

Academy Athletics

Child protection and Safeguarding Policy v.2.1

October 2025

Policy Review Information

This policy will be reviewed in full by the committee annually.

Person responsible for the policy: **Christine Justice**

Signed: C. Justice

To be reviewed: 07 October 2026

At *Academy Athletics* the named personnel with designated responsibility for safeguarding are:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Christine Justice 07415399204 Email safeguarding@academyathletics.co.uk

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO): Miki Garratt Email academyathletics@icloud.com

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1: AIM OF THE POLICY

- To inform staff, parents/carers and volunteers about the club's responsibilities for safeguarding children.
- To enable everyone to have a clear understanding of how these responsibilities should be carried out.
- To ensure that appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

2: DEFINITIONS

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

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

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. *Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.*

Neglect is a form of abuse and 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. *Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.*

"Children" includes everyone under the age of 18. (*Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE, September 2025*)

3: LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023**, and the **Governance Handbook**.

This policy is also based on the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- **The Children Act 1989 and The Children Act 2004 amendment - Section 11** of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the **Serious Crime Act 2015**, which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- **Statutory guidance on FGM**, which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- **The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**, which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**, which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty, which explains schools' duties under the **Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015** with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- Section 175 of the **Education Act 2002**, which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- **The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009**, which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one person on a school interview/appointment panel to be trained in safer recruitment techniques
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)

- Part 3 of the schedule to the **Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014**, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school (Academies, including free schools, and independent schools)
- Part 1 of the schedule to the **Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015**, which places a duty on non-maintained special schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school (Non-maintained special schools)
- **The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009** (and 2018 amendment) and **Childcare Act 2006**, which set out who is disqualified from working with children (All schools with pupils aged under 8)
- This policy also meets requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. (All early years providers)

This policy forms part of a suite of documents and policies which relate to the safeguarding responsibilities of the club. The following 3 safeguarding partners are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority(LA)
- A clinical commissioning group for an area within the LA
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

4. EQUALITY STATEMENT

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face. We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs or disabilities

- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff and volunteers at Academy Athletics. Our policy and procedures also apply to **both Academy Athletics** locations and off-site activities.

We will maintain an attitude of “it could happen here” where safeguarding is concerned.

5.1 All Staff and Volunteers

All staff will read and understand Part I and Annex A of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#) and review this guidance at least annually.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including the staff code of conduct, the role of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), the behaviour policy, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- The early help process and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play

- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation (CSE), FGM and radicalisation.
- Please refer to the [MK Together](#) Website for specific guidance on identification of neglect, the [MKTSP Decision Making Tool](#) outlines initial actions. Please use the full suite of documents and guidance contained within the MK Together webpages - including the [Neglect Screening Tool](#) and [Support Tool](#).

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

5.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Our DSL is Christine Justice.

The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding.

During term time, the DSL will be available during working hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

We will ensure appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

Christine Justice can be contacted via email on safeguarding@academyathletics.co.uk

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so
- Contribute to the assessment of children
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and other staff who make such referrals directly

- The DSL will also keep the staff informed of any issues, and liaise with Local Authority case managers and Designated Officers for child protection concerns as appropriate.

Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate **lead responsibility** for child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead; this **lead responsibility** should not be delegated. (*Annex C; Paragraph 3 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.*)

The full responsibilities of the DSL are set out in their job description. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should undergo formal training every two years. The DSL should also undertake Prevent awareness training. In addition to this training, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed, (for example via e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments), at least annually.

6. WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

6.1 Children Who May Require Early Help

All staff should be aware of the early help process, and understand their role in identifying emerging problems, sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment of a child's needs. It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. This also includes staff monitoring the situation and feeding back to the Designated Safeguarding Lead any ongoing/escalating concerns so that consideration can be given to a referral to Children's Services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving.

Early Help Links:

- The Early Help Strategy Link: [Early Help Strategy](#)
- Early Help Directory Link: [Early Help Directory](#)

Staff and volunteers working within Academy Athletics should be alert to the potential need for early help for children also who are more vulnerable.

For example:

- **Children with a disability and/or specific additional needs.**

- **Children with special educational needs.**
- **Children who are acting as a young carer.**
- **Children who are showing signs of engaging in antisocial or criminal behaviour.**
- **Children whose family circumstances present challenges, such as substance abuse, adult mental health or learning disability, domestic violence.**
- **Children who are showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.**

6.2 Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities:

Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour; including for example: ADHD or other specific behavioural problems/diagnosis, mood and injury relate to the child's impairment without further exploration;
- Assumptions that children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs;
- Communication barriers and difficulties;
- Reluctance to challenge carers, (professionals may over empathise with carers because of the perceived stress of caring for a disabled child);
- Disabled children often rely on a wide network of carers to meet their basic needs and therefore the potential risk of exposure to abusive behaviour can be increased
- A disabled child's understanding of abuse; Lack of choice/participation; Isolation.

Directory of Services for Children with Disabilities: [Specialist-support-for SEND](#)

6.3 Thresholds for Intervention

If our staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. They should follow this child protection policy and speak to the DSL.

The DSL will decide on the most appropriate course of action and whether the concerns should be referred to Children's Social Care. If it is decided to make a referral to Children's Social care the parent will be informed, unless to do so would place the child at further risk or undermine the collection of evidence e.g. obtaining forensic evidence.

All concerns, discussions and decisions will be recorded in writing. NB: Informing parents does not require seeking their consent to share the information with professionals who need to know.

The DSL will provide guidance on the appropriate action. Options will include:

- Managing any support for the child internally via the school's own pastoral support processes, An Early Help Assessment or
- A referral for statutory services e.g. the child is or might be in need or suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

Early Help - If early help is appropriate, the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to Children's Social Care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

Children in Need – A child in need is defined under the *Children Act 1989* as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. The Local Authority is required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the *Children Act 1989*.

Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm - Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquiries under section 47 of the *Children Act 1989* if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should

take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment, including all forms of abuse and neglect, female genital mutilation or other so-called honour based violence, and extra-familial threats like radicalisation and sexual exploitation.

The DSL should refer all cases of suspected abuse or neglect to the [Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub](#) (MASH), (01908 253169/01908 253170, Police (cases where a crime may have been committed) and to the [Channel](#) programme where there is a radicalisation concern.

6.4 If you discover that FGM has taken place or a pupil is at risk of FGM

The Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs". FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

Any staff member who discovers (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a student under 18 must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a statutory duty, and staff members will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it. Unless they have good reason not to, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

Any other member of staff who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a student under 18 must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for staff members mentioned above does not apply in cases where a student is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine students. Any member of staff who suspects a student is *at risk* of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out [or discovers that a student age 18 or over appears to have been a victim of FGM] must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

6.5 Concerns about extremism

If a child is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the committee team and/or seek advice from local authority children's social care. Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include [Channel](#), the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which members of staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a student.

You can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk

Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group, See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

7. DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff/volunteer should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said
- Allow the child to talk freely
- Reassure the child, but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep
- Never promise a child that they will not tell anyone - as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.
- Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault

- Stress that it was the right thing to tell
- Listen, only asking questions when necessary to clarify
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told
- Make a written record (see Record Keeping below)
- Pass the information to the Designated Senior Person without delay. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to children's social care and/or the police directly and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so.

8. CONCERNS ABOUT A STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER

Any concerns regarding a staff member or volunteer should be reported to the DSL immediately, if for any reason you feel you cannot speak to the DSL or you don't agree with the action the DSL is/has taking, you can contact M.A.S.H or the L.A.D.O (Local Authority Designated Officer)

- M.A.S.H - 01908 253169 / 01908 253170
- L.A.D.O - 03000 411 111/ 0300 0419 191

9. SAFER WORKING PRACTICE

To reduce the risk of allegations, all staff should be aware of safer working practice and should be familiar with the guidance contained in the staff handbook.

Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (September 2019).

The document seeks to ensure that the responsibilities of school leaders towards children and staff are discharged by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe, unprofessional and unwise behaviour. This includes guidelines for staff on positive behaviour management in line with the ban on corporal punishment (School Standards and Framework Act 1998).

10. RECORD KEEPING

All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing. If in doubt about recording requirements staff should discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

When a child has made a disclosure, the member of staff/volunteer should:

- Record as soon as possible after the conversation. Use the Academy Athletics safeguarding email and members' Coacha profile wherever possible.
- Do not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any injuries
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions

All records need to be given to the Designated Safeguarding Lead promptly. No copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that all safeguarding records are managed in accordance with the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005.

Non-confidential records will be easily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

We will hold records in line with our records retention schedule.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect. GDPR does not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Lawful and secure information sharing between schools, Children's Social Care, and other local agencies, is essential for keeping children safe and ensuring they get the support they need.

[The Data Protection Act 2018](#) introduced 'safeguarding' as a reason to be able to process sensitive, personal information, even without consent (DPA, Part 2,18; Schedule 8, 4)

When Designated Safeguarding Leads are considering whether, or not, to share safeguarding information (especially with other agencies) Academy Athletics will record who they are sharing that information with and for what reason. If we have taken a decision not to

seek consent from the data subject and/or parent/carer that should also be recorded within the safeguarding file.

All relevant information can be shared without consent if to gain consent would place a child at risk.

Fears about sharing information **must not be allowed** to stand in the way of promoting the welfare and protecting the safety of children. As with all data sharing, appropriate organisational and technical safeguards should still be in place.

[The Working Together on Safeguarding Children statutory guidance](#) states the following:

1. Effective sharing of information is essential for early identification of need, assessment, and service provision to keep children safe.
2. All professionals responsible for children should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care (e.g. they are being supported as a child in need or have a child protection plan). You should be alert to sharing important information about any adults with whom that child has contact, which may affect the child's safety or welfare.
3. Information sharing is also essential for the identification of patterns of behaviour when a child has gone missing, when multiple children appear associated to the same context or locations of risk, or in relation to children in the secure estate where there may be multiple local authorities involved in a child's care.
4. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children, which must always be the paramount concern.

To ensure effective safeguarding arrangements:

- You should have arrangements in place that set out clearly the processes and the principles for sharing information. The arrangement should cover how information will be shared within your own organisation/agency; and with others who may be involved in a child's life

- All professionals responsible for children should not assume that someone else will pass on information that they think may be critical to keeping a child safe. If a member of staff has concerns about a child's welfare and considers that they may be a child in need or that the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, then they should share the information with local authority children's social care and/or the police. Staff should be particularly alert to the importance of sharing information when a child moves from one school to another, due to the risk that knowledge pertinent to keeping a child safe could be lost.
- You should aim to gain consent to share information, but should be mindful of situations where to do so would place a child at increased risk of harm. Information may be shared without consent if you have good reasons to do so, and believe that sharing the information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner. When decisions are made to share or withhold information, you should record who has been given the information and why.

Safeguarding children raises issues of **confidentiality** that must be clearly understood by all staff/volunteers in the organisation.

- Staff/volunteers should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about an allegation, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- Staff/volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.
- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding
- Information must only be shared on a 'need-to-know' basis, but you do not need consent to share information if a child is suffering, or at risk of, serious harm

12. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/CARERS

Academy Athletics will ensure the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is available publicly via the website.

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children's social care before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents of all the children involved.

13. USEFUL LINKS AND NUMBERS

M.A.S.H 01908 253169/01908 253170

NSPCC 08088005000

ChildLine: 0800 1111

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP): 0870 000 3344

Online safety policy examples: Online safety policy examples

Inspecting Safeguarding In the Early Years 2019: [Early years inspection toolkit](#)

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework: [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#)

14. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The policy will be reviewed annually by the governing body. It will be implemented through the Academy Athletics induction and training programme, and as part of day to day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and through staff performance measures.

Appendix

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION (DfE 2025)

[KCSIE 2025 Part 1](#)

Academy Athletics will ensure that all staff have access to the above online document and read Part 1 and also the below Annex, which provides further information on:

- A) Children and the court system
- B) Children missing from education
- C) Children with family members in prison
- D) Child sexual exploitation
- E) Child criminal exploitation: county lines
- F) Domestic abuse
- G) Homelessness
- H) So-called 'honour-based' violence including Forced Marriage and FGM
- I) Preventing radicalisation
- J) Peer on peer abuse
- K) Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
 - What is sexual violence and sexual harassment
- L) Upskirting
- M) The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment

This is to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities as set out in this guidance.

Appendix 1: Types of abuse

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

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

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse 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
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- 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
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

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 nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- 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.

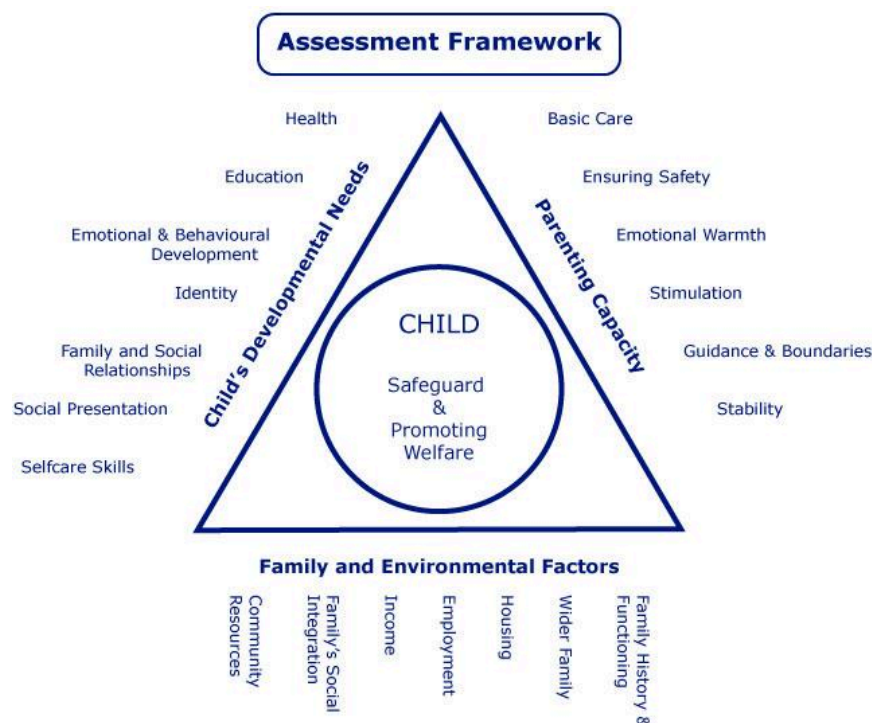
Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

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.

The framework for understanding children's needs:



A) Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children [5 - 11 yrs Guide](#) and [12-17 year olds Guide](#). They explain each step of the process and support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

B) Children missing from education

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

C) Children with family members in prison

Approximately 200,000 children have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. [NICCO](#) provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

D) Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people, (or a third person or persons) receive something, (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affections, gifts, money) as a result of them performing and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child's or young person's limited availability of choice, resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. (DCSF 2009).

Key Facts about CSE

- Sexual exploitation often starts around the age of 10 years old. Girls are usually targeted from age 10 and boys from age 8.
- It affects both girls and boys and can happen in all communities.
- Any person can be targeted but there are some particularly vulnerable groups:
Looked after Children, Children Leaving Care and Children with Disabilities.
- Victims of CSE may also be trafficked (locally, nationally and internationally).
- Over 70% of adults involved in prostitution were sexually exploited as children or teenagers.

Sexual violence or abuse against children represents a major public health and social welfare problem within UK society, affecting 16% of children under 16. That is approximately 2 million children.

Good practice– Individuals

- Recognise the symptoms and distinguish them from other forms of abuse
- Treat the child/young person as a victim of abuse
- Understand the perspective/behaviour of the child/young person and be patient with them
- Help the child/young person to recognise that they are being exploited
- Collate as much information as possible
- Share information with other agencies and seek advice/refer to Social Care

Good practice– Organisations

- Ensure robust safeguarding policies and procedures are in place which cover CSE
- Promote and engage in effective multi-agency working to prevent abuse
- Work to help victims move out of exploitation
- Cooperate to enable successful investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators

E) Child Criminal Exploitation: County Lines

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

Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

F) Domestic Abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological;
- physical;
- sexual;
- financial; and
- emotional

Emotional exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence 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. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

G) Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live.

The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: [Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets](#). The new duties shift focus to early intervention and encourage those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

In most cases school and college staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised that in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support.

Children's services will be the lead agency for these young people and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances. The department and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have published joint statutory guidance on the provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/ or require accommodation.

H) So-called ‘honour-based’ violence (including FGM and Forced Marriage)

So-called ‘honour-based’ violence (HBV) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving “honour” often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. *All forms of HBV are abuse* (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV, or already having suffered HBV.

Actions

If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV or who has suffered from HBV, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

As appropriate, they will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multiagency liaison with police and children’s social care.

Female Genital Mutilation FGM

FGM is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls, and therefore should be dealt with as part of existing child safeguarding/protection structures, policies and procedures. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is **illegal** under the *Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003*.

Other than in the excepted circumstances, it is an offence for **any person (regardless of their nationality or residence status)** to:

- perform FGM in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (section 1 of the Act);
- assist a girl to carry out FGM on herself in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (section 2 of the Act); and
- Assist (from England, Wales or Northern Ireland) a non-UK person to carry out FGM outside the UK on a UK national or permanent UK resident (section 3 of the Act).

Forced Marriage (FM)

FM is now a specific offence under [s121 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014](#) that came into force on 16 June 2014.

A FM is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties, and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is when someone faces physical pressure to marry (e.g. threats, physical violence or sexual violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (e.g. if someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). This is very different to an arranged marriage where both parties give consent.

FM is illegal in England and Wales.

This includes:

- taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place)
- marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured to or not)

I) Preventing Radicalisation

[The Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015](#)

The Act places a Prevent duty on specified schools to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. The education and childcare specified authorities in Schedule 6 to the Act are as follows:

- The proprietors of maintained schools
- non-maintained special schools
- maintained nursery schools
- independent schools (including academies and free schools)
- alternative provision academies
- PRUs
- registered early years providers
- registered late years providers and some holiday schemes.

Schools/settings subject to the Prevent Duty will be expected to demonstrate activity in the following areas

- Assessing the risk of children being drawn into terrorism
- Demonstrate that they are protecting children and young people from being drawn into terrorism by having robust safeguarding policies.
- Ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

- Make sure that staff have training that gives them the knowledge and confidence to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas which can be used to legitimise terrorism
- Expected to ensure children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school

J) Peer on Peer Abuse

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. This is generally referred to as peer on peer abuse and can take many forms.

This can include but is not limited to:

- Bullying including cyberbullying
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm
- Sexting
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up”. Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under the schools behaviour policy but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegation that raises safeguarding concerns.

This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put students in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including sexting)

If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse.

When considering whether behaviour is abusive, it is important to consider:

- Whether there is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned; or
- Whether the perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children; or

- Whether there are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.

Peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways and different gender issues can be prevalent. Severe harm may be caused to children by abusive and bullying behaviour of other children, which may be physical, sexual or emotional and can include gender based violence/sexual assaults, sexting, domestic abuse, peer-on-peer exploitation, serious youth violence, sexual bullying or harmful sexual behaviour.

Guidance on responding to and managing sexting incidents can be found at:

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and college](#)

[Sexting In Schools Police and Schools](#)

In order to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse Academy Athletics will

- Ensure students have an understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe.
- Have systems in place for any student to raise concerns with staff, knowing that they will be listened to, believed and valued.
- Develop robust risk assessments where appropriate.
- Have relevant policies in place (e.g. behaviour policy).

K) Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any** age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing.

This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that **all** victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;

- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts.

Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

L) What is Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment?

Sexual violence

It is important that staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way.

When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the **Sexual Offences Act 2003** as described below:

- **Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Assault by Penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Sexual Assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

What is consent?

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs.

Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Sexual Harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual “jokes” or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence- it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment.

This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:

- non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;
- sexualised online bullying;
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

M) Upskirting

Upskirting generally involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence.

N) The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment

The initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Appendix 2

Table of Changes/Amendments/Updates

Date	Version	Amendments	Name
26.05.2026	2.1	Updated email address	C. Justice
07.10.2025	2.0	Updated links	C.Justice

31.08.2023	1.0	Version Published	J McGuaine