



# Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

*"Safeguarding children is everybody's business" (Lord Laming)*

<b>Applies to</b>	Whole School
<b>Responsibility</b>	Deputy Head (Pastoral)
<b>Ratified by</b>	Full Governing Body
<b>Date reviewed</b>	Michaelmas 2025
<b>Next review</b>	Michaelmas 2026

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Statement of intent

Wells Cathedral School recognises that the safety and welfare of children is paramount and that we have a responsibility to protect children in all of our activities. We take all reasonable steps to ensure, through appropriate procedures and training, that all children, irrespective of sex, age, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual identity or social status, are protected from abuse.

**This policy is to be read by all staff annually and a safeguarding questionnaire acts as evidence that they have read and understood it. The Policy will also be accessible to all visitors to the school, parents, and carers through the school's website.**

## 1.2 Safeguarding legislation and guidance

This Policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 and related guidance. This includes:

- DfE guidance: *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)* (KCSIE25)
- DfE guidance: *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)* (WTSC18)
- *Prevent Duty Guidance*: for England and Wales (2023)
- Advice from Somerset Support Service for Education (SSE).
- Advice from Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SShttpsCP)

Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 require proprietors of independent schools (including academies and city technology colleges) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

The statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)* covers the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services (including schools and colleges) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It also provides the framework for Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (SSCPs) to monitor the effectiveness of local services, including safeguarding arrangements in schools.

The statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)* is issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Education (Non-Maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 2011. Schools and colleges must have regard to this guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. All staff must read *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) Part One* of this guidance.

### **1.3 To whom and where does this policy apply?**

This Safeguarding Policy relates to all school employees or staff working within Wells Cathedral School and is in addition to the Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) & Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) guidance. This policy document is produced in order to inform and assist our staff and contractual partners in meeting their responsibilities in terms of child protection, whether working directly or indirectly for Wells Cathedral School.

### **1.4 Aims of the policy**

This policy aims to ensure that Wells Cathedral School is a safe and welcoming environment where 'children can have a sense of belonging and be contented, balanced and confident individuals who have the necessary tools to be able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.' (Care Manifesto)

This document seeks to raise awareness of the types of abuse and specific safeguarding concerns relating to children. It then sets out guidance as to the roles and responsibilities of staff and the correct practices and procedures that must be followed in order to manage such concerns.

Key elements of these aims are ensuring that:

- Staff recognise that safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone, not just those who work directly with children
- Staff are alert to the signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns and follow the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) procedures for identifying, recording, reporting and monitoring such cases
- Staff keep child protection issues at the forefront of their work and know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), deputies and other members of the safeguarding team are
- Staff respond swiftly and appropriately to all complaints and concerns about poor practice or suspected or actual child abuse
- Staff treat all children with respect regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity
- The School establishes positive, supportive, secure working practices that put children first
- The School practises safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
- The School has a DSL and at least one Deputy who have received appropriate training and support for their role

- Either the DSL or one of the deputies will be on call whenever activities involving children take place on site
- The School keeps written, dated and signed records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately. This includes the use of any screening tool that aids identification of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Radicalisation, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), on-line use or other such issues and that such records are securely placed.
- The School cooperates with relevant persons and agencies when dealing with child protection matters; sharing information, attending case conferences if necessary and involving parents and children as appropriate
- All events, both on and off site, are risk assessed and managed to the highest possible safety standards
- Through the School's education system, we equip children with the skills needed to keep them safe and support those who have been abused in accordance with agreed plans
- The School constantly reviews ways of working to incorporate best practice. Including this policy being regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current best practice and Government expectations

## 2 Safeguarding overview

### 2.1 What is Safeguarding?

**Safeguarding** is defined by *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)* 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
- 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** refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

**Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

**Child** includes everyone under the age of 18.

**Parent** refers to parents or other adults who are in a parenting role, including step-parents, adoptive parents and foster carers.

**Abuse** is anything that harms another person.

## **2.2 Types of abuse**

All staff members must be alert to the possible signs of abuse of a child or young person.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. 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

Forms of abuse are:

### **2.2.1 Physical**

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.

### **2.2.2 Emotional**

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 children 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 the 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. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber-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, though it may occur alone.

### **2.2.3 Sexual**

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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

### **2.2.4 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.

## **2.3 Specific safeguarding issues**

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

Other safeguarding issues all staff should be aware of include:

### **2.3.1 Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see,

hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent may cause considerable distress to children and both the physical assaults and psychological abuse suffered by adult victims who experience domestic abuse can have a negative impact on their ability to look after their children. Children can still suffer the effects of domestic abuse, even if they do not witness the incidents directly. However, in up to 90% of incidents involving domestic violence where children reside in the home, the children are in the same or the next room. Children's exposure to parental conflict, even where violence is not present, can lead to serious anxiety and distress among children. Children can see provision as a safe retreat from problems at home or alternatively not attend provision through a perceived need to be at home to protect abused parents or siblings.

Domestic abuse can therefore have a damaging effect on a child's health, educational attainment and emotional well-being and development. The potential scale of the impact on children is not always easy to assess but may manifest itself as behavioural, emotional or social difficulties, including poor self-esteem, withdrawal, absenteeism, adult-child conflict. Children sometimes disclose what is happening or may be reluctant to do so hoping that someone will realise something is wrong.

### **2.3.2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

#### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur through the use of technology. Like all forms of child sex abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex
- can still be abused even if the sexual activity appears consensual
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and noncontact sexual activity

- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence
- may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media)
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults.

The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of child sexual exploitation:

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

### **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) : 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.

Some specific forms of CCE can include:

- children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines,
- children working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing.
- Children forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.



Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence, or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation. Further information about CCE including definitions and indicators is included in KCSIE, Annex B.

While professional judgement may lead you to refer this matter to Somerset Direct, a screening tool has been developed that may help an employee in their judgement.

There are fuller details around this subject including access to the screening tool at <http://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/>

### **2.3.3 Radicalisation**

*Note: This preventing radicalisation section remains under review, following the publication of a new definition of extremism on 14 March 2024.*

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk is part of the School's safeguarding approach.

- Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.
- Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism, there are factors that may indicate concern. It is possible to

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

Staff Members receive 'Prevent' training bi-annually as part of their Level 2 Basic Awareness Safeguarding Training to help to identify signs of extremism. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the DfE advice Promoting fundamental British Values as part of SMCS (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014).

#### **2.3.4 So-called 'honour'-based abuse (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage)**

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. 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 HBA 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 HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

#### **2.3.5 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Comprises all procedures of partial or total removal of the female genitalia or other injury to other female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 and a form of child abuse with long lasting, harmful consequences. There is a range of potential indicators that a girl may be at risk of FGM and if staff are concerned they should immediately contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a member of staff discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl aged under 18 there is a statutory duty for that member of staff to report it to the police.

#### **FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers**

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon **teachers**, along with regulated

health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

### **2.3.6 Forced Marriage**

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

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) has created: Multi-agency practice guidelines: handling cases of forced marriage and, Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage, which can both be found at *The right to choose: government guidance on forced marriage* - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

In addition, since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

### **2.3.7 Child on Child Abuse**

A more detailed policy with contextual procedures can be found in our Child on Child Abuse Policy.

Children can abuse other children (often referred to as child on child abuse) and it can take many forms. It can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child on child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports. This can include (but is not limited to): bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); abuse within intimate partner relationships; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexual violence and sexual harassment; consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos; 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; upskirting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child on child abuse. Abuse is abuse and should never be passed off as banter, or as a natural part of growing up. Forms of child on child abuse are most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- 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).

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can take many forms (outlined in the School's Anti-Bullying Policy and cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's wellbeing and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people. Bullying will not just be passed off as banter. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed in accordance with our anti-bullying policy and procedures.

The School takes measures to reduce child on child abuse by promoting a culture of awareness, responsibility, kindness and respect through our day to day interactions with pupils, our policies, PSHE and co-curricular programmes. All pupils must abide by the Pupil Code of Conduct and the School Rules.

At Wells Cathedral School, we have a **Zero Tolerance approach** to child on child abuse. Zero Tolerance is a phrase adopted by the Department of Education and used alongside the government guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) Part five: sexual violence and sexual harassment*.

For us, this means that every reported incident will be taken seriously, recorded on our internal systems and actions processed as per our Behaviour Management Policy. Parents of all pupils involved are likely to be informed as early as possible in the process too. Intended outcomes are two fold; preventing any further harmful effects for the victim(s) (and supporting repair or healing as necessary) and employing actions in such a way that the perpetrator does not continue any harmful behaviour.

### 2.3.8 Online Safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. We aim to protect and educate pupils, students, and staff in their use of technology and establish mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

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

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism.
- **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.

Mobile phones, laptops, tablets and other networked devices are integrated into all our lives. However, there are associated risks which include the following: exposure to inappropriate material, physical danger, cyber-bullying, legal and commercial issues, addictive behaviour, radicalisation, CSE and sexting. These issues are addressed by teaching pupils about digital citizenship through PSHE, managed in accordance with the School's Online Safety and IT Acceptable Use Policy and reinforced through filtering and monitoring systems. The School recognises that these controls are easily bypassed using 3/4G connections and hence emphasises the need for discussions between parents, pupils and staff about digital citizenship issues. Wells Cathedral School has a designated Online Safety Officer to whom all online concerns should be referred and also the DSL if appropriate.

## **Filtering and monitoring**

The School has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn. and regularly reviews their effectiveness.

The School considers the number of and age range of our 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. We:

- 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 our safeguarding needs.

### **2.3.9 Children Absent from Education (previously Children Missing from Education CME)**

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. Children missing 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. The School will monitor absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly when children are absent on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day without authorisation or known reason. Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

All staff should be aware of the School's Missing Child Policy.

## **2.4 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or health issues**

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can be more vulnerable to and face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- These children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- The potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.

- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in school or the consequences of doing so.

## 2.5 Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning

***N.B. This section remains under review, pending the outcome of the gender questioning children guidance consultation, and final gender questioning guidance documents being published.***

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, schools should 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. Schools should refer to our 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.

## 2.6 Boarding

As a boarding school there are additional factors to consider with regard to safeguarding as set out in the National Minimum Standards. Staff are alert to inappropriate pupil relationships, initiation type behaviours and the potential for peer to peer abuse. Boarding

staff receive additional induction and safeguarding training appropriate to their additional duties.

## **2.7 Music**

As a choir school and also a specialist music school we are very alert to the additional safeguarding challenges that can arise with specialist musicians and choristers.

Specific guidance relating to our safeguarding policies and procedures for specialist musicians can be found in the Staff Code of Conduct (Visiting Music Staff Information Handbook) and the MDS Schools Safeguarding Agreement.

Specific guidance relating to our safeguarding policies and procedures for choristers can be found in the document – A Joint Safeguarding Agreement to Ensure Continuity and Seamless Care for Children and Young People of Wells Cathedral Choir.

## **2.8 Abuse of position of trust**

All staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and represents a breach of the Staff Code of Conduct.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that pupil is over the age of consent.

## **3 Management of safeguarding**

### **3.1 Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1.1 All Staff**

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and maintain an attitude that 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. Child abuse issues should never be trivialised.
- Reassure victims 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 abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.



- Be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.
- Be familiar with and understand the contents of this policy particularly the types and signs of abuse and safeguarding issues (outlined in section 2) so that they are able to identify children who are in need of help or protection. **It is essential that staff act on and refer at the early signs of abuse and neglect.**
- Be aware of the specific systems within the school to support safeguarding. Particularly the specific guidance found in the documents: Behaviour Management Policy (which includes the Child on Child Abuse Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy), Staff Code of Conduct, Low Level Concerns Policy and Suspected Malpractice (Whistle-Blowing) Policy.
- Attend safeguarding and child protection induction and regular training appropriate to the level of their duties (see section 3.5)
- Know the names of the Head Master, DSL and Deputies and who to refer concerns of abuse to, in line with the procedures outlined in section 4.
- Read and understand Part 1 of the statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)* **annually** if they work directly with children. (There is a condensed Part one of this guidance at Annex A - Governing bodies can choose this condensed Part one where they think it will be appropriate for those staff not working directly with children)
- Be aware of the School's safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods.
- Be aware of their legal responsibility to report to the police any instances of FGM
- Be able to manage a report of child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Respect children at all times regardless of their sex, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation and promote an ethos where children and young people feel secure and are encouraged to use their preferred means of communication. Inclusive communication skills and strategies should be used at all times. (See European Convention on Human Rights and Health and Social Care Act 2012).
- Ensure that children and young people know which adults they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty
- Commit to providing education which equips children and young people with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse

- Ensure that, wherever possible, every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies.
- Use social networks appropriately, this includes only using official work accounts to promote work and never referring to individual children. Further guidance can be found on the Online Safety and IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Staff must never allow or engage in inappropriate verbal or physical contact of any description.
- Staff should not allow children or adults to engage in abusive activities, ridiculing, bullying etc electronically or face to face.
- Managers must develop an ethos that allows staff to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out any inappropriate attitudes or behaviour to each other.
- All staff should ensure that when working individually with a child or young person, they should be mindful of safe working practices, (e.g. where possible doors are left open), other staff are aware they are working on a one to one basis, and immediate help is available if needed. Inviting pupils to a staff member's private home or driving them in a car alone should not take place unless there is a clear and relevant reason and absolute transparency around the event. **In any one-to-one situation that is not a clear and proper part of your work, you put yourself at risk of false allegations.** More detailed information can be found in the Staff Code of Conduct.

### 3.1.2 The Governing Body

Ensures that the School:

- Appoints a DSL for child protection who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training
- Ensures that the DSL role is explicit in the role holder's job description
- Has a child protection policy and procedures, including a staff behaviour policy/code of conduct and acceptable use of technology, that are consistent with SSCP and statutory requirements, reviewed annually and made available publicly on the school's website or by other means
- Has a procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff and allegations against other children
- Follows safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and disqualification by association regulations
- Develops a training strategy that ensures all staff, including the Head Master, receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, staff behaviour policy or code of conduct and the role of the DSL on induction, and appropriate child protection

training, which is regularly updated in line with any requirements of the SSCP. The DSL receives refresher training at two-year intervals.

- Ensure that all governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenges to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training should be regularly updated.
- Ensures that all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers are provided with the provision's child protection and safeguarding policy and staff behaviour policy (code of conduct)
- Ensures that the school contributes to early help arrangements and inter agency working and plans
- Ensures that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

The Chair of Governors is responsible for liaising with the local authority and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the Head Master.

An annual report will be submitted through *Virtual College*, as required, to the local authority about how the governing body's duties have been carried out. Any weaknesses will be rectified without delay.

#### **The Head Master:**

- Ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff
- Allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements when necessary, to enable the DSL and deputies to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- Ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures
- Ensures that pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online
- Ensures that leaders and governors ensure that the child's wishes are taken into account

when determining action to be taken or services to be provided

- Liaises with the designated officer or team in the local authority where an allegation is made against a member of staff
- Ensures that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service and TRA as appropriate.

### **3.1.3 Leadership team**

Wells Cathedral School and our Leadership Team recognise their responsibilities with regard to Child Protection and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

Wells Cathedral School has within the Leadership Team a Designated Safeguarding Lead, Martin Ashton (Deputy Head Pastoral). In addition to this we have a number of deputy safeguarding leads whose contact details can be found at the back of this document. Staff should take all daily case concerns to their line manager as a first point of contact.

The Leadership team will:

- Comply with section 11 of The Children Act (2004), by determining and monitoring the level of training staff and contractors should receive appropriate to their level of work and have refresher training as required.
- Liaise with Somerset Direct, Local Children's Social Care and other agencies, as appropriate. Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of any referrals and that the referral is confirmed in writing under confidential cover.
- Act as a source of advice and expertise and keep provision colleagues informed about any action taken and any further action required.
- Ensure that a proper record is kept of any referral and action taken, and that this is kept safely and in confidence.
- Manage and deliver staff child protection training and review the operation of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy annually to ensure the procedures are working and that it complies with current best practice. The DSL will report to the Provision's Leadership Team quarterly on any issues with regard to the implementation of this policy.

### **3.1.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Martin Ashton as Deputy Head (Pastoral) is the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The Designated Safeguarding Lead is supported by a team of deputies all of whom have received inter-agency training. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is involved in regular training, including inter-agency working, in accordance with the recommendations of Somerset Direct, the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership and other agencies at

regular two yearly intervals. The nominated governor for Child Protection is Elizabeth Shelton. The Governors undertake an annual review of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the procedures in place at the school for safeguarding children and the efficiency and effectiveness with which the related duties have been discharged. This enables the Governing body to monitor compliance with the The Children Act (1989), the 2004 (updated) Children Act, guidance from the DfE, the local authority and locally agreed inter agency procedures, to identify areas for improvement and to ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection are remedied as soon as they have been identified.

The DSL undertakes appropriate training every two years to enable continuing to develop understanding and skill base. In particular seeks to:

- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention
- Have a working knowledge of how the local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference, to enable attendance and effective contribution when required.
- Be able to ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with SEND, and young carers
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses
- Encourage a culture amongst all staff of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures the school puts in place to protect them.

The DSL is responsible for raising awareness, and ensuring appropriate use of the School's policies and procedures related to safeguarding. In particular:

- Ensure the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually, working with the Governing Body in this regard. The DSL will also ensure the procedures and implementation is reviewed regularly.
- Ensure the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the role that the school plays in referrals about suspected abuse or neglect that may be made.
- Link with the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.
- Where children leave the school, ensure that their child protection file is copied for any new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child arrives. The designated safeguarding lead should ensure secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. For schools, this should be transferred separately from the main pupil file.

The School maintains good working relations with relevant agencies including Somerset Direct (SSCP) and the Avon and Somerset Public Protection Unit, and will always seek advice from these agencies.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the person responsible for contacting SSCP/Social Services/OFSTED to register concerns about a child's welfare and implementing procedures relating to child protection at the Senior School, Prep School and Pre-Prep which includes EYFS. The DSL is fully conversant with SSCP procedures, and will ensure representations/reports to Child Protection Conferences. They will inform OFSTED of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children on the school premises (whether the allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on or off the school site); or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the school site, and of the resulting action taken in respect to these allegations. During an absence of the DSL, one of the deputies will perform this role.

As a senior member of staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead has the authority to commit resources and where appropriate support and direct other staff as well as being able to call a full Senior Team meeting should need arise.

The DSL will provide for a report to be sent promptly to the Disclosure and Barring Service, if the school dispenses with a person's services because of unsuitability to work with children, or would have done so had the person not resigned.

The DSL will give consideration to making a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) where a teacher has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed had he or she not resigned) and a prohibition order may be appropriate, because of 'unacceptable professional conduct', 'conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute', or a 'conviction at any time for a relevant offence'.

The DSL is responsible for liaising with the Head to inform of issues, especially ongoing inquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, and police investigations.

The DSL acts as a source of support, advice and expertise to all staff on matters of safety and safeguarding, and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.

### **3.1.5 Deputy Designated Leads (DDSLs)**

Are/is appropriately trained and, in the absence of the designated person, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the on-going safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the designated person, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

### **3.1.6 Safeguarding Team**

The Safeguarding Team consists of the Deputy Head (Pastoral) DSL, Deputy DDSs, and Medical Staff. It meets weekly to discuss safeguarding issues and all referrals and safeguarding concerns which are passed to it. The Safeguarding Team adopts a 'team around the child' approach to develop individual safeguarding plans which take into account the school's duties to both children in need and those at risk of harm. The Safeguarding Team will liaise with outside bodies, contributing to inter-agency working.

### **3.1.7 Welfare team**

The Welfare Team consists of the Deputy Head (Pastoral), DSL, Deputy DSLs, School Counsellor and Medical Staff. It meets weekly to discuss pastoral and welfare issues and all referrals and pastoral concerns which are passed to it. The Welfare Team adopts a 'team around the child' approach to develop individual welfare plans which take into account the school's duties to both children in need and those at risk of harm. The Welfare Team will liaise with outside bodies, contributing to inter-agency working.

### **3.1.8 Online Safety officer**

Martin Ashton, Deputy Head (Pastoral), DSL, is the school's Online Safety officer and is responsible for coordinating the delivery of the Digital Citizenship programme, as well as supporting the other members of the Child Protection team in matters relating to Online Safety.

### **3.1.9 Local Safeguarding Children Partnership**

The Director of Children's Services, within the Local Authority has the overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in the area. They have a number of statutory functions under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 which make this clear. This policy is to add detail to expectations of staff to expect specific duties to happen in relation to children in need and children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, regardless of where they are or who takes any further action.

The Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services in local authorities are the key points of professional and political accountability, with responsibility for the effective delivery of these functions. (Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023))

*"Children are best protected when professionals are clear about what is required of them individually, and how they need to work together." (Working together to Safeguard Children (2023))*

### **3.2 Safer recruitment**

The School will take all possible steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children through its recruitment processes, DBS checks, referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service, Disqualification by Association checks, and induction procedures. Assurances are obtained that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to other staff employed by another organisation and working with the school's pupils on another site.

The School will notify the DfE, the Disclosure and Barring Service and any other designated authority within one month when the services of a person are discontinued because he or she was considered unsuitable to work with children. The school will undertake to notify OFSTED within 14 days of any allegations against people living or working at the School.

All staff members have a standard statement in their job description which places a responsibility on staff to safeguard children and young people.

Further details can be found in the School's Recruitment & Selection Policy.

### **3.3 Visitors on site and supervision of contractors**

#### **3.3.1 Regulated Activity**

Schools are 'specified places' which means that the majority of staff and volunteers will be engaged in regulated activity. A fuller explanation of regulated activity can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

#### **3.3.2 Volunteers**

Volunteers, including governors will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the School and contact with pupils. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised or be allowed to engage in regulated activity.

#### **3.3.3 Supervised volunteers**

Volunteers who work only in a supervised capacity and are not in regulated activity will undergo the safe recruitment checks appropriate to their role, in accordance with the School's risk assessment process and statutory guidance.



### **3.3.4 Contractors**

The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS checks and barred list checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity.

### **3.3.5 Site security**

All staff employed by the school are given a personal ID badge with a blue lanyard that they are expected to wear at all times. Governors and regular volunteers are given a badge with a green lanyard. Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a badge with a red lanyard, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the school's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure children in school are kept safe. The DSL will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

## **3.4 Extended school and off-site arrangements**

Specific guidance relating to the management of extended and off-site activities can be found in the Educational Visits and Events Policy. All activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

## **3.5 Use of school premises for non-school activities**

When school facilities/premises are rented out to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities), the School will ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place to keep children safe.

The School will seek assurance that the provider concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed); and ensure that there are arrangements in place for the provider to liaise with the

School on these matters where appropriate. This applies regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on the school roll.

The School will also ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement. The guidance on Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings details the safeguarding arrangements that the Schools should expect providers to have in place.

If the School receives an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using their school premises for the purposes of running activities for children (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities), the School will follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

### **3.6 Staff Induction and Training**

The Head Master, all (permanent and temporary) staff and volunteers are given an appropriate level of child protection training by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Online Safety Officer and online via HR as part of their induction programme. This includes Prevent training, online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, managing a report of child on child abuse (including child on child abuse, sexual violence or harassment), the School Safeguarding Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct, the Behaviour Management Policy and the identity and function of the DSL and DDSs as well as a copy of Part 1 of KCSIE and Annex A. Staff are given a quick reference card which provides clear guidance on what to do when receiving a disclosure and emphasises the sensitivity needed. The Head Master and all staff have Level 2 child protection training on a 2 year cycle with refresher training annually.

The School's pupil leaders (prefects) and peer mentors receive guidance from the DSL as part of their induction training.

All staff receive a physical copy or an online link to Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) or Annex A if relevant and must complete an online questionnaire to confirm that they have read and understood it.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is also involved in running training for staff outside of the School as part of our commitment to sharing best practice.

### **3.7 Staff use of Mobile Phones and Cameras**

#### **3.7.1 Use of Cameras, including mobile phones as cameras**

Specific guidance around the use of cameras and mobile phones can be found in the Pupil Images Policy. This guidance covers the taking of images and the use of cameras, including mobile phone cameras, by staff members in School and on off site visits

Where staff want to take photographs or capture video images either in School or whilst on trips, they are encouraged to use one of the School cameras, whose content can be downloaded immediately after the event into the School's central photo archive.

If staff make use of their own cameras, the picture files should be downloaded to their School Drive or the School archive as soon as possible after the event and deleted from their own personal archives.

Under no circumstances should photographs taken of pupils, school events or on trips (and featuring pupils or any identifying feature that could link the image with the School) be uploaded to any site on the internet (such as Facebook) other than the School's own websites or the School's social media channels.

In the EYFS photographs form a key part of daily record keeping. Staff are provided with School cameras and mobile devices such as iPads. These remain the property of the School at all times. The staff have access to colour printing facilities and digital storage on the School network.

On joining the School, parents are asked to give their permission to have their child's photo taken for a variety of purposes (outlined in the consent form) as per the Pupil Images Policy. Staff should check the 'Pupil No Photo List' (found in WCS bookmarks) before publishing photos of pupils on school media.

#### **3.7.2 Staff use of Mobile Phones in School**

Staff are permitted to bring their mobile phone to work. They should only be used for professional reasons during contact time with the children and personal numbers should not be given out to pupils or parents. Staff have access to the internal telephone system and are encouraged to give the School number to relatives as an emergency contact number for themselves.

Staff in the EYFS should not use their mobile phones at any point whilst on duty with the children. Mobile phones are left in staff bags in the locked office or with the Pre-Prep administrator. Staff can use their phones in the office and during their breaks.

### **3.8 1-1 Remote Lessons**

When 1-1 remote lessons take place for any reason, the following protocol should be adhered to. Google Meet is the preferred platform to be used for remote lessons and only Wells Cathedral School email addresses are to be used by both staff and pupils. Other platforms can only be used with agreement from the relevant Head of Department. Private email addresses and the exchange of telephone numbers is absolutely and strictly forbidden and would be breaching the School's safeguarding policies and therefore non-compliant and lead to a situation of risk and vulnerability for both parties.

Agreement must be in place from the Head of Department before remote lessons can take place. Parents or guardians of the pupil must also be in agreement.

The following guidance should be followed:

- A parent, guardian or responsible adult should be around and aware of the lesson taking place.
- A laptop or desk-based computer should be used rather than a personal phone.
- The lesson should take place in an appropriate location such as a lounge or sitting room (absolutely not a bedroom/bathroom).
- No personal/private information should be displayed or exchanged.
- Ensure that there are no identifiable features in the background – ideally use a blank wall/curtain.
- The staff member and the pupil must be appropriately dressed;
- As always, a log of your contact with children and their families should be kept recording/reporting this in line with Wells' systems.

For any further advice or guidance, please speak to your Head of Department or the DSL.

### **3.9 Equipping children with skills needed**

Children's awareness about themselves, safeguarding, and digital citizenship, will be raised through the school's PSHE programme and a trusting climate is developed in tutor times and house times. Children are encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings. The School seeks to promote a positive, supportive and secure environment and give pupils a sense of being valued.

The PSHE programme explores the role of sexual relationships and the potential for abuse from peers, which are possible within a school community. The programme also seeks to educate pupils about child sexual exploitation (CSE), female genital mutilation (FGM) and radicalisation.

## **4 Child protection procedures**

### **4.1 Concerns about a child**

The School recognises that there may also be children who, whilst not suffering harm or at immediate risk, require additional support from external agencies. Any such concerns about a child should be passed to your line manager and/or the DSL or any of the Deputies. Concerns can also be recorded using the safeguard system CPOMS which will directly notify the DSL.

The DSL will refer all allegations or suspicions of abuse or cases where there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, to Somerset Direct within 24 hours. Borderline cases will be discussed with Somerset Direct without identifying individuals in the first instance and, following discussions, Somerset Direct will judge whether or not an allegation or concern meets the relevant threshold. Somerset Direct will decide in the circumstances what further steps should be taken. This could involve calling the police.

Where the outcome of a referral is not reported to the referring member of staff or DSL and/or where a child's situation does not appear to be improving, the School will follow this up with the children's social care and push for reconsideration where appropriate.

Any member of staff who has concerns that a child's situation does not appear to be improving should press for reconsideration. The School will not do anything that may jeopardise any external investigation. Once the matter has been referred, all further responsibility for gathering information and deciding what happens next will rest with social services and the police.

Where appropriate, the School may consult with the child concerned and their parents regarding a referral to external agencies (such as children's social care). This may lead to a written plan to support a child in need being drawn up or an early help assessment, such as the Common Assessment Framework, being carried out. In either case, the School will liaise and take advice from external agencies as appropriate.

Where the suspicion or complaint is in relation to terrorism or extremism ideas involving a pupil, staff must firstly raise this with the Head of the Senior/Prep School or DSL without delay. The Head Master or DSL will consult with external agencies, as appropriate in accordance with this policy.

### **4.2 Neutral Notification**

There may be occasions where something occurs which is out of the ordinary or which causes a member of staff to have doubts about the behaviour of another adult towards a

pupil or another child. It is important that any concerns, or incidents which might give rise to concerns about the conduct of staff, are reported to the Head Master or DSL, however, minor. In the vast majority of cases, there will be a perfectly innocent explanation for what has occurred, and staff should not feel that making a report, or being the subject of a report, will cause them to suffer any detriment or stigma where this is the case. Reporting of these types of concerns is a neutral act, and the Head Master and DSL will, on receipt of a report, determine how to best approach the issue.

The process for reporting a concern of this nature about safeguarding is called 'Neutral Notification'. This is a procedure for self-reporting or reporting about the behaviour and action of others. Neutral Notification **must** be used by staff to record all events and/or situations which have the potential to be misconstrued or misinterpreted by others; or where they are at all concerned about the behaviour of an adult, not just where it is clear that a role or professional boundary has been broken. The purpose of neutral reporting is to protect both pupils and the staff working with them and allows a system for a simple record to be kept in case events are later referred to or any patterns emerge.

Further details about Neutral Notifications can be found in the Staff Code of Conduct and the Low Level Concerns Policy.

The Notification form can be reached using the following links: [Neutral Notification Form \(hard copy\)](#) or [Neutral Notification Form \(online\)](#)

#### **4.3 Low Level Concerns**

Any concerns (including allegations) which do not meet the harm threshold are referred to as 'low-level' concerns. Further details can be found in the School's Low Level Concerns Policy.

Wells Cathedral School promotes an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school or college (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. If implemented correctly, this should:

- encourage an open and transparent culture
- enable the school to identify inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour early
- minimise the risk of abuse
- ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution

All low-level concerns can be reported in person or using the school's Neutral Notification Form (hard copy) or Neutral Notification Form (online). Concerns are shared responsibly with the DSL and Head Master and recorded and dealt with appropriately.

#### **4.4 Child at risk of suffering**

The School treats the safeguarding of the pupils in its care as the highest priority and recognises the important role it has to play in the recognition and referral of children who may be at risk. All our school staff are made aware of their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the School's care. Staff members are alerted to the particular potential vulnerabilities of looked after children.

Where it is believed that a child or young person is suffering from, or is at risk of, significant harm, a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately. Staff members follow the procedures set out in the South West Child Protection Procedures ([www.swcpp.org.uk](http://www.swcpp.org.uk)) and the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) documents which can be found at <http://SSCP.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/>

These procedures clearly confirm that the welfare of the child is of paramount importance and takes precedence over sensitivities about relations with partners, parents, or the likely reaction of others in the community, and any wish a child might have for complete confidentiality (which cannot be guaranteed).

**Any staff member** can make a direct referral to children's social care or other external services such as early help services. Members of staff not following procedures could put themselves at risk of disciplinary action and the child concerned at risk. As long as the procedures are adhered to, members of staff will receive the full support and provision of the Local Authority. If anyone other than the DSL makes a referral, they should inform the DSL that a referral has been made as soon as possible. Staff must share information with children's social care and/or the police where there are any concerns that a child may be at risk of harm or neglect. If staff members are unsure about whether or not a referral should be made, they should speak to the DSL.

In relation to our nursery/EYFS setting, the School will inform Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practicable, in any event within 14 days of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere) or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations.

When an employee feels that, in their professional judgement or after discussion with their manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), they believe a child or young person is

suffering or likely to suffer, then a referral should be made to Somerset Direct using the Common Request for Involvement Form or phoning **0300 123 2224**. <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/childrens-services/safeguarding-children/report-a-child-at-risk/>

In many cases the concerns do not reach the threshold for a Child Protection Referral but that of a Child in Need of an earlier intervention.

This is the function of the Early Help Assessment (EHA) and Team around the Child and/or family meeting. This will identify a lead professional who will bring appropriate professionals together to empower the family to address concerns raised. Details of this process are available at:

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/strategies/common-assessment-framework-caf/>

When completing the Common Request for Involvement Form (CRIF) please refer to the Somerset Threshold document Effective support for Children and Families in Somerset. (SSCP). This prompt sheet will also help you bring together all necessary information. Designated Safeguarding leads can also use the SSCP Consultation Line to discuss cases they have concern about.

Before making a referral through the locally agreed procedures, the following information should be available:

#### **Child's details**

- Name, including any middle names and, if the child is known by more than one name; list all names known.
- Date of birth.
- Address and telephone number.
- Health issues that may be relevant.
- Any known disabilities that may affect communication.

#### **Family details**

- Names of parents and/or carers.
- Names and ages of any other children in the family.
- Ethnicity and cultural background and where appropriate information about the need for interpreters.
- Any legal or custody documents known to exist.
- Name of the family's GP.

#### **Provision history**

- How long has the child attended Wells Cathedral School?



- Attendance record – check if there has been a problem with attendance, look out for any patterns that emerge from attendance records, i.e. some children have been reported to miss every Monday because there have been problems at the weekend.
- Behaviour – how does the child present? Check for any repeated patterns of behaviour, or sudden changes of behaviour. Do these relate to a change in circumstances at home?
- Relationships with parents, provision, other agencies: good, non-existent, volatile?

### **Child protection history**

- Have you had previous concerns and have you made previous referrals? It is important to revisit previous concerns to get a wider picture. Child protection services are reliant on other agencies to help them build up a clearer picture of what has been happening. The relationship between each event may be more significant than each individual event.
- If you have referred in the past, what was the outcome? Never let the fact that no action was taken last time affect your way of managing new concerns. If you have a concern, always pass it on.

### **Informing the parent**

In most cases it is agreed that it is better to tell the parent that you intend to refer to Children's Social Care or the Police, but think it through. If you think telling may put the child or young person at more risk, take advice first. If in doubt, ring Somerset Direct (0845 3459122) and discuss with the Duty Social Worker or the consultation Line.

### **Making the referral**

Once there is all the necessary information available a child protection referral can be made with confidence, following the South West Child Protection Procedures ([www.swcpp.org.uk](http://www.swcpp.org.uk)). Record all your actions and responses from other agencies.

## **4.5 Disclosure of an allegation of abuse**

If a child chooses to disclose an allegation of abuse you must:

- **Receive** what is said by listening to what they want to tell you without showing any signs of disquiet, anxiety or shock.
- **Observe** carefully the demeanour of behaviour of the child or young person
- **Do not interrogate or enter into detailed investigations:** rather, encourage the child or young person to say what they want using open questions until enough information is gained to decide whether or not a referral is appropriate.

- **It is important NOT to ask leading questions.** Remember you are only clarifying with the young person if something concerning did happen or could have happened from the information they give you.

Types of Questions you can ask:

- Tell me (tell me what happened)
- Explain (explain what you meant by)
- Where did this happen/where were you?
- When did this happen?
- **Reassure** the child that they are right to disclose the matter; that their wellbeing is what is most important and that they will be consulted at each step of the process.
- **Do not promise confidentiality**
- **Respond** to the child with clarity and sensitivity and explain what will happen next ie the matter will be referred to the DSL within 24 hours
- **Record** in detail what has been seen and heard, noting times and dates, and ensuring only facts are recorded not opinions.
- **Report** to the DSL or, in the case of an allegation against a member of staff, the Head Master

Staff **MUST NOT**:

- Investigate suspected/alleged abuse themselves;
- Evaluate the grounds for concern;
- Seek or wait for proof;
- Discuss the matter with anyone other than their line manager, Somerset Direct, One of the school's designated safeguarding leads and, as appropriate, the Head Master.

Children's Social Care & the Police are the only agencies that can investigate allegations of abuse.

#### **4.6 Disclosure of an allegation of child on child abuse**

Any instances of child on child sexual violence or harassment should be dealt with in line with government guidance. For disclosures of child on child abuse, the procedure outlined in the School's Child on Child Abuse Policy should be followed.

If the allegation is of a serious nature, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who will refer to Somerset Direct. The School will take advice from children's social care on the investigation of serious allegations, and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils involved, including the pupil or pupils accused of abuse.

A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation. In the case of pupils whose parents are living abroad, the

pupil's educational guardian will be requested to provide support to the pupil and to accommodate him or her if it is necessary to suspend them during the investigation.

If it is necessary for a pupil to be interviewed by the police in relation to allegations of abuse; the School will ensure that, subject to the advice of children's social care and the police, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the pupil is supported during the interview by an appropriate adult.

Where an allegation has been made against a pupil, both the victim and the perpetrator will be treated as being at risk of significant harm. It is recognised that those with special educational needs are at particular risk of peer abuse and teachers are alert to this.

A bullying concern will be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm which may warrant referral to an external agency. The School's anti-bullying policy gives extensive guidance to staff and pupils, and details how pupils who have been bullied will be supported.

#### **4.7 Disclosure of an allegation against a member of staff**

If you receive a disclosure, about an adult colleague, it is important to follow the guidance given above about how to receive a disclosure and, in particular, reassure the child that what they say will be taken very seriously and everything possible done to help. If you are in the room when a child or young person begins to disclose concerns to another person, you should stay unobtrusively in the background. You may be able to support/witness what has been said if required.

All allegations should be dealt with according to guidance set out by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership and in line with the procedures set out in Part 4 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)*.

The School has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (and volunteers who work with children) that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations. These procedures are based on *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)*. These procedures will be used where the member of staff or volunteer has been alleged to 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 would pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that they may not be suitable to work with children

If an allegation is made against a member of staff it should be reported to the Head Master who, in general, is the 'Case Manager' who oversees such allegations. The Head Master will then inform the DSL and HR Bursar. If appropriate, the Head Master may appoint a substitute Case Manager to act in his stead in matters of the allegation and keep him, the DSL, and the HR Bursar informed.

Where an allegation or complaint is made against the DSL, the matter should be reported immediately to the Head Master or, in his absence, the Chair of Governors.

Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Head Master, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of Governors or, in his absence, the Deputy Chair, without first notifying the Head Master.

If an allegation is made against the Chair of Governors, the allegation should be reported to the Head Master. Where appropriate, the Head Master will consult with the DSL or deputy/ies.

All allegations that come to the School's attention, including those discussed directly with the police, will be discussed with the LADO immediately where possible and certainly within one working day. It will be more usual practice to discuss any course of action, including referral to the police, with the LADO prior to embarking on any course of action. Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership's website offers helpful guidance – the website address may be found at: <http://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/>

Allegations against a member of staff who is no longer employed by the School will be referred to the police along with allegations that may amount to a criminal offence

No member of staff may investigate an allegation of abuse made against themselves. The initial sharing of information and evaluation may lead to a decision that no further action is to be taken in regard to the individual facing the allegation or concern. In this situation the decision and a justification for it should be recorded by both the case manager and the designated officer(s), and agreement reached on what information should be put in writing to the individual concerned and by whom. The case manager should then consider with the designated officer (s) what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation.

The Case Manager will usually inform the accused person of the allegation as soon as possible after the LADO has been consulted; unless it would place a child at further risk of significant harm or jeopardise a police investigation. The DSL and HR Bursar, where possible, will be present for this or informed. The parents or carers of the pupil(s) involved will be informed of the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. If there is cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm; a strategy discussion should be convened by Social Care in accordance with the statutory guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023). Where the LADO advises that a strategy discussion is needed, or the police or the local authority's social care services need to be involved; the Case Manager should not inform the accused or the parents or carers until these agencies have been consulted and it has been agreed what information can be disclosed.

#### 4.7.1 Support for Staff

The School has a duty of care towards its employees and as such, it must ensure that effective support is provided for anyone facing an allegation. The procedures for dealing with allegations need to be applied with common sense and judgement. Individuals should be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless external agencies object to this. The case manager, HR Bursar and DSL will be present, where possible, when the individual is informed. A representative will be appointed by the Case Manager to keep him or her informed of the progress of the case and to consider what other support is available for the individual, as appropriate. Social contact with colleagues and friends should not be prevented unless there is evidence to suggest that such contact is likely to be prejudicial to the gathering and presentation of evidence.

#### 4.7.2 Action against the accused

The following definitions should be used when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:

**Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation

**Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive

**False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation

**Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. This term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.

Where an investigation by the police or the local authority children's social care services is unnecessary, the LADO will discuss the steps to be taken with the Case Manager. The appropriate action will depend on the nature and circumstances of the allegation and will range from taking no further action to summary dismissal, or a decision not to use the person's services in the future. It may be necessary to undertake a further investigation to determine the appropriate action. If so, the LADO will discuss with the DSL, Head Master or Chair of Governors as appropriate, as to how and by whom the investigation will be undertaken. The appropriate person will usually be a senior member of staff, but in some instances it may be appropriate to appoint an independent investigator as advised by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

If an allegation is made against a member of resident staff, consideration will be given as to whether the member of staff should be asked to move off site, the cost of this may need to be funded by the staff member concerned depending on the circumstances of the case.

## **Suspension**

Suspension must not be an automatic response to an allegation and all options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to taking that step. The professional reputational damage that can arise from suspension where an allegation is later found to be unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious must be considered. Suspension will therefore only be considered in a case where:

- There is cause to suspect pupil(s) at the School is, or are at risk of significant harm
- The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

It may be that the result that would be achieved by suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements, for example, redeployment. If there is no reasonable alternative to suspension and suspension is deemed appropriate, the reasons and justification for this will be recorded and the individual notified of the reasons.

Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation will be dispatched within one working day, giving as much detail as appropriate for the reasons for the suspension. The person will be informed at the point of their suspension who their named contact is within the organisation and provided with his/her contact details, (s)he will be regularly updated as to the progress of the investigation unless it would prejudice the investigation process, and any work related issues. Options for additional support will be discussed.

## **Sharing information with parents**

Parents or carers of a child or children involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. However, where a strategy discussion is required, or police or children's social care services need to be involved, the Case Manager should not do so until those agencies have been consulted and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the parents or carers. Parents or carers should also be kept informed about the progress of the case, and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process. The deliberations of a disciplinary hearing, and the information taken into account in reaching a decision, cannot normally be disclosed, but the parents or carers of the child should be told the outcome in confidence.

Parents and carers should also be made aware of the prohibition on reporting or publishing allegations about teachers in section 141F of the Education Act 2002, as amended (see below). If parents or carers wish to apply to the court to have reporting restrictions removed, they will be told to seek legal advice.

### **Criminal proceedings**

The School will consult with the LADO following the conclusion of a criminal investigation or prosecution as to whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and if so, how to proceed. The options will depend on the circumstances of the case, including the result of the police investigation or trial and the standards of proof applicable.

### **Return to work**

If it is decided that the person who has been suspended should return to work, the School should consider how to facilitate this. For example, a phased return may be appropriate and/or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance in the short term. The School should also consider how to manage their contact with the pupil(s) who made the allegation.

### **Ceasing to use staff**

If the School ceases to use the services of a member of staff (or a governor or volunteer) because they are unsuitable to work with children, there will be a prompt and detailed report to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), and to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) in the case of teaching staff considered unsuitable to work with children (in cases of unacceptable professional conduct, conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute or a relevant offence).

The School has a legal duty to refer promptly to the DBS any person (including a pupil) who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to a child, or if there is reason to believe a member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and/or if they have been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in Regulated Activity, or would have been removed had they not left. A compromise agreement will not be used to prevent a referral to the DBS nor can an individual's lack of cooperation. The School will also notify the police promptly if a crime has been committed or is suspected.

The School will notify the training agency in the case of trainee teachers or other personnel undertaking training at the School.

The Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team of Wells Cathedral School recognise the requirement to report any serious incidents such as, suspicions, allegations or incidents of abuse of vulnerable beneficiaries to the Charities Commission. Any such incidents will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the School, with a report being presented to the Governing Body without delay

## **Resignation**

If a member of staff (or a governor or volunteer) tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide his or her services, any child protection allegations will still be followed up by the School. Resignation will not prevent a prompt and detailed report being made to the DBS and TRA in appropriate circumstances. Compromise agreements will not be used in such circumstances, and the providing references policy will be adhered to.

### **4.7.3 Timescales**

All allegations must be dealt with as a priority to avoid any delay. Where it is immediately clear that the allegation is unfounded or malicious, the case should be resolved within one week. It is expected that most cases of allegations of abuse against staff will be resolved within one month with exceptional cases being completed within 12 months. If the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Head Master should institute appropriate action within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation it should be held, where possible, within 15 working days in term time.

## **Confidentiality**

The School will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. Reporting restrictions under the 2011 amendment to the 2002 Education Act will be paramount and remain in place until such time as:

- The accused person is charged with a criminal offence
- The National College for Teaching and Leadership, under the direction of the Secretary of State, publishes information about the case
- A judge lifts the reporting restrictions
- The individual to whom the restrictions apply effectively waives his/her right to anonymity by going public themselves or by giving their written consent for another to do so.

The Case Manager will take advice from the LADO, police and children's social care services to agree the following:



- Who needs to know and, importantly, exactly what information can be shared;
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip
- What, if any information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if and when it should arise.

### **Existing staff**

If the School has concerns about an existing staff member's suitability to work with children, all relevant checks may be made as if the person were a new member of staff. Similarly, if a person working at the School moves from a post that was not Regulated Activity, into work which is Regulated Activity, the relevant checks for the Regulated Activity must be carried out. This also applies if a staff member moves into an area where the Disqualification from Children Act would apply.

All staff are required to notify the School immediately if there are any reasons why they should not be working with children - this will include notification of convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings. This includes any staff who are disqualified from childcare "by association" i.e. they live or employed in the same household as someone who has unspent cautions or convictions for a relevant offence or who has been disqualified from working with children under the Childcare Act 2006. Those who are disqualified either in their own right or by association may apply to Ofsted for a waiver, but cannot work in the relevant settings until this has been determined.

The School's HR department will ask relevant staff members annually if there has been a change to the circumstances which would mean that they may be disqualified from working with children under this provision.

### **Malicious allegations**

Where an allegation by a pupil is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Head Master will consider whether to take disciplinary action in accordance with the School's Behaviour Management Policy.

Where a parent has made a deliberately invented or malicious allegation the Head Master will consider whether to require that parent to withdraw their child or children from the School on the basis that they have treated the School or a member of staff unreasonably.

Whether or not the person making the allegation is a pupil or a parent (or other member of the public), the School reserves the right to contact the police to determine whether any action might be appropriate.

Allegations that are not substantiated, are unfounded or malicious will not be referred to in employer references.

### **Support for a pupil making an allegation**

In cases where a child may have suffered significant harm, or there may be a criminal prosecution, children's social care services, or the police as appropriate, should consider what support the child or children involved may need.

### **Record keeping**

Details of allegations that are found to have been false or malicious should be removed from personnel records, but will be retained as part of a separate safeguarding record. However, for all other allegations, it is important that a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, is kept on the confidential personnel file of the accused, and a copy provided to the person concerned. The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference, where appropriate. It will provide clarification in cases where future DBS checks reveal information from the police about an allegation that did not result in a criminal conviction and it will help to prevent unnecessary re-investigation if, as sometimes happens, an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time. The record should be retained at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for a period of 60 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

## **4.8 Child's Wishes**

Where there is a safeguarding concern, the school will ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account as much as possible when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems are in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately, all systems and processes operate with the best interests of children at their heart.

## **4.9 Children Absent from Education (previously Children Missing from Education CME)**

Pupils are registered according to the School's Admission and Attendance Register Policy.

The DSL will follow the school's procedure, as outlined in the School's Admission and Attendance Register Policy, for children who are absent from education, particularly on repeated occasions and/or for prolonged periods, to help identify the risk of abuse and

neglect, including sexual exploitation and to help prevent the risk of them going missing in future. All pupils must be on the Admissions Register and Attendance Registers. The School will inform Somerset County Council (online forms) of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent **without school permission** for a period of 10 school days or more. Any attendance concerns will be monitored using the 'attendance' category in our safeguarding system CPOMS.

#### **4.9.1 EHE- Elective Home Education**

When appropriate we will advise the Local Authority of when children leave the school to be electively home educated at the earliest moment.

#### **4.9.2 Reduced Timetables**

Should a reduced timetable be instigated or be necessary, guidance will be reviewed with the aim the child returns to school full time at the earliest moment or other provision sought to ensure the child/ young person has their full entitlement.

#### **4.9.3 School Admissions**

In following good practice, should a child be successful in obtaining a place at Wells Cathedral School but then for some reason not be able to attend at the last minute we will alert the Local Authority School Admissions at the earliest moment.

#### **4.10 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. No adult must ever guarantee confidentiality to any child or young person. Staff should make children and young people aware that if they disclose information that may be harmful to themselves or others, then certain actions will need to be taken.

Personal information will only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information (Data Protection Act 1998, European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8). Wherever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances, obtaining consent may not be possible or in the best interest of the child or young person, e.g., where safety and welfare of that child or young person necessitates that the information should be shared. The law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a

child or children. Disclosure should be justifiable in each case, according to the particular facts of the case, and legal advice should be sought if in doubt.

#### **4.11 Records and monitoring**

Well-kept records are *essential* to good child protection practice. We are clear about the need to record any concerns held about children or young people, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.

In our work with children, young people and families, and others in an advisory and support role, we will promote:

- Keeping clear detailed written records of concerns about children and young people.
- Ensuring all records are kept secure either online or in a locked location.
- Ensuring records are passed on to the receiving institution if a child or young person transfers.

We will keep written notes/records of any child protection issues regarding individual children and young people. These will be kept securely. Where necessary, we ensure that child protection information has been passed on to Somerset Direct appropriately or any other appropriate institution where there is a legitimate safeguarding need. When files are transferred or shared with any other institution, the School keeps a record of the date of transfer.

#### **4.12 Working with other agencies**

At Wells Cathedral School we recognise we do not operate in isolation. The welfare of children and young people is not just the responsibility of the Local Authority but a partnership with other public agencies, the voluntary sector and service users and carers.

Child Protection and Safeguarding is the responsibility of all adults, especially those working with children and young people. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of the SSCP.

If a child or young person becomes the subject in a Child Protection Conference relevant staff may be asked to share information about the child or young person and his/her family. Usually this will be in the form of a written report, the contents of which will be shared with parents/carers prior to the meeting.

Occasionally, there may be information which is confidential and which will be shared in a closed meeting prior to the conference. If this is necessary, the chair of the conference will discuss the matter with parents/carers beforehand.

When any child or young person becomes the subject of a conference, local procedures require all other children in the family are considered. It may well be that staff will be required to provide information on children with whom there appear to be no direct concerns.

Staff may contribute to the process of risk assessment and the decision about the child being in receipt of a child protection plan.

## **5 Policy Review**

This policy is reviewed annually by the school in conjunction with DSL and is signed off by the Chair of Governors within one of the annual full Governors Meetings.

The School regularly reviews its practice and procedures relating to safeguarding issues, endeavouring to develop best practice and taking into account the nature, age range, and other significant features of the school such as the specialist music programme and choristers, and of the specific issues related to operating in historic buildings.

## **6 Related policies and documents**

Behaviour Management Policy  
Anti-Bullying Policy  
Child on Child Abuse Policy  
Physical Restraints Policy  
Staff Code of Conduct  
Whistleblowing Policy  
Low Level Concerns Policy  
Recruitment and Selection Policy  
Equal Opportunities Policy  
Online Safety and IT Acceptable User Policy  
Educational Visits and Events Policy  
Health and Safety Policy  
Admissions Policy  
Missing Child Policy  
Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs Misuse Policy  
Visitors Policy  
Pupil Images Policy  
First Aid Policy  
Accommodation Policy

## **7 Key Contacts**

### **Wells Cathedral School**

Address: 15 The Liberty, Wells, Somerset, BA5 2ST

Phone number: 01749 834200

Email address: reception@wells-cathedral-school.com

### **Head Master: Alastair Tighe**

Phone number: 01749 834212

Email address: a.tighe@wells-cathedral-school.com

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead: Martin Ashton**

(Also the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children, Prevent Lead, Child Sexual Exploitation Lead, Online Safety Lead)

Phone number: 01749 834222 (main office) 07507 981694 (DSL mobile)

Email address: m.ashton@wells-cathedral-school.com

### **Chair of Governors: Robert Powell**

Phone number: 01749 834200

Email address: r.powell@wells-cathedral-school.com

Safeguarding Interview Record Sheet:



**Safeguarding  
Interview Record Sheet**

Date	
Present at interview	
Allegation concerning	
Source(s)	
Concern:	
Interview notes:	
Action:	
Outcome:	

**Neutral Notification Form:**



**Confidential: Neutral  
Notification Form**

School name	
Name of person completing form	Date
Form handed to (name and role)	

Please circle	Self-report	Report about other
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**Notification:** Include relevant background (continue on separate sheet and number each page)