Meersbrook Bank

Community Primary School

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

October 2026

Revision history

Date	Changes	Author(s)
April 2021	Policy statement to overarch all safeguarding guidance documents from the local authority	GH, CG & CS
Oct 2021	Additional info re distribution of guidance docs	GH & CG
July 2022	• Named duty holders • Adopted most recent policy in line with LA recommendation. More detail on all aspects of Safeguarding.	GH & CG
Jan 2024	• Updated KCSIE date (2023) • 1 - Addition of named Online Safety Leader • 2.1 – replace term [domestic] violence with **abuse** • 3 - Inclusion of term Family Intervention Service – FIS linked to Early Help service) • 3.5 Replaced term PSHE with RSHE • 3.7 – Our position on the term 'banter' in relation to Peer Abuse • 3.11 – Operation Encompass police letter • 4.3 – Inclusion of trauma-informed approach reference	GH & CG
Nov 2024	• Update KCSIE 2024 • 2.1 – Updating the definition of safeguarding in line with the term, maltreatment. • 2.1 Reference to the approach contextual safeguarding. • 2.1 – Updated list of children who are most at risk from abuse. • 3.9 -Replaced missing in education to unexplained or persistent absences. • 3.11- Updating the definition domestic abuse has on children, keeping in line with KCSIE 2024, new terminology.	C Grant
Nov 2025	• Update KCSIE 2025 • Updated name of safeguarding lead governor and LAC gov. • Section 3.5 and 4.2– additional information about digital media: misinformation, disinformation (including "fake news"), and conspiracy theories. This expands the previous "Four Cs". Also additional info about our duty regarding filtering and monitoring. • Section 3.9 – updated info re persistent attendance • Section 3.11 scope of harm has been broadened to encompass the experience of witnessing ill treatment (in Domestic Abuse situations)	C Grant
Sept 2026	• Update policy in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. • Update arrangements for Family Help and local Sheffield Early Help processes. • Strengthened guidance regarding child-on-child abuse, including harassment and violence, and harmful sexual behaviour. • Added specific reference to the making and sharing of nude and semi-nude images and videos. • Strengthened online safety arrangements, including generative AI, AI-generated images and deepfakes. • Added reference to misogyny, misandry and discriminatory attitudes. • Strengthened guidance relating to mental health, serious violence, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation and modern slavery.	C Grant

	• Updated safeguarding arrangements for children with SEND and other vulnerable groups. • Strengthened information-sharing and safeguarding record-keeping arrangements. • Updated DSL/deputy DSL cover arrangements. • Updated safer recruitment, DBS and regulated activity arrangements. • Added specific arrangements relating to trainee teachers and third-party organisations. • Addition of section on low-level concerns in section 5.6	

Approval

Date	Approver(s)	Minute no.
19.11.20	Safeguarding & Premises Committee	9
18.11.21	Safeguarding & Premises Committee	8.1
17.01.23	FGB	13.1
06.02.24	FGB	9.2
26.11.24	FGB	7.2
2.12.25	FGB	11.2
6/10/26	FGB	16.2

Review: This policy will be reviewed annually

Date due for review:
November 2026

Summary Statement:

At Meersbrook Bank Primary School we follow guidance issued by the local authority from Safeguarding Sheffield Children.
https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/sscb/education/policies-procedures

All policies and procedures are used in conjunction with our own school specific policies, including our:

- Attendance policy
- Behaviour policy
- Equality & Diversity policy
- Physical Intervention & Restraint policy
- Recruitment & Selection Policy
- Staff code of conduct

Our policy is also written with reference to:
• **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026**, statutory guidance for schools and colleges.
• **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**.
• The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, where applicable to our school-based Nursery and Reception provision.
• Sheffield Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and local safeguarding arrangements.
• Relevant legislation and government guidance relating to safeguarding, child protection, online safety, safer recruitment and information sharing.

Distribution:
All safeguarding documents are given to staff upon induction and annually thereafter.

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Section 1: Our school ethos, policy and principles

At Meersbrook Bank Primary School we ensure that every member of the school community feels valued and respected, and that each person is treated fairly and well. We are a caring community, whose values are built on mutual trust and respect for all. The school's policies are designed to support the way in which all members of the school and school community can work together in a supportive and considerate way. It aims to promote an environment in which everyone feels happy, safe and secure. These policies are underpinned by robust safeguarding policies and procedures in order to achieve this.

Important contact information and details

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Caroline Grant** (0114 2814423)
- The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: **Gemma Harvey** (0114 2814423) **Clare Shaw** (0114 2814423)
- The Online Safety Leader is: **Kimberley Dyball**
- The Appointed Teacher for Looked after children/virtual School: **Clare Shaw** (0114 2814423)
- The Appointed Teacher for SEND: **Beth Wood**
- The Designated Link Governor for Safeguarding is **Simon Smith**
- The Designated Link Governor for Looked After Children is **Simon Smith.**
- LADO and Prevent (Local Authority Designated Officer): (0114) 273 4855 (select option 1) or email sheffieldsafeguardinghub@sheffield.gov.uk
- **Police** Non Emergencies: 101
- **DfE**- one single access web link to access all local authority's reporting webpage or phone number for any concerns/worries about a child, young person and vulnerable adults Report Child Abuse
- **CEOP**: 0370 496 7622
- **NSPCC** National Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- **ChildLine**: 0800 11 11

1.1 Our responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors. Appropriate information sharing, in line with the data protection act and GDPR, across our safeguarding partners is key to the successful implementation of this policy.

Meersbrook Bank Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding. This policy sets out how we will deliver these responsibilities and is underpinned by the latest statutory guidance and local safeguarding arrangements.

All members of staff, including those who do not work directly with children, are expected to read Part One of KCSIE 2026 in full and follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

The DfE specifically confirms that all staff now follow the same safeguarding expectations and that the previous shorter Annex A version has been removed.

- "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (September 2026) which is the statutory guidance for Schools and Colleges.

- 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (December 2023) which is statutory guidance to be read and followed by all those providing services for children and families, including those in education.
- "What to do if worried a child is being abused" (March 2015)
- "Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (July 2018)
- "The Prevent Duty Departmental, advice for Schools and childcare providers" (June 2015). The Counter- Terrorism and Security Act
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- Section 175 of the 2002 Education Act
- Ofsted Safeguarding Advice (September 2020)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children advice (May 2018)

Furthermore, we will follow the policies and procedures set out by the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP). These can be found in the offices on both sites and in every classroom. We carry out an annual audit of our safeguarding provision (S175 Safeguarding Audit, which is a requirement of the Education Act 2002 & 2006) a copy of which is sent to the SSCP.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is **Caroline Grant**. In the absence of the DSL, child protection matters will be dealt with by Gemma Harvey or Clare Shaw the Deputy DSLs. The DSL and deputy DSLs will complete training every 2 years and attend refreshers in the interim period.

1.2 Our Principles

Safeguarding arrangements at Meersbrook Bank Primary School are underpinned by these key principles:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: anyone who has contact with a child or young person including governors and volunteers should play their full part in keeping children safe
- We will aim to protect children using national, local and school child protection procedures
- We aim to work in partnership and have an important role in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements as set out by Working Together 2018 (updated September 2020)
- Anyone who has contact with a child or young person has a clear understanding regarding abuse and neglect in all forms and understands how to identify, respond and report it. This also includes knowledge in the process for allegations against professionals.
- Staff, governors and volunteers, should feel confident that they can report any safeguarding concern to the school and that these will be dealt with in an appropriate manner.
- A child-centred approach: a clear understanding of the needs, wishes, views and voices of children.

In accordance with KCSIE 2026, safeguarding at Meersbrook Bank Primary School is child-centred. We will:

• Put the best interests of the child at the centre of safeguarding decisions.
• Listen carefully to children and take their wishes, feelings and experiences seriously.
• Recognise that children may experience multiple and overlapping safeguarding risks.
• Consider the child's individual circumstances, including age, developmental stage, SEND, communication needs, previous experiences of harm and vulnerability.

• Recognise that safeguarding concerns may arise within the family, school, community or online.
• Maintain professional curiosity and avoid making assumptions based on a single incident or piece of information.
• Share information appropriately when this is necessary to safeguard a child.

1.3 Our Policy

There are 8 main elements to our policy:

- **Types of abuse:** The types of abuse that are covered by the policy
- **Signs of abuse:** The signs of abuse that that anyone who has contact with a child or young person including Governors and volunteers should look out for
- **Reporting:** How to report a concern, who to go to within Meersbrook Bank School; including how /who to report to at the relevant agencies
- **Roles and responsibilities**: in relation to safeguarding
- **Process and procedures:** Expectations of anyone who has contact with a child or young person including governors and volunteers with regard to safeguarding, and the procedures and processes that should be followed, including the support provided to children
- **Training:** How the school will ensure that anyone who has contact with a child or young person including governors and volunteers are appropriately trained; this includes, receiving regular updates and undertaking annual whole school training in safeguarding.
- **Safer recruitment:** How staff, volunteers and governors are checked for their suitability to work within the school.
- **Implementation:** How the policy will be managed and have its delivery overseen.

Section 2: Recognising signs of abuse

2.1 Children who may require early help

Family Help and Early Help

KCSIE 2026 places increased emphasis on children and families receiving the right help at the right time, including community-based and targeted support.

At Meersbrook Bank we will follow the current local safeguarding arrangements and terminology, including Family help and Early Help Assessment, where appropriate.
Staff should recognise emerging concerns and consider whether a child and family may benefit from early intervention before concerns escalate to the level requiring statutory children's social care involvement.

The DSL will consider the child's circumstances holistically and will ensure that Early Help is reviewed regularly. Where circumstances do not improve, or concerns escalate, the DSL will consider whether a referral to Children's Social Care is required.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- **Contextual safeguarding**: Protecting children from maltreatment whether it is in or outside the home, this also includes online.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

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

All Staff (Governors and Volunteers) working within the Meersbrook Bank community should be alert to the potential need for early help for children, following the procedures identified for initiating early help using the local and current Sheffield Safeguarding Partnership Threshold.

Children who are most at risk are those who:

- Are disabled and have specific additional needs.
- Has a mental health need.
- Have special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- Are a young carer.
- Are privately fostered.
- Have returned home to their family from care.
- Are showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines.
- Are in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health, and domestic abuse.
- Are showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.
- Are showing signs of displaying behaviour or views that are considered to be extreme.
- Are misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- Are not attending school or are at risk of exclusion from school.
- Frequently go missing/goes missing from care or from home.
- Are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, exploitation, radicalised.
- Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
- Is at risk of so-called 'honor'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage.

Children may experience more than one safeguarding vulnerability at the same time. Staff should consider the whole picture of a child's circumstances and recognise that different forms of harm may overlap.

Particular consideration should be given to children who:

- have experienced previous abuse, neglect or trauma;
- have SEND or communication difficulties which may make it harder for them to recognise, communicate or report abuse;
- have mental health difficulties or significant changes in emotional wellbeing;
- are experiencing domestic or intimate relationship abuse within the family;
- may be experiencing child-to-parent or child-to-carer abuse;
- are at risk of serious violence or exploitation;
- may be experiencing child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, county lines or modern slavery;
- are exposed to harmful or discriminatory attitudes, including misogyny or misandry;
- are exposed to harmful online content or online communities;
- are young carers or have significant caring responsibilities;
- experience persistent or unexplained absence from education; or
- may be living in circumstances that increase their vulnerability, including temporary accommodation.

2.2 Child Abuse

In relation to children safeguarding and promoting their welfare is defined as:

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

Meersbrook Bank recognises abuse can happen anywhere such as:

- Online
- In person
- In school
- In the wider community.

There are five types of child abuse as defined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2026):

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

- **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.

- **Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact or non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

- **Harmful sexual behaviour.** At Meersbrook Bank, we recognise that children and young people may display a range of sexual behaviours. Any behaviour should be considered in the context of the child's age, developmental stage, level of understanding, individual circumstances and any vulnerabilities or previous experiences of harm.
  We recognise that sexual behaviour exists on a continuum, ranging from developmentally appropriate and expected behaviour through to inappropriate, problematic and harmful sexual behaviour, including sexual violence.

Staff should report concerns where sexual behaviour appears inappropriate, coercive, harmful, abusive or developmentally inappropriate. The DSL/ Headteacher will ensure that concerns are assessed appropriately and that safeguarding action is taken where required. Support will be provided to children who have experienced harm and appropriate safeguarding and pastoral support will be considered for children who have displayed harmful behaviour.

- **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. It may include a failure to:
- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter.
- 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.
- Respond to a child's basic emotional needs

Bullying and forms of bullying on- and off-line including prejudice based and cyber bullying is also abusive and will include at least one or more, of the defined categories of abuse above.

2.3 Specific Safeguarding Issues

There are specific issues that have become critical issues in safeguarding. The school will endeavour to ensure their staff, governors and volunteers are familiar with these issues, namely:

- Bullying including cyber bullying
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and as defined by Working Together 2018 (Update September 2020)
- Children at risk of criminal exploitation (CRE) as defined by local safeguarding partnership procedures
- Domestic Violence
- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced Marriage
- Gangs and Youth Violence
- Gender based violence/Violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Hate
- Mental Health
- Private Fostering
- Preventing Radicalisation
- Online abuse/Sexting
- Teenage Relationship abuse
- Trafficking
- Missing children and vulnerable adults
- Child sexual abuse within the family
- Poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children

Multiple and Overlapping Safeguarding Risks

Children may experience multiple safeguarding risks at the same time. Staff should avoid considering concerns in isolation and should consider how different risks may interact. Examples include:

- domestic abuse alongside neglect;
- mental health difficulties alongside abuse or exploitation;
- SEND alongside communication barriers and vulnerability to abuse;
- online harms alongside bullying or child-on-child abuse;
- child criminal exploitation alongside serious violence or county lines;
- harmful sexual behaviour alongside previous trauma or abuse.

The DSL will consider the wider context of the child's life when assessing safeguarding concerns and deciding what action is required.

2.4 Physical Abuse

Most children will collect cuts and bruises and injuries, and these should always be interpreted in the context of the child's medical / social history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the board, e.g. elbows, knees, shins, and are often on the front of the board. Some children, however, will have bruising that is more than likely inflicted rather than accidental.

Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given; these can often be visible on the 'soft' parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e g, cheeks, abdomen, back and buttocks. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern.

The physical signs of abuse may include:

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Multiple bruises- in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh
- Cigarette burns
- Human bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds, with upward splash marks. Multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home.

2.5 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to identify as there are often no outward physical signs. Indications may be a developmental delay due to a failure to thrive and grow, however, children who appear well-cared for may nevertheless be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix or play with other children.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

- Neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking,
- Self-harm hair twisting, rocking
- Fear of parent being approached
- Being unable to play regarding their behaviour
- Fear of making mistakes
- Developmental delay in terms of
- Sudden speech disorders

2.6 Sexual Abuse

It is recognised that there is underreporting of sexual abuse with in the family. All staff and volunteers should play a crucial role in identifying / reporting any concerns that they may have through, for example, the observation and play of younger children and understanding the indicators of behaviour in older children which may be underlining of such abuse.
All staff and volunteers should be aware that adults, who may be men, women or other children, who use children to meet their own sexual, needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages. Indications of sexual abuse may be physical or from the child's behaviour. In all cases, children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Stomach pains
- Bruising or bleeding near genital
- Discomfort when walking or sitting area down
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Pregnancy.
- Vaginal discharge or infection

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.
- Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)

2.7 Neglect

It can be difficult to recognise neglect, however its effects can be long term and damaging for children. Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children and young people in danger. And it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Being constantly dirty or 'smelly'.
- Losing weight, or being constantly
- Constant hunger, sometimes underweight. stealing food from other children.
- Inappropriate or dirty clothing.

Neglect may be indicated by changes in behaviour which may include:

- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.
- Not having many friends.
- Complaining of being tired all the time.
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments.

Section 3: Specific Safeguarding Issues

In understanding the signs and indicators of specific issues listed earlier in this policy, Meersbrook Bank School will incorporate the signs of abuse and specific safeguarding issues on safeguarding into briefings, staff induction training, and ongoing development training for all staff and anyone who has contact with a child or young person including governors, supply teachers and volunteers.

We will also access government guidance, local procedures, strategies and tools through the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Partnership. Sheffield Early Help Service is the Family Intervention Service (FIS) and we foster good relationships with this service.

All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse, neglect exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) exploitation, grooming, sexual exploitation/ criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

3.1 Prevent Duties

Meersbrook Bank School will ensure all staff including governors and volunteers need to be aware of extremism, including the signs of it, alerts to concerning behaviours, and ideologies considered to be extreme. They need to have an understanding of the British Values agenda and adhere to their duties in the Prevent guidance 2015 to prevent radicalisation.

The Headteacher, Caroline Grant, and Chair of Governors will:

- Establish or use existing mechanisms for understanding the risk of extremism;
- Ensure staff understand the risk and build capabilities to deal with issues arising
- Communicate the importance of the duty
- Provide appropriate and sufficient training on the Prevent duty
- Ensure all Staff (governors and volunteers) implement the duty.

Meersbrook Bank will respond to any concern about Prevent as a safeguarding concern and will report in the usual way using local safeguarding procedures. This may include a referral into Channel using the case pathway process. We will seek to work in partnership, undertaking risk assessments where appropriate and proportionate to risk, building our children's resilience to radicalisation. We will use the relevant forms to record any concerns, keeping records which will be treated as a Child Protection Record, storing them as appropriate.

3.2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) & Children at Risk of Exploitation (CRE)

We recognise this is relevant to both boys and girls. Risk factors may include;

- Going missing, staying out unusually late
- Engagement in offending
- Disengagement from education
- Using drugs or alcohol
- Unexplained gifts/money
- Overly secretive
- Repeat concerns about sexual health
- Decline in emotional wellbeing
- Unexplained Absence from school
- Association in gangs
- Unexplained injuries
- Carrying weapons, access to or carrying unusual number of mobile phones

All suspected or actual cases of CSE/CRE are a safeguarding concern in which child protection procedures will be followed; this will include a referral to the police. If any staff are concerned about a pupil, they should refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/s within the school.

3.3 The criminal exploitation of children: County Lines and serious risk of harm

Children and young people involved with gangs and criminal exploitation need help and support. This can include those involved in serious violent crime. They might be victims of violence or pressured into doing things like stealing or carrying drugs or weapons. They might be abused, exploited and put into dangerous situations.

Signs which may indicate criminal exploitation:

- Persistently going missing from school or home and / or being found out-of-area
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones or unexplained injuries
- Excessive receipt of texts /phone calls
- Relationships with controlling /older individuals or groups or changes in relationships
- Leaving home / care without explanation
- Suspicion of physical assault /unexplained injuries
- Parental concerns
- Carrying weapons
  Significant decline in school results / performance
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

Criminal exploitation of children is a safeguarding concern and will require a discussion with the DSL who will seek advice from agencies and professionals. This will mean a referral into the Police and Social Care.

3.4 Carrying knifes/offensive Weapons & Gang Culture

Children bringing and carrying a knife/offensive weapon onto Meersbrook Bank School's premises is a criminal offence and immediate action will be taken by calling the police. The guidance on 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation for Head teachers, schools and Governors, January 2018' will be consulted and we will consider and may apply the disciplinary procedure.

If a member of staff suspects a pupil/student being involved in gang culture, this is a safeguarding concern and will require a discussion with the DSL who will seek advice from agencies and professionals including reference to the safeguarding procedures as outlined by the local authority.

3.5 The sending of indecent images from one person to another through Digital Media Devices

Online Safety and Emerging Technology

At Meersbrook Bank, we recognise that online safeguarding risks are continually evolving. Children may be exposed to risks through social media, online communities, gaming platforms, messaging services and other digital technologies. These risks may include harmful or age-inappropriate content, online bullying and harassment, coercion, grooming, exploitation, misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories and risks associated with artificial intelligence (AI) and generative AI.

Staff should be alert to children being exposed to or affected by:

- harmful or age-inappropriate content;
- online bullying, harassment or abuse;
- coercion, grooming and exploitation;
- misogynistic, misandrist or discriminatory content and attitudes;
- AI-generated or manipulated images and videos, including deepfakes;
- AI-generated nude or semi-nude images;
- harmful sexual content;
- content encouraging violence, self-harm, exploitation or other harmful behaviour; and
- misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories.

At Meersbrook Bank School we recognise that the online risk landscape extends beyond the traditional **'Four Cs' framework of Content, Contact, Conduct and Commerce**, and that emerging technologies and online harms require ongoing consideration.

Children will be taught about online safety through age-appropriate lessons and the school's RSHE/PSHE curriculum. Teaching will reflect current risks and support children to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to stay safe online, recognise harmful content and know how and where to seek help.

At Meersbrook Bank we have a robust filtering and monitoring systems in place to help manage and restrict access to inappropriate online content and to support the safeguarding of pupils. Any concern about a child's online safety must be reported to the DSL / Headteacher in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Making or Sharing Nudes or Semi-Nudes

Meersbrook Bank recognises that children of any age may encounter, create, possess or share nude or semi-nude images or videos of themselves or others. Any concern involving the creation, possession or sharing of nude or semi-nude images or videos of children will be treated as a safeguarding concern.

Staff should **not intentionally view, copy, download, save, print, forward or share** any nude or semi-nude image or video. If a child reports receiving, creating or sharing such an image, staff should listen, reassure the child and report the concern immediately to the DSL or Headteacher. Staff should record the information disclosed or observed accurately and factually, but must **not investigate the incident themselves**.

The DSL or Headteacher will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and seek advice from appropriate agencies or professionals where required. The response will consider the individual circumstances, age and development of the children involved, the nature of the image or video, how it was created or shared, and the impact on the children involved.

Particular consideration will be given to whether a child has been **pressured, coerced, threatened, blackmailed, groomed or exploited** into creating or sharing an image. Where there are concerns that a child has experienced abuse, exploitation or significant harm, the safeguarding team will take appropriate safeguarding action and make referrals to external agencies where necessary. The DSL/Headteacher will work appropriately with parents and carers while maintaining the safety and wellbeing of the child as the priority.

Current Guidance
Meersbrook Bank will follow current national and local safeguarding guidance when responding to online safety concerns and incidents involving nude or semi-nude images. This includes relevant **Department for Education (DfE)** and **UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS)** guidance, including *Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people*, alongside *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and other relevant statutory and non-statutory safeguarding guidance. We will also follow relevant **local authority safeguarding procedures and advice** when responding to incidents and will seek advice from appropriate agencies and professionals where required.

Preventative Education
Online safety forms part of the school's wider safeguarding and RSHE/PSHE curriculum. Teaching will be **age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate** and will help children understand online risks, including privacy, consent, sharing images, online relationships, harmful content, misinformation and disinformation. Children will be encouraged to speak to a trusted adult if something happens online that makes them feel uncomfortable, worried or unsafe. Staff will reinforce that children should not feel ashamed or blamed when seeking help about an online incident.
The safeguarding team will continue to review its curriculum, filtering and monitoring arrangements and safeguarding procedures to ensure that they reflect emerging online risks and changes in technology. The review will consider whether:

- filtering and monitoring systems are effectively protecting children;
- appropriate alerts are generated and acted upon;
- staff understand their responsibilities;
- safeguarding incidents indicate any weaknesses in current arrangements; and
- improvements or additional controls are required.

The DSL, Headteacher and relevant technical staff will work together to ensure that safeguarding concerns identified through filtering and monitoring are appropriately investigated and acted upon.

3.6 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and 'Honour-Based' Abuse (HBA)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All forms of HBA are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

3.6.1 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

"Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons." (World Health Organisation, 2016)

FGM has been an embedded practice for centuries in some countries in the world including Africa, the Middle East, Iran, Iraq, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan (DH, 2015).

The World Health Organisation estimated that between 100 to 140 million women and girls worldwide have undergone FGM, but prevalence of FGM in the UK is difficult to estimate because of the hidden nature of the crime.

All suspected or actual cases of FGM are a safeguarding concern and safeguarding procedures will be followed. This will include a referral to the police. If any staff are concerned about a pupil, they will refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/s within the School.

It is a mandatory reporting duty for all teachers to report to the police where it is believed an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 in the UK. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken.

There are 4 types of FGM, mainly carried out on girls between the ages of five and ten. In some countries it is practised on babies as young as two or three days old and in other areas, it is practised prior to marriage or as part of the wedding rituals.

It is the parent's decision as to whether their daughters are 'cut', but they face tremendous pressure from older members of their families, especially, if they return to their country of origin. In most countries, including the UK, FGM is illegal.

Signs may include:

- Being repeatedly absent from school or absent for a prolonged period
- Not participating in Physical Education
- Unauthorised and or extended leave, vague explanations or plans for removal of a female in a high risk category (parents from a country who are known to practice FGM) especially over the summer period
- Plans to take a holiday which may be unauthorised, unexplained or extended in a country known to practice FGM
- Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing, or looking uncomfortable
- Finding it hard to sit still for long periods of time (where this was not a problem previously)
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating, or having frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
- Demonstrating increased emotional and psychological needs – for example, withdrawal or depression, or significant change in behaviour
- Being reluctant to undergo any medical examinations
- Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem
- Talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Potential signs that a pupil may be at risk of FGM include:

• The girl's family having a history of practising FGM (this is the biggest risk factor to consider) • FGM being known to be practised in the girl's community or country of origin • A parent or family member expressing concern that FGM may be carried out • A family not engaging with professionals (health, education or other) or already being known to social care in relation to other safeguarding issues	A girl who: ▪ Has a mother, older sibling or cousin who has undergone FGM ▪ Has limited level of integration within UK society ▪ Confides to a professional that she is to have a "special procedure" or to attend a special occasion to "become a woman" ▪ Talks about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent, or parents stating

	that they or a relative will take the girl out of the country for a prolonged period ▪ Requests help from a teacher or another adult because she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk of FGM ▪ Talks about FGM in conversation – for example, a girl may tell other children about it (although it is important to take into account the context of the discussion) ▪ Has sections missing from her 'red book' (child health record) and/or attending a travel clinic or equivalent for vaccinations/anti-malarial medication

The above indicators and risk factors are not intended to be exhaustive.

3.6.2 Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. 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.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the 'one chance' rule, i.e. we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them. If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being forced into marriage, they should speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will: speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place, activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer, seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or fmu@fco.gov.uk, refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, class teacher, learning mentor, or member of the leadership team as appropriate.

3.7 Allegations of abuse against other children/Peer abuse / Child on child abuse. (including harassment and violence) Child to parent/carer abuse.

Staff at Meersbrook Bank Primary School recognises that children can cause harm to other children. Child-on-child abuse may occur in person or online and may include physical, emotional or sexual abuse, bullying, harassment, violence, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and the sharing of nude or semi-nude images.
Such behaviour will never be dismissed as simply "banter", "falling out" or "children being children".
Staff must report concerns promptly to the DSL/ Headteacher. Each incident will be considered individually, taking account of the ages, developmental stages, needs, vulnerabilities and circumstances of the children involved.

The DSL/Headteacher will safeguard and support both the child who has experienced harm and the child who may have caused harm, while ensuring that appropriate safeguarding action is taken.

We recognise that some children abuse other children or their peers and the reasons for this are complex and are often multi-faceted. We understand that we need as a school to have clear mechanisms and procedures in place to identify and report incidents or concerns. We aim to reduce this behaviour and any related incidents with an expectation to eliminate this conduct.

Peer on peer abuse is a safeguarding concern and normal procedures will be followed. We will consider and may apply the disciplinary procedure outlined in the school's behaviour for learning policy. We will offer support to a victim.

We recognise peer on peer abuse can take some of these forms:

- Language seen as derogatory, demeaning, inflammatory
- Unwanted banter
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual Violence
- Hate
- Homophobia
- Abuse based on gender differences and orientation
    - Up-skirting 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 and distress.

We will challenge this type of abuse and will use the curriculum to address and tackle peer on peer abuse.

We are aware that many schools and organisations pass off this behaviour as 'banter.' We do not tolerate 'banter'. This behaviour is harmful.

Child-to-Parent or Child-to-Carer Abuse

At Meersbrookbank we recognise child-to-parent or child-to-carer abuse as a safeguarding concern. This may involve repeated physical, emotional, psychological, verbal, financial or other abusive behaviour by a child towards a parent or carer.
Staff should not dismiss such behaviour simply as poor behaviour or family conflict. Where there are concerns about the safety or wellbeing of the child or other family members, the concern should be reported to the DSL/ Headteacher.

3.8 Mental Health of Children and Young People

At Meersbrook Bank, we recognise that mental health difficulties and safeguarding concerns can overlap. Mental health difficulties may, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has experienced, or is at risk of experiencing, abuse, neglect or exploitation. Equally, children experiencing safeguarding concerns may develop difficulties with their mental health and emotional wellbeing. Staff should be alert to significant or unexplained changes in a child's behaviour, emotional presentation, relationships, attendance, self-esteem, engagement with education or general wellbeing. Staff should also recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to safeguarding risks due to existing or emerging mental health difficulties.

Where a mental health concern is also a safeguarding concern, staff must report this immediately to the DSL/ Headteacher and follow the school's safeguarding procedures. Relevant information about the child's mental health and emotional wellbeing should be included when making safeguarding referrals, where appropriate. Mental health concerns do not automatically constitute safeguarding concerns. Where a concern relates to a child's mental health but there are no immediate safeguarding concerns, staff should speak to the DSL/ Headteacher to agree an appropriate course of action and identify suitable support.
The DSL/headteacher will work with parents and carers and, where appropriate, seek support from relevant services. Depending on the child's needs and the level of concern, this may include: Early Help / Family help, health services, the GP, CAMHS, Children's Social Care or other specialist services.

If there are concerns of abuse, neglect, exploitation, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, serious violence or any other risk to a child's safety or wellbeing, the concern must be reported to the DSL /Headteacher without delay. The safeguarding team will consider the child's individual circumstances and vulnerabilities and ensure that appropriate support and safeguarding action are put in place.

3.9 Children who have unexplained or persistent absences:

At Meersbrook Bank, we recognise that **attendance is an important safeguarding indicator**. Changes in a child's attendance, persistent or severe absence, repeated lateness and patterns of absence may indicate that a child is experiencing difficulties or is at increased risk of harm. Attendance should therefore be considered alongside other safeguarding information and not viewed in isolation.

Staff should be alert to **unexplained or concerning changes in attendance**, including increased absence, repeated lateness, patterns of absence or a child becoming absent from education. Any concerns should be shared promptly with the DSL/ headteacher in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

When considering attendance concerns, staff will seek to understand the reasons for absence and consider whether there are underlying barriers or safeguarding concerns. These may include **neglect, abuse, domestic abuse, child sexual abuse or exploitation, child criminal exploitation, bullying, serious violence, mental health difficulties, substance misuse, radicalisation, FGM, forced marriage or other vulnerabilities**.

KCSIE 2026 recognises changes in attendance as a potential safeguarding indicator. Persistent or repeated absence can be a warning sign that a child may be experiencing safeguarding

difficulties, including abuse, neglect or exploitation and will therefore consider attendance as part of the child's **wider safeguarding picture**, particularly where there are other indicators of concern.

Some children may be particularly vulnerable to becoming absent from education or missing education. This may include children who:

- are at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- are experiencing domestic abuse or other family difficulties;
- are at risk of forced marriage or FGM;
- go missing or run away from home or care;
- are involved with or supervised by the youth justice system;
- have a social worker or have previously had a social worker;
- have significant mental health or emotional wellbeing difficulties;
- are experiencing bullying, discrimination or other difficulties at school;
- are from families who have recently moved to the area or are new to the country; or
- are experiencing other circumstances that may affect their ability to attend or engage with education.

Where attendance concerns suggest that a child may be at risk of harm, neglect or exploitation, the DSL / Headteacher will consider whether **Early Help, Family Help, Children's Social Care, the local authority attendance service or other specialist services** should be involved.

3.10 Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- Being more prone to peer group isolation than other children.
- The potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs, and communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers. We are mindful of these additional challenges, and where required, will provide extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities. Staff need to be aware of the additional challenges faced by those with SEN or disabilities.

3.11 Domestic Abuse

As part of KCSIE 2026 the scope of harm has been broadened to encompass the experience of witnessing ill treatment, acknowledging that exposure to these circumstances can adversely affect a child's welfare. Meersbrook Bank recognises that domestic and intimate relationship abuse can have a significant impact on children, including where they are not the direct victim. Staff should be alert to the possible impact of domestic abuse on a child's behaviour, emotional wellbeing, attendance, relationships and development.

Domestic abuse may include physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic or financial abuse and other behaviours intended to frighten, harm or control another person.

At Meersbrook Bank we recognise the importance of supporting children who have *seen, heard* and in fact *experienced* all parts of domestic abuse – with the understanding that child abuse can happen to ANY CHILD regardless of their age / circumstances.

Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse and/or violence at home where it occurs between family members. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Older children may also experience domestic abuse and/or violence in their own personal relationships. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children.

If police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any children in the household have experienced the incident, the police will send an 'Operation Encompass' letter via the school's secure system. These can be accessed by the DSL and Headteacher.

Where domestic abuse is suspected or disclosed, staff must report the concern to the DSL without delay. The DSL/ Head teacher will consider the impact on the child and whether a referral to Children's Social Care or other safeguarding partners is required.

3.11 Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSL/deputies will be aware of contact details and referral routes into the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures). Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to children's social care.

3.12 Checking the identity and suitability of visitors

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff. If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification. Visitors are expected to sign into school and wear a visitor's badge.

Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and will be asked to confirm their DBS clearance; or the organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an enhanced DBS check with barred list information has been carried out.

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise pupils or staff.

3.13 Non-collection of children

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day:

- A check will be made for information about changes to the normal collection routines
- Reasonable attempts will be made to contact parents, carers or others with parental responsibility at home or at work or other adults authorised to collect the child or vulnerable young person from the setting
- The child or vulnerable young person will not leave the premises with anyone other than parents, carers, others with parental responsibility or other authorised person

- If no-one can be contacted to collect the child or vulnerable young person after one hour, the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub or Police will be contacted
- The child or vulnerable young person will stay at the setting in the care of two staff members until safely collected either by the parent, carer, a person with parental responsibility, other authorised person, social worker or police officer
- Staff should never take the child or vulnerable young person home with them.

A full written report of the incident and outcome must be recorded on CPOMs.

3.14 Looked-after children and previously looked-after children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. We are also aware that a previously looked-after child potentially remains vulnerable and this requires staff to have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep them safe. We understand that all agencies must work together and take prompt action on concerns to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group. The school will also ensure that care leavers are supported with pathways including liaison with the local authority where a personal advisor will be appointed.

Section 4 to 6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 states designated teachers will have the responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of those who have left care. The virtual school head at the local authority manages the pupil premium plus grant for looked-after children. The designated teacher should work with the virtual school head to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of the looked-after children in the school and meet the needs identified in each child's personal education plan. The designated teacher should also work with the virtual school head to promote the educational achievement of previously looked-after children. Statutory guidance on promoting the education of looked-after children contains further information on the roles and responsibilities of virtual school heads.

3.15 Children with family members in prison and part of the court system

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

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. A guide for 5-11 year olds explains each step of the process and the support and special measures that are available. Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families, including for the children involved. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service.

3.16 Parental alcohol and drug use

Parents' dependent alcohol and drug use can negatively impact on children's physical and emotional wellbeing, their development and their safety. The impacts on children include:

- physical maltreatment and neglect
- poor physical and mental health
- development of health harming behaviours in later life, for example using alcohol and drugs and at an early
- poor school attendance due to inappropriate caring responsibilities
- low educational attainment
- involvement in anti-social or criminal behaviour

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will make a referral to children's social care.

3.17 Other vulnerable groups

Home Educated Children can be more vulnerable than other children and with regard to the motivations of the intention to home educate. The school has a responsibility to those who are thinking about or who are about to home educate, including those who have been removed from the school roll with a view to home educate.

Young carers can be more vulnerable or placed at risk. It is important to identify young carers and ensure they are supported to help reach their potential with an understanding that the school will need to refer into early help (currently called Family Intervention Service – or FIS) social care services for an assessment of their needs.

Private fostering occurs when a child is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer. The school has a duty to notify the local authority if it is thought or known that a child or young person may be Privately Fostered or subject to a host family arrangement which is unclear or ambiguous.

3.18: Gender questioning

Meersbrook Bank school complies with its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the overriding safeguarding mandates of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) to ensure fairness, safety, and privacy for all pupils. In accordance with legal requirements, toilets designated for the exclusive use of male or female pupils over the age of 8 will remain restricted to pupils of that biological sex. Similarly, changing facilities for pupils over the age of 11 will be strictly separated by biological sex.

Where a pupil is questioning their gender or undergoing an approved social transition plan, the school will make reasonable efforts to provide alternative, private gender-neutral facilities (such as single-occupancy accessible toilets), but under no circumstances will a pupil be permitted to access communal spaces designated for the opposite biological sex.

Regarding physical education and competitive sports, the school mandates that sports sessions and competitions will be organized by biological sex wherever mixed-sex participation would compromise either physical safety or competitive fairness.

For overnight accommodation during school trips, sleeping arrangements will remain strictly divided by biological sex to protect the privacy and safeguarding interests of all students.

4.1 Roles and responsibilities of all staff

All staff, governors, volunteers and others working with or having contact with children have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and concerns must be acted upon promptly.

All staff, governors and volunteers must:

- understand and follow this safeguarding policy and their individual safeguarding responsibilities;
- remain alert to the **signs and indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding concerns**;
- report any safeguarding concern to the **safeguarding team without delay**, regardless of whether they believe it meets a particular threshold;
- listen to children and ensure their **views, wishes and feelings are heard and taken seriously**;
- maintain **professional curiosity** and consider concerns in the context of the child's wider circumstances, vulnerabilities and experiences;
- recognise that safeguarding concerns may **overlap or occur alongside other vulnerabilities**;
- make accurate, factual and timely records of concerns, disclosures and actions taken;
- understand that data protection should not be a barrier to appropriate information sharing where this is necessary to safeguard a child;
- follow the procedures of the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Partnership, https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/sscb and relevant statutory guidance, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE);
- challenge and report any safeguarding practice that may place a child at risk; and
- cooperate fully with safeguarding referrals, enquiries and investigations where required.

The safeguarding team will coordinate the school's response to safeguarding concerns and determine the appropriate action. However, all staff, governors and volunteers retain an individual responsibility to act if they believe a child is at risk of harm. Where necessary, any member of staff can make a referral directly to the appropriate safeguarding agency.
Where a concern relates to the Headteacher, it must be reported to the Chair of Governors in accordance with the school's procedures.

KCSIE 2026 requires staff to act immediately on safeguarding concerns and report concerns to the DSL or Headteacher without delay.

4.2 Roles and responsibilities governors and leaders

Governors, and school leaders have responsibility for the school's safeguarding and child protection arrangements and ensuring:

- They understand this policy and their role in safeguarding
- A DSL and/or deputy are in place and that they have access to appropriate and regular training/refresher courses Ensuring the DSL and/or deputy are available during the school day when possible or are contactable
- To share safeguarding updates and information with all staff through termly bulletins and a quiz. The safeguarding team to actively monitor results and support staff when appropriate.
- A nominated Governor for Safeguarding is in place who can also provide a link to the local authority, other partners, and agencies
- An appointed teacher who is responsible for looked after children is in place who understands his/her safeguarding responsibilities

- They are up to date with emerging issues in safeguarding and recognise the strategies by the local authority in trying to keep children safe
- Safeguarding and child protection training for staff and governors is provided regularly as required (and in any case at least annually)
- Procedures are in place for handling allegations against staff, or volunteers and any such concerns are referred to the Local Authority Designated Lead (LADO) in every case
- All staff or anyone who has contact with a child or young person, including governors and frequent visitors, be given a mandatory induction on their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection
- Important policies linked to this policy, such as those for behaviour, bullying, online safety, safer recruitment etc. are kept up to date and information on online checks for shortlisted candidates during the safer recruitment process has been added.
- Children are taught about safeguarding, including on line and sex, relationship, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum
- The local authority be notified if there is an unexplained absence of a pupil who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan or if it is thought or known that a child or young person may be privately fostered
- That the school use the local authority Case Referral Pathway for reporting concerns about extremism which may include a referral to Prevent and/or social care.
- They are aware of the 'Learning from Serious Case Reviews' (see Appendix A)
- All staff are made aware of the Whistle Blowing policy
- That all child protection and safeguarding records are stored securely, are up to date, and are retained in accordance with the latest version 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- The safeguarding team to ensure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and review their effectiveness. This includes:
- Making sure that leadership teams and staff are aware of the provisions in place, and that they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training.
- Reviewing the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards, and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting these standards

Creating a safe environment

We aim to create an environment in which:

- Is trauma informed
- All staff, including governors and volunteers, feel able to raise concerns and are being supported in their safeguarding role.
- The buildings, including its surroundings, are safe and somewhere where children can feel safe
- Parents/carers know about our principles on safeguarding and their role in it
- There are clear protocols on reception for visitors and contractors with procedures in place to ensure the appropriate questions are asked and checks made.

Section 5: Safeguarding procedures and processes

The school will deliver its responsibilities for identifying and acting on early help needs, safeguarding and child protection in line with the policies and procedures identified by the Sheffield Safeguarding Partnership.

5.1 Early help / Family help

If an early help assessment is appropriate, the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner.

We will discuss and agree, with statutory safeguarding partners, levels for the different types of assessment, as part of local arrangements.

The DSL will keep the case under constant review and the school will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

Sheffield's Family Intervention Service (FIS) can help with advice and provision of early help services. They can be contacted on 0114 203 7485 and more information including referral forms is available vis this link

https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/social-care/community-support-advice

5.2 Referring to Children's Social Care

Where welfare and safeguarding concerns are identified e.g. as a child having an injury or has made a disclosure of sexual abuse, this is a child protection concern and safeguarding procedures must be followed. Any concerns about the welfare and safety of a child, should be reported to the DSL as soon as possible. The DSL will act upon the information received. It should be noted that anyone can make a referral into social care.

If the child has been the subject of an Early Help Assessment then a chronology, a copy of the assessment, together with a copy of the Multi-Disciplinary Plan, and any supporting document evidence to support a threshold should be attached to the written confirmation. Details should include: who undertook the assessment, and their contact details.

When there are concerns for a child, and if the school are aware that the case is open to the Multi-Agency Team, they should discuss whether to request escalation to Children's Social Care. If the child does not at that time have a lead professional or allocated social worker then the appropriate numbers to contact can be found in the safeguarding file.

We will ensure we have spoken to the family about their concerns and proposed actions unless to do so would place the child at significant risk (imminent danger because of a disclosure made); the decision not to inform parents/carers must be justified and the details recorded. If a child makes a disclosure or presents with an injury, it is imperative that advice is sought immediately prior to the child returning home and as soon as the school become aware of this.

Essential information for making a referral includes:

- Full names and dates of birth for the child and other members of the family
- Address and daytime phone numbers for the parents, including mobile
- Child and family's ethnic origin
- Child and family's main language Actions taken and people contacted
- Special needs of the child, including need for an accredited interpreter etc.

- The child's address and phone number
- Whereabouts of the child (and siblings)
- A clear indication of the family's knowledge of the referral and whether they have consented to the sharing of confidential information
- The details of the person making the referral

Other information that may be essential:

- Previous addresses and addresses of wider family members
- Schools and nurseries attended by the child and others in the household
- Name, address & phone number of GP/Midwife/Health Visitor/School Nurse
- Hospital ward/consultant/Named nurse and dates of admission/discharge
- Details of other children who may be in contact with the alleged abuser
- Details of other practitioners involved with the family
- Child's legal status and anyone not already mentioned who has parental responsibility
- History of previous concerns and any previous CAF or Initial Assessments completed
- Any other information that is likely to impact on the undertaking of an assessment or Section 47 Enquiry.

5.3 Records

All safeguarding concerns about a child must be recorded accurately, factually and promptly and stored securely in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures, relevant data protection legislation and information-sharing requirements.

Safeguarding records must provide a clear and accurate account of the concern and the school's response. Records should include, where appropriate:

- a clear summary of the concern, including the date and time;
- information shared by the child or another person;
- actions taken and people or agencies contacted;
- decisions made and the rationale for those decisions;
- referrals made, including decisions not to refer; and
- outcomes, feedback and any further actions required.

Safeguarding concerns will be maintained as a separate child protection/welfare record and kept securely and confidentially. Access will be restricted to staff who require the information to safeguard children. Staff should be aware that parents and carers may have rights to request information held about their child, subject to relevant legal and safeguarding considerations.

Meersbrook Bank uses CPOMS to record and securely store safeguarding concerns. The DSL and Deputy DSLs have access to all safeguarding records. Other appropriate staff can record concerns and access information relevant to their role. Staff will receive appropriate guidance and training to support accurate safeguarding recording.

Information will be shared appropriately and on a need-to-know basis where this is necessary to safeguard and promote a child's welfare. Data protection must not be used as a barrier to appropriate safeguarding information sharing.

Child protection and welfare records, including records relating to allegations against staff or other adults working with children, will be retained securely in accordance with the school's retention requirements and current statutory guidance. Records must not be destroyed inappropriately.

Referrals to Children's Social Care

Where there is a concern that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the DSL will make an immediate referral to Children's Social Care and, where appropriate, the police.

In Sheffield, the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub can be contacted on 0114 273 4855 (24 hours). Where a child already has an allocated social worker, the DSL will contact the allocated social worker or their manager.

Parental consent is not required where a referral is necessary to protect a child from significant harm. Parents or carers should normally be informed where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

The Sheffield Safeguarding Hub will gather relevant information and determine what further action is required. Where a concern does not require a child protection referral, relevant information should still be recorded and appropriate support considered, including Early Help where appropriate.

The DSL will record all referrals and subsequent actions on CPOMS, including the information shared, decisions made, rationale, outcomes and any required follow-up. Where an appropriate response or outcome is not received, the DSL will follow this up promptly.

The safeguarding team at Meersbrook Bank will follow current Sheffield Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and other relevant statutory safeguarding guidance when recording, sharing and responding to safeguarding concerns.

If a child is in immediate danger, the police should be contacted on 999.

5.4 Recruitment

We must prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check all staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required. This school will ensure that safer recruitment practices are always followed and that the requirements outlined in the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children safe in Education'. This includes:

- Verifying the identity of candidates
- A check of professional qualifications.
- Checking the right to work in the UK.
- DBS checks (see Section 5.5)
- Prohibition checks (where required)
- Additional overseas checks where relevant
- Asking for and follow up at least two references
- Scrutinising applications for gaps in employment.

Some of these will be done by our HR service Capita.

Meersbrook Bank will comply with the latest statutory requirements and guidance relating to safer recruitment, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and regulated activity with children and will determine the appropriate level of DBS check for staff, volunteers, contractors and other individuals working with or having contact with children, in accordance with current legislation and guidance and all recruitment procedures will reflect the KCSIE 2026 requirements relating to regulated activity and supervision, including the circumstances in which individuals may undertake regulated activity with children.

Where an enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information is required, Meersbrook Bank will ensure that the appropriate checks are completed before the individual undertakes the relevant regulated activity.

All interview panels will have at least one member who has undergone safer recruitment training and we will include questions regarding safeguarding. We will have a Single Central Record which will cover all staff, including governors, and volunteers, frequent visitors, agency and supply, and others according to their role and responsibility. We will ensure this record is regularly updated and reviewed regularly.

We will ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities as per the Staff Code of Conduct document. This also includes advice on conduct, safe use of mobile phones and guidance on personal / professional boundaries in emailing, messaging, or participating in social networking environments.

5.5 The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions which helps preventing unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.

The DBS are responsible for:

- Processing requests for criminal records checks
- Deciding whether it is appropriate for a person to be placed on or removed from a barred list
- Placing or removing people from the DBS Children's Barred list and Adults' Barred list for England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Providing an online DBS service

The DBS search police records and in relevant cases, the barred list information, before issuing a DBS certificate to the applicant. A DBS check will be requested as part of the prerecruitment checks following an offer of employment, including unsupervised volunteering roles, and staff engaging in regulated activity, where the definition of regulated activity is met.

We will follow advice on DBS checks from our HR provider, and this includes:

- Where relevant, a separate Barred Check List has been completed
- That individuals are not disqualified from working with children under the Child Care (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 and will adhere to any changes made to this
- A check to include a Secretary of State Prohibition Order (Teacher Prohibition Order) and this may mean on Teaching Assistants
- A Section 28 Direction Check where relevant, and in any case for all governors.

If a person in regulated activity is dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have been had they not resigned, we will ensure a referral is made to the DBS.

At Meersbrook bank we will review DBS eligibility and checking arrangements whenever statutory guidance or legislation changes. This includes consideration of the requirements applicable to employees, volunteers, contractors, trainees and individuals working within Meersbrook bank's Early Years provision.

5.6 Dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers who work with children

The School will adhere to the procedures set out under 'Allegations against Persons who work with Children (including Staff, Carers and Volunteers)' (allegations of abuse by teachers and other staff). This document can be found on the Sheffield Safeguarding Partnership website and there is a paper copy in the safeguarding file on each site.
https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/p/processes/allegations-of-abuse-against-people-who-work-with-children-lado

If a member of staff has concerns about another member of staff (including supply staff or temporary staff), this should be referred to the Headteacher. Where there are concerns about the Headteacher this will be referred to the Chair of Governors.

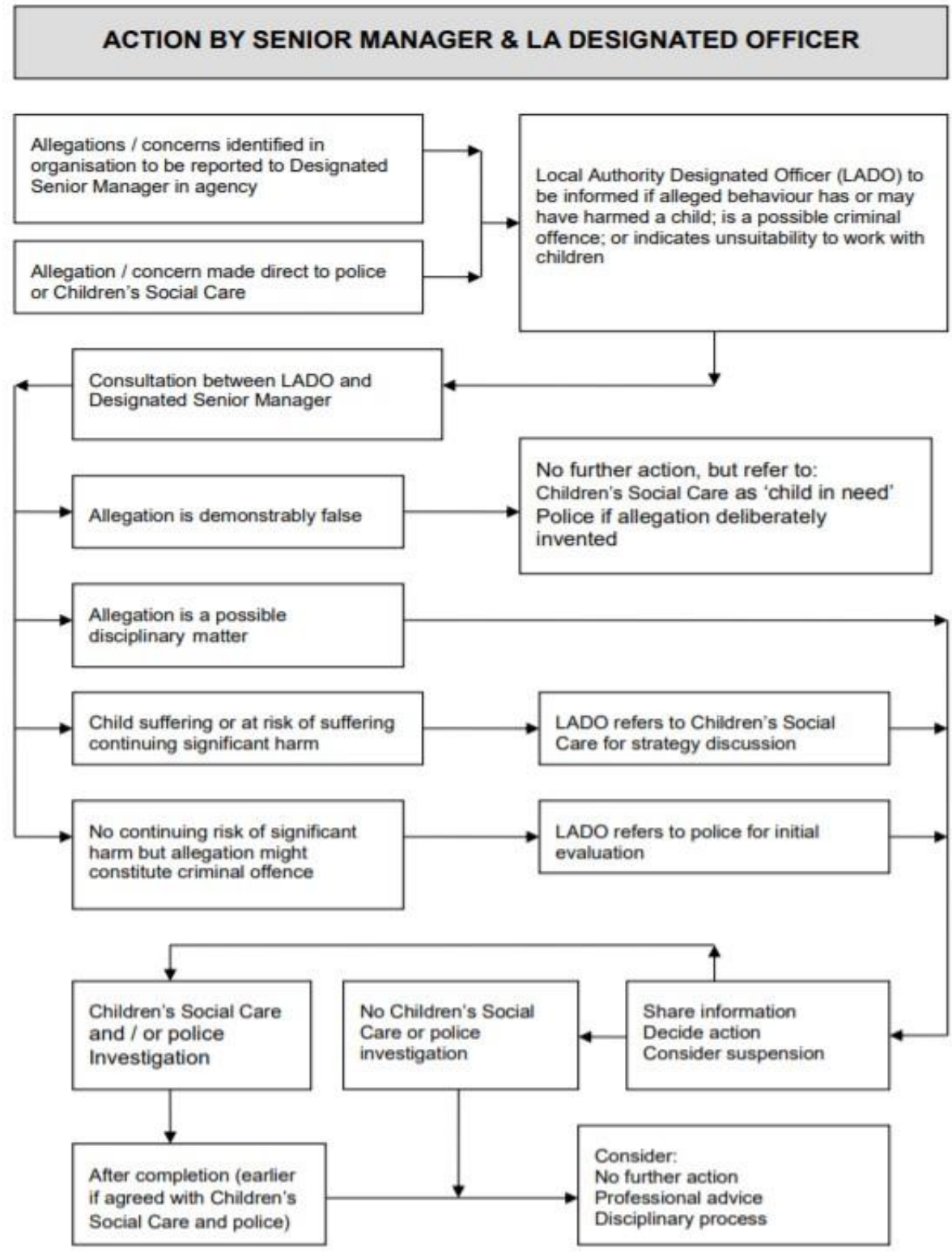
Low-level concerns: The school recognises that a concern about an adult does not have to meet the harm threshold to warrant action. Any concern, no matter how small, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Staff

Code of Conduct, including conduct that causes a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt', should be shared promptly with the Headteacher (or the Chair of Governors where the concern relates to the Headteacher) and will be recorded and dealt with appropriately in line with KCSIE.

We will ensure that all allegations are discussed with the Local Authority Designated Lead (LADO) in every case.

Where there are allegations that are substantiated, the school will fully ensure any specific actions are undertaken on management and exit arrangements as advised by our HR providers Capita and supported by relevant guidance.

Flow chart to support:



Section 6: Management of the Policy

All governors need to be effective in their management of safeguarding. The governing board will ensure:

- All staff, including governors and volunteers, have read the policy
- That it is displayed on the school's/college's website
- The implementation of the policy
- Review the policy on an annual basis.

The Headteacher will report termly on safeguarding activity and progress to the Governing Board.

The DSL will complete the S175 Safeguarding Audit annually and with an Action Plan which will be used to report on safeguarding activity and progress. A copy of which will be submitted to the local authority. This will be held on file and reported to the Sheffield Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

The Head Teacher should report any significant issues to the Chair of the Governing Board that may have an impact on safeguarding in the school and using the normal protocols to inform the local authority if deemed necessary.

Appendix A

Learning from Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and Serious Incident Learning Reviews (SILRs)

Sheffield Safeguarding Children Body recognises the importance of learning and improving from our experiences in this area. A range of learning and themes from SCRs and SILRs have been identified from our most recent reviews, and from the preceding years. In 2012 we have learnt that: **Babies** are particularly at risk from abuse and neglect including:

- Shaking
- Co-sleeping
- Domestic abuse
- Methadone used as a soother
- Lack of ante-natal assessment

Teenagers - a quarter of all SCRs/SILRs have been about the serious injury or death of a teenager. Issues include:

- Suicide/self-harm
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Offending behaviour
- Missing from school, home or care
- Difficult to engage

Parents- the death or serious injury of children and young people often has contributory factors including:

- Substance misuse
- Mental health
- Domestic abuse
- Hostility/non-engagement
- Disguised compliance
- Violent men

In 2016/17 in summary form we learnt that:

- The importance of authoritative practice
- To be alert to disguised compliance risk
- The importance pf professional curiosity
- To be alert to the possibility of abuse
- That all professionals to consider the need for an Early Help Assessment
- Hear the voice of the child
- Understand and record the child's lived experience.

Learning for Schools from SCR's and Serious Incident Learning Reviews (SIR's)

- Appropriate representation is needed at key meetings- Child Protection Case Conferences

It is vital that themes and learning is shared across all agencies to improve practice and increase safeguards to children and young people. The SCR subcommittee has identified a number of practice developments for professionals including:

- Information gathering, sharing and recording.
- Assessing the complete circumstances of the child and family, including their history.
- Critically analysing all information.
- Ensuring the needs of the child are paramount above those of the parents.
- Seeing a child at home and where they sleep.

In 2013/2014 in summary form we learnt that:

Common Themes:

- Domestic Abuse
- Substance Misuse
- Vulnerabilities of older teenage children
- Suicide/self-harm
- Shaken babies/youngsters
- Disguised compliance from parents/carers
- Agencies should be consulted before closing cases
- Risk to children should be assessed when in contact with perpetrators of domestic abuse
- Not to have overoptimistic or unrealistic expectations of improvements seen or made as it is not likely reflective of past or current

- Effective multi-agency working
- Working more SMART (ly) with children and Young people
- Effective information sharing to inform assessments
- Staff to be curious, inquisitive and ask more questions
- Reflection and constructive challenge for staff when working with vulnerable children and young people
- Staff to observe safer working practices
- Staff to be reminded of a code of conduct and staff to operate by one In summary form we need:
- A requirement for holistic & family based approach to ante-natal care and the importance of recording a full history of parents
- A need for professional curiosity into parental capacity & the mental health of parents
- To find out about the role of fathers/male partners/boyfriends in families

- To understand how mental health issues impact on the welfare & development of young children
- To act upon disrupted education, going missing, school refusal
- To know about the need to distinguish between sexual abuse, sexual exploitation , and or/underage sexual activity
- To identify neglect in disabled children
- A requirement to know about and use escalation & challenge processes provided by a safeguarding body where there are professional disagreements
- To understand the impact of bereavement, loss and transition for children and especially young people
- Realise and respond to parents who dominate and manipulate meetings (early help/CIN) by disputing points, creating diversions & feigned compliances with recommendations.

Relevant SCRs:

Serious Case Reviews, Serious Incident Learning and Thematic Case Reviews and leaning relevant for schools /colleges can be found on the Sheffield Safeguarding Children's Body website Schools are not required to have separate policies to cover EYFS requirements provided the requirements are already met through an existing policy.

Appendix B

Sheffield Safeguarding Hub
Children and Young People
To report that a child or young person is suffering or likely to suffer harm call
0114 273 4855
Email: C&FScreeningTeam@sheffield.gcsx.gov.uk
Police
Child or young person in immediate danger?
Call 999
Early Help
Request support on an
Early Help Assessment part 1 form
www.sheffield.gov.uk/earlyhelp
or for further advice call 0114 2037485
www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org
POLICE
Sheffield
Clinical Commissioning Group
Sheffield