when there is evidence of physical or sexual abuse and certainly by the end of the day
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern and seek support for yourself if you are distressed or need to debrief
- If any member of staff is concerned about a child, he or she must inform the DSL.

The DSL will decide whether the concerns should be raised to Children's Social Care. If a referral to Children's Social Care is required, the DSL will discuss the referral with the parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm or a criminal offence has been committed.

Whilst it is the DSL's role to make referrals to Children's Social Care, any staff member can make a referral to Children's Social Care and / or the police if a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm (e.g. concern that a family might have plans to carry out FGM, Forced Marriage etc) and the DSL / Deputy DSL is unavailable (the DSL / Deputy DSL should be informed of the referral(s) made as soon as possible.)

What to do if staff are concerned about a child's welfare

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately. Any concerns regarding indicators of abuse or neglect or signs that a child may be experiencing a safeguarding issue should be recorded on the school's safeguarding platform-My Concern, and shared with the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately. For physical signs of abuse, a body map can also be used. Concerns can also be discussed in person with the DSL but the details of the concern should **always** be recorded in writing. There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk, but have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical or inconclusive signs may have been noticed.

Castle Court School recognises that the signs may be due to a variety of factors, for example a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill or an accident has occurred. However, they may also indicate a child is being abused or is in need of safeguarding. In these circumstances staff will exercise professional curiosity and will try to give the child the opportunity to talk. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way. Staff should use record these early concerns on My Concern. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL and put them in writing. If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below regarding a pupil making a disclosure.

What to do if a pupil discloses to a member of staff

Remember the seven Rs: Receive; Reassure; Respond; Report; Record; Remember; Review (see appendix 5 for more details).

We recognise that it takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, guilty or scared, their abuser may have threatened that something will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults or believe that what has happened is their fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abuse.

A child who makes a disclosure may have to tell their story on a number of subsequent occasions to the police and/or social workers. Therefore, it is vital that their first experience of talking to a trusted adult is a positive one. For some extra help: [NSPCC Responding to a child's disclosure of abuse](#)

During their conversation with the pupil staff will:

- Listen to what the child has to say and allow them to speak freely
- Remain calm and not overreact or act shocked or disgusted – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting the listener
- Reassure the child that it is not their fault and that they have done the right thing in telling someone
- Do not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how difficult it is for the pupil and allow them time to talk
- Take what the child is disclosing seriously
- Ask open questions and avoid asking leading questions
- Avoid jumping to conclusions, speculation or make accusations
- Not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who is being abused
- Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing sooner. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about it when it started' may be the staff member's way of being supportive, but may be interpreted by the child to mean they have done something wrong. There are multiple reasons why children delay disclosing

- Tell the child what will happen next

If a pupil talks to any member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing the staff member will let the child know that they will have to pass the information on. Staff are not allowed to keep secrets. The member of staff should write up their conversation as soon as possible on the school's safeguarding platform, My Concern, using the child's own words. Staff should make this a matter of priority.

Notifying Parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem or if a criminal offence has been (or potentially been) committed, advice will first be sought from children's services front door service.

Where there are concerns about forced marriage, honour-based abuse or any harmful practice, parents should not be informed a referral is being made as to do so may place the child at a significantly increased risk.

Making a referral to Children's Social Care

Concerns about a pupil or a disclosure should be discussed with the DSL who will help decide whether a referral to the Children's Social Care (in Dorset this is the Family Support and Advice Line) is appropriate. If a referral is needed, then the DSL should make it. However, anyone, including children, can make a referral and if for any reason a staff member thinks a referral is appropriate and one hasn't been made, they can and should consider making a referral themselves.

The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the pupil or if a criminal offence has been (or may have been) committed.

If you have not had any feedback from Children's Social Care within 72 hours of making the referral, you must follow this up. If after a referral the pupil's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL (or whoever made the referral) should press for re-consideration to ensure their concerns have been addressed, and most importantly the pupil's situation improves. If necessary the Dorset Multi-Agency Procedure for Resolution of Professional Differences should be followed [dorset-multi-agency-resolution-and-escalation-procedure-v2-15042024.pdf](#)

If a pupil is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care and/or the police immediately. Anybody can make a referral. Where referrals are not made by the DSL, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible.

Pupil Information

The school's record-keeping policy for child welfare and child protection is consistent with the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership, guidance which is known to all staff.

To keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, our school requires accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives.
- Names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above)
- Emergency contact details (if different from above)
- Details of any persons authorised to collect the child from school (if different from above)
- Any relevant court orders in place including those, which affect any person’s access to the child (e.g., Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions etc.)
- If the child is or has been subject to a Child in Need, Child Protection or Care Plan
- Name and contact detail of GP.
- Any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child.

The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely.

Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome

The DSL should ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content within it is shared, this happens in line with information sharing advice as set out in Part one and Part two of KCSiE 2025.

These records will be transferred when a child moves to another school or setting, within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child arrives. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. This will be clearly marked ‘Child Protection, Confidential, for attention of Designated Safeguarding Lead’. (KCSiE 2025)

A lack of information about their circumstances can impact on the child’s safety, welfare, and educational outcomes. In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead will consider if it is appropriate to share any additional information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving to help them put in place the right support to safeguard this child and to help the child thrive in the school or college. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives. (KCSiE 2025)

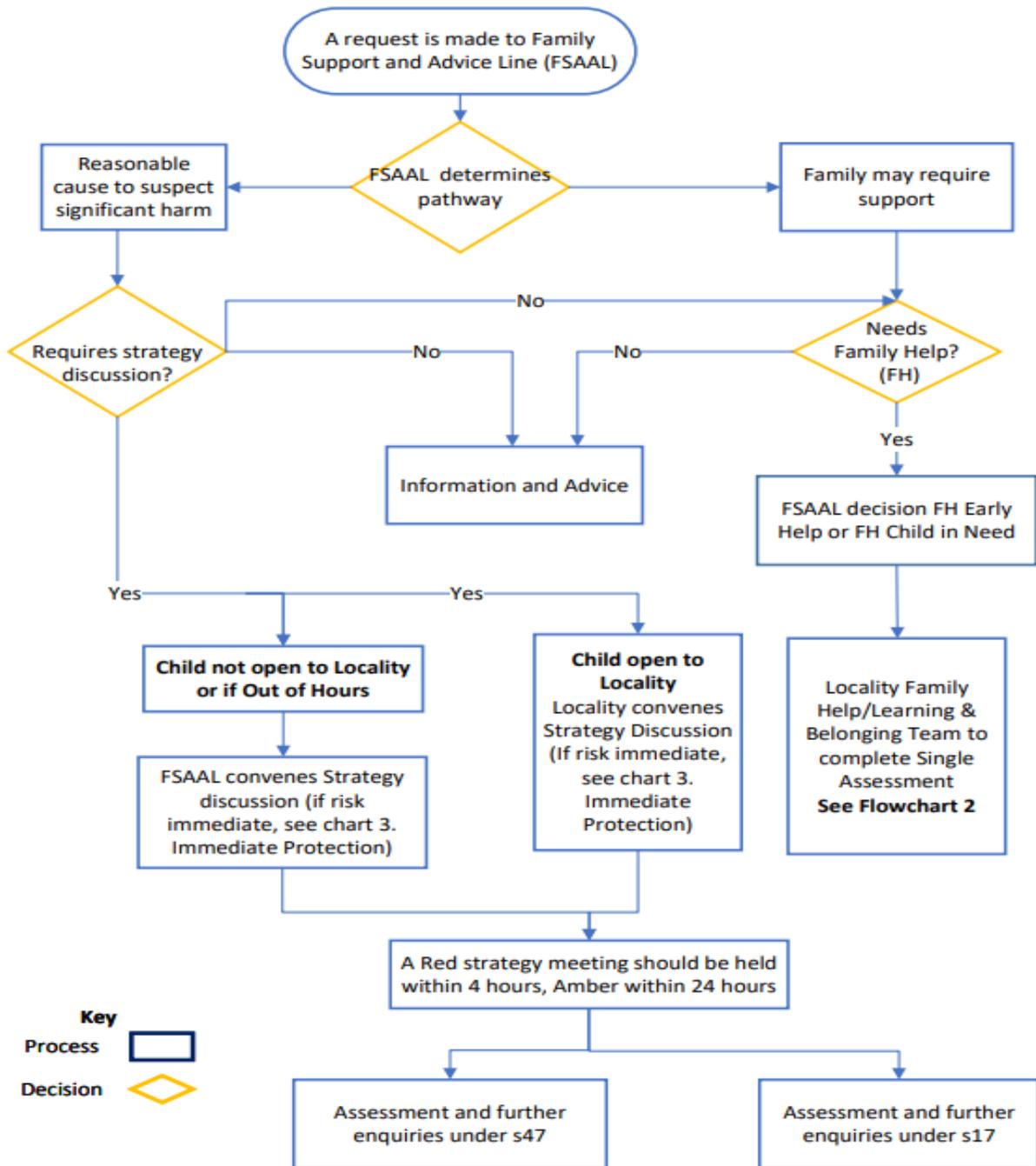
Appendices

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Appendix 1.



How we do things in Dorset
1. When a request for support is made to Dorset Council



Key
 Process
 Decision

V5.0 190525

Owner: Family Support and Advice Line Manager

Next review: May 2027

The Seven R's

Receive

Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief. Accept what is said and take it seriously. Make a note of what has been said as soon as practicable.

Reassure

Reassure the pupil /student, but only as far as is honest and reliable. Do not make promises you may not be able to keep, e.g.: "I'll stay with you", or "everything will be alright now" or "I'll keep this confidential". Do reassure, e.g. you could say "I believe you", "I am glad you came to me", "I am sorry this has happened", "we are going to do something together to get help".

Respond

Respond to the pupil/student only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate for full details. Do not ask 'leading' questions, i.e. "did he touch your private parts?" or "did she hurt you?". Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later court proceedings.

Instead, make use of open ended questions which offers the child the opportunity to provide more information about an event in a way that is not leading, suggestive or putting them under pressure.

Open questions may use: How? When? Who? Where?

Questions beginning with the phrases "tell me", "describe" or "explain" are useful:

- Tell me what happened, tell me who was there....
- Explain what you mean when you say....
- Describe the place to me....
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator (noting that some may also be vulnerable); the pupil may care about him/her, and reconciliation may be possible.
- Do not ask the pupil to repeat it all for another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to. Reassure the pupil that it will be the designated lead for safeguarding or Head.

Report

Share concerns with the DSL as soon as possible. If you are unable to contact your DSL, deputy DSL, or most senior member of staff, if the child is at risk of immediate harm, you MUST contact Achieving for Children SPA service or Police.

If you are dissatisfied with the response from the DSL or children's social work, you should ask for the decision to be reconsidered, giving your reasons for this.

A formal referral or any urgent medical treatment must not be delayed by the unavailability of designated staff.

Record

If possible, make some very brief notes at the time and write them up as soon as possible. Keep your original notes on file.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child or young person or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse in a child or young person, will make a written record as soon as practical, recording the disclosure using the child's own words, what was said or seen and the location both of the abuse and the disclosure.

Record the date, time, place, person's present and noticeable non-verbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into proper words.

A record of a concern, suspicion or allegation should be made at the time of or as soon as possible after the event. Dates and times of events should be recorded as accurately as possible, together with a note of when the record was made.

Record facts and observable things, rather than your 'interpretations' or 'assumptions'.

A record should be made of any visible marks, bruising or injuries to a child that give cause for concern. This may be completed on a body map. The child should not be examined intimately, or pictures taken of any injuries / marks.

All records must be signed and dated clearly with the name of the signatory clearly printed. Children **MUST NOT** be asked to make a written statement themselves or to sign any records. All records of a child protection nature (handwritten or typed) are passed to the DSL.

Remember

Support the child: listen, reassure, and be available. Complete confidentiality is essential. Share your knowledge only with appropriate professional colleagues.

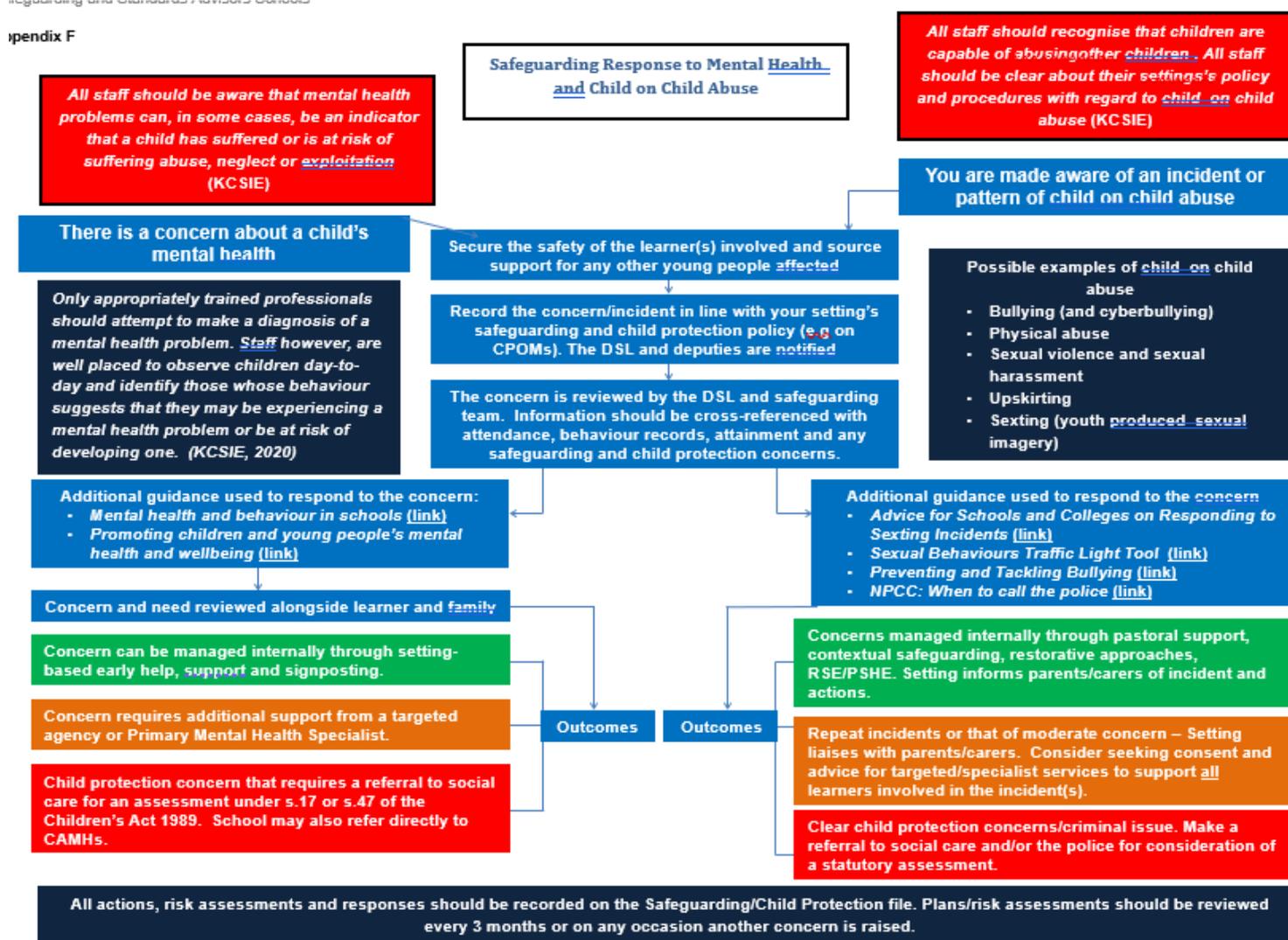
Try to get some support for yourself if you need it.

Review

- Has the action taken provided good outcomes for the child?
- Did the procedure work?
- Were any deficiencies or weaknesses identified in the procedure?
- Have these been remedied?
- Is further training required?

Appendix 5.

Appendix F



Appendix 6.

Additional Useful Links

[Dorset - BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership PDSCP Resources](#)
[Dorset Council – Worried About a Child Continuum-of-Need-Final-07.05.2025.pdf](#)
[Allegations Against Staff](#)

Mental Health

[Mental health and behaviour in schools guidance](#)
NSPCC: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/>
Mind: <https://www.mind.org.uk/>
Kooth: <https://www.kooth.com/>
Papyrus: <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/suicide-prevention/>

Child on Child Abuse

[Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges \(DfE September 2021\)](#)
[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident Home - Shore](#)
[Resources for education settings | CSA Centre](#)

Domestic Abuse

[Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

Child Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding

[Beyond Referrals | Contextual Safeguarding](#)
[Stop it Now](#)
[Child Sexual Exploitation Definition and Guide](#)
CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)
CEOP's Thinkuknow website www.thinkuknow.co.uk
[Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines](#)
[Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation | The Children's Society.](#)

FGM / Modern Slavery / Prevent / Forced Marriage

[New Definition of Extremism](#)
[Female Genital Mutilation Statutory Guidance](#)
[Guidance Forced Marriage](#)
[Protecting Children from Radicalisation: The Prevent Duty](#)
[Educate Against Hate: Educate against hate](#)

Online Safety

[National Cyber Security Centre: National Cyber Security Centre](#)
The UK safer Internet Centre (www.saferinternet.org.uk)
[Plan technology for your school - GOV.UK](#)
[Generative AI: product safety expectations - GOV.UK](#)
[Artificial Intelligence - DfE Guidance](#)

Legislation

[Children Act 2004](#)
[Education Act 2002](#)

Statutory Guidance

[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#)
[What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused](#)
[Guidance for safer working practice 2023](#)

[Use of reasonable force](#)
[Statutory guidance for alternative provision](#)
[Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher](#)
[Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance](#)
[Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#)
[RCPCH updated guidance on fabricated or induced illness](#)
[Children who run away or go missing from home or care](#)
[Positive environments where children can flourish](#)
[Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills](#)
[Teachers' Standards](#)
[Information Sharing](#)
[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#)
[Working together to improve school attendance](#)

External Contact Details

Childline 0800 11 11 <https://www.childline.org.uk>
Crimestoppers 0800 555 111
Foreign and Commonwealth Office 0207 008 0151 (
Kidscape Bullying Helpline 0845 1205 204
NSPCC (NSPCC website) 0800 800 5000
NSPCC whistleblowing helpline: 0800 0280285 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
Professional organisations who provide guidance and practical support TES, MindEd, NSPCC
RU Safe? (Barnardo's - Child Sexual Exploitation Service) 01494 461112
Samaritans 0845 790 9090