



Venture
Learning

**Site Specific Arrangements
for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

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Introduction

This document sets out the arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Venture Learning.

Venture Learning is committed to Safeguarding and encourages a strong culture of vigilance in this area.

This document forms part of the integrated safeguarding portfolio and should be read alongside:

- Venture Learning: Managing Allegations Against Adults;
- Venture Learning: Safer Recruitment Policy
- Venture Learning: IT & Online Safety Policy
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2025;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children – 2023;
- Local arrangements for managing allegations issued through the relevant Local Safeguarding Partnership;
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004;
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- The Education Act 2002;

It is important to see safeguarding as the “umbrella” term for everything that is done to support children and young people, to keep them safe and promote their welfare. ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children – 2025’ defines safeguarding 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 impairment of a child’s mental and physical health and development,
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is defined as:

- part of safeguarding and promoting welfare; and
- the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or who are likely to suffer, significant harm.

It can be seen therefore that protection is only one part of safeguarding and indeed the spirit of the legislation is about promotion of children’s needs and the prevention of harm. This supports the need for all staff to be able to respond early when they have a concern rather than wait until something is more defined and certain.

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

DSL refers to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Venture Learning.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parents refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step- parents, foster carers and adoptive parents and LA corporate parents.

At Venture Learning we are committed to safeguarding children and young people and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment. Adults in our school take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them. We will always act in the best interest of the child. Staff should share any concerns they have about a child with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. However, it should be remembered 'that sometimes children will 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. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and they should speak to the DSL'.

All adults are aware that no single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance 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 outcome.

In addition, staff at Venture Learning follow these principles:

- All children regardless of age, gender, culture, language, race, ability, sexual identity or religion have equal rights to protection, safeguarding and opportunities.
- We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff, volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm and have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.
- All staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical, mental wellbeing and moral development of the individual child.
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support and supervision

Key Staff and Contacts

School Based Contacts

Name	Role
Rich Hill	Headteacher
Rich Hill	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Gemma Waddington	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
Rich Hill	Online Safety Lead
Rich Hill	Prevent Duty Lead
Gemma Waddington	Mental Health / Wellbeing Lead
Gemma Waddington	Designated Teacher for Looked After Children
Gemma Waddington	Designated Teacher for Previously LookedAfter Children
Gemma Waddington	Attendance Officer

Other Useful Contacts

Agency / Contact	Contact Details
Children's Social Care Contact Centre Nottingham City Council	0115 8764800 CityMASH@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
Nottingham County Professionals consultation line	03005008090 01159774247
Children's Social Care – Emergency Duty Team Nottingham City Council Nottinghamshire	0115 8764800 03004564546
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Nottingham City Council/ Nottinghamshire LADO	Clare Patel 01158764742 LADO@nottinghamcity.gov.uk Hazel McKibbin LADO@nottscg.gov.uk/0115 9773920
Child Line	0800 1111
NSPCC Information Service	0808 800 5000
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 0285

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the member of Venture Learning's Senior Leadership Team who is responsible for the strategic leadership of safeguarding.

The DSL is the person to whom staff should pass their concerns and who will ensure a practical and efficient way of dealing with those concerns.

The DSL will:

- ensure they are appropriately trained to carry out the role;
- ensure school procedures are followed and adhered to with regard to reporting concerns about a child;
- promote the process within the school to be followed to report any concerns regarding a child;
- ensure an open and efficient route for staff to report concerns to them of any sort and to have their concerns taken seriously;
- consider whether concerns need to be referred to Local Authority Children's Services, the Channel Programme where there is a radicalisation concern or the police as required;
- assist with providing information to the Disclosure and Barring Service as necessary;
- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff;
- act as point of contact with all safeguarding partners;
- ensure the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult is observed where necessary;(see Appendix 6)
- assist the case manager in collating information for LADO referrals where this relates to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of any children involved;
- liaise with all relevant staff on matters of safeguarding and welfare when assessing concerns to ensure children's needs are considered holistically;
- liaise with the mental health lead where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health;
- promote supportive engagement with parents/carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances;
- work with the chair of the proprietary body and relevant strategic leads to promote educational outcomes and identifying the impact of any welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues may have on attendance, engagement and achievement;
- maintain written records of concerns on CPOMS ensuring all include; a clear comprehensive summary of concerns; details of how the concern was followed up and resolved and details of any action taken, decisions made and the outcome;
- ensure all CPOMS records are regularly reviewed and subject to quality assurance scrutiny;
- ensure all staff are aware of how to accurately record concerns and actions on CPOMS and maintain oversight of these records;
- ensure child protection files / CPOMS records are transferred to receiving schools within 5 days and any additional safeguarding information is shared with relevant staff;
- ensure all staff have access to and understand all safeguarding policies (including temporary and agency staff);
- ensure the correct version of the Site Specific Safeguarding Arrangements documents are available on the school website;
- share Local Safeguarding Partnership information as appropriate with wider staff teams;
- understand Local Authority Early Help and Child Protection referral and assessment processes;
- have working knowledge of Child Protection Conferences and attend all relevant meetings;
- contribute to the assessment of children through the Local Authority processes;
- understand the lasting impact of trauma and adversity;
- be alert to specific needs of children including those with SEND, health conditions and young carers;
- understand the importance of information sharing and relevant data protection legislation;
- understand the requirements of the Prevent Duty, complete Prevent Duty training and

- complete a specific Prevent Risk Assessment;
- understand the unique risks associated with online safety and ensure they have the relevant knowledge and capability to help keep children safe online;
- recognise the additional risks children with SEND can face online;
- obtain access to resources and attend relevant refresher training sessions;
- encourage a culture of listening and taking account of children's wishes and feelings across the school;
- ensure all staff receive the appropriate level of safeguarding training for their role within the school;
- ensure staff are supported during any referral process;
- support staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked with academic and pastoral support; and
- gather, collate and analyse as appropriate all relevant information for the purposes of Quality Assurance.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Is trained to the same level as the DSL and, in the absence of the DSL, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

Children and Young People who may be particularly vulnerable

Any child may be considered vulnerable at any time, but some children may have an increased risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation. As an alternative provider, staff at Venture Learning understand that our commissioned students often have complex needs and staff are aware of the additional risk of harm that they may be vulnerable to, in particular CCE and/or CSE.

Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues, reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse, neglect and exploitation can occur and contextual safeguarding issues. To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, all staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for any pupils who:

- are disabled or have certain health conditions and have specific additional needs;
- have special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);
- have mental health needs;
- are young carers;
- show signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines;
- are frequently missing/go missing from care or from home;
- are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation;
- are at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- have a family member in prison or is affected by parental offending;
- are in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse;
- are misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- have returned to their family from care;
- are at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- are privately fostered;

- are persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day;
- are asylum seekers;
- are vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying;
- are living in temporary accommodation;
- are living transient lifestyles;
- are living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations;
- are homeless;
- are vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality;
- do not have English as a first language;
- are within the court system.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

Children with special educational needs or disabilities

Venture Learning recognises that children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation such as:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- children with SEND 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 able to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in school and the consequences of this.

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

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

For children questioning their gender, caution is necessary 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 and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Venture Learning will support families/carers to seek clinical help and advice when making decisions about support for their gender questioning child. If the child is pre-pubertal, Venture Learning will support families/carers with ensuring clinical services are sought as early as possible.

When supporting a gender questioning child, Venture Learning will take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with the child's parents (other than in

the exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child), including any clinical advice that is available and how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying.

Venture Learning endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and we have created a culture where students can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

Allegations against staff or volunteers

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, our set procedures **must** be followed. The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in Venture Learning's Managing Allegations Against Adults Policy.

If you have a concern about an adult working within Venture Learning, please contact:

Name	Role	Contact Number
Rich Hill	Headteacher	07587408996

If your concern relates to the Headteacher, please contact:

Name	Role	Contact Number
Rhys Griffiths	Chair of Proprietary Body	07806699370

If your concern relates to the Headteacher, please contact:

Name	Role	Contact Number
Steven Fearn	Director of Finance	07712707607

Whistleblowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

All staff should be aware of their duty and feel able to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues (within or outside of work and including online activity), poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements.

If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should follow the Venture Learning Whistleblowing Policy.

The NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285, the line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Staff training

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

All staff in addition to completion of mandatory online Safeguarding modules on initial employment / joining the school and every two years thereafter, will undertake training each September as directed by the Headteacher, covering as a minimum:

- Signs and symptoms of abuse, neglect and exploitation (including online safety);
- Local procedures for responding to concerns;
- Venture Learning's behaviour policy;
- Response to children that go missing in education;
- The staff code of conduct; and
- Allegations management.

Any staff joining the school throughout the academic year, whether permanent, part time, agency or supply staff must also receive this training in a format appropriate to the setting and circumstances.

The level of additional training staff will receive is based on their role.

It is the DSL's responsibility to ensure that all staff complete mandatory safeguarding training including online modules and that this is up to date. Regular reviews of training requirements should be undertaken between the DSL and the Chair of the Proprietary Body.

Safer Recruitment

All Safer Recruitment processes are overseen by the Chair of Proprietary Body and the Headteacher and our school complies with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and the LSP by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant's identity, qualifications, and work history.

- At least one member of each recruitment interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training within the last **2 years**; and have read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 Part 3: Safer Recruitment.
- In order to follow best practice, all staff involved in any part of the recruitment process should also undertake safer recruitment training and have read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 Part 3: Safer Recruitment
- All relevant staff are made aware of relevant legislation and their obligations to disclose relevant information
- Venture Learning obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the school have been appropriately checked
- Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained; and
- Venture Learning maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken

The Chair of Governors, Headteacher and DSL's should ensure that they have read and understood all Safer Recruitment guidance in KCSIE 2025: Part 3 and Venture Learning: Safer Recruitment Guidance.

Volunteers

All volunteers working with the school will be risk assessed and will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school, their contact with pupils and the supervision provided to them.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised.

Contractors

The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS with barred list checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised whilst pupils are on-site.

Site security

Visitors to Venture Learning, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a badge, 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. The Headteacher will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

Extended school and off-site arrangements

All extended and off-site 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 on behalf of Venture Learning, 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.

Teaching our pupils about safeguarding

Children at Venture Learning are taught about how they can keep themselves and others safe, including online. To be effective, we present this information in an age-appropriate way. We are sensitive to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs or disabilities.

The PHSE curriculum at Venture Learning ensures students are taught how to recognise, understand, cope with, and develop resistance to the risks and issues they face as young people living within Nottingham City and beyond. The curriculum covers a range of issues relating to health and wellbeing, relationships and living in the wider world. Learning is facilitated through stand alone delivered sessions, assemblies and workshops from specialist external providers.

Planned sessions within our RHSE curriculum reflect the statutory guidance published by the DfE and will be updated inline with further guidance updates as and when published.

Child Protection Procedures

Recognising Concerns

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Abuse, neglect and exploitation are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone. Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 refers to four categories of abuse. These are set out at Appendix One along with indicators of abuse.

Taking action

Any child, in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff should always maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child and should act on concerns immediately:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary call 999;
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, definitely before the end of the

- day and ensure the concern is fully recorded on CPOMS;
- do not start your own investigation;
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family; and
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should record these early concerns following the agreed school process. It is important to understand that pupils may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally. They may show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, there may not be a direct report – staff may be approached by a friend of the pupil or overhear a conversation that suggests a pupil may be at risk.

If a pupil reports a concern to you

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will, at the appropriate time, let the pupil know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the DSL. The point at which they tell the pupil is a matter for professional judgement. During their conversations with the pupil staff will:

- listen carefully and allow them to speak freely;
- remain calm and not overreact;
- take it seriously;
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me' and confirm that it was right to tell;
- not be afraid of silences – do not stop the pupil from speaking freely;
- under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times has this happened, whether it happens to siblings, or what does the pupil's mother think about it;
- not speculate or accuse anyone or jump to conclusions (especially about the abuser);
- at an appropriate time tell the pupil that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on and explain to whom and why;
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort;
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong;
- tell the pupil what will happen next;
- report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves;
- Record the concern on CPOMS (or complete the record of concern form) immediately and hand it to the DSL as soon as possible; and

- seek support if they feel distressed

Effective Safeguarding Practice

- If possible, reports should be taken with two members of staff present (preferably one of these being a trained DSL)
- Careful management of reports that include an online element – additional guidance should be read and staff must remember that they must not view or forward images of children
- Not promising confidentiality but staff should only share the report with people who are required to progress the issue.
- Ensure the pupil understands what the next steps will be
- Recognising that a pupil will most likely disclose to an adult they trust – this could be anyone within the school and all staff should feel confident in taking details of a disclosure and should be supportive and respectful of the pupil
- Recognising that an initial disclosure to an adult may only be the first reported incident, not representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory so pupils may not always be able to recall specific details or timelines
- Keeping in mind that certain pupils may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and / or sexual orientation
- Listening carefully to the pupil, reflecting back, using the pupil's language, being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed, not asking leading questions
- Considering how to make a record of the report. Best practice is to wait until the end of the report and write up a thorough summary to be recorded on CPOMS and shared with the DSL. If notes are made during the report staff should remain engaged with the pupil and not appear distracted
- Only recording the facts as the pupil presents them. Notes / records should not reflect any personal opinion of the member of staff.
- Informing the DSL as soon as possible (or Deputy DSL) if they are not involved in the initial report

Notifying parents

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

Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil. Therefore, if Venture Learning believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents/carers are contacted.

Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL (or Deputy in their absence). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in school had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 emphasises that any member of staff can contact children's social care or the dedicated NSPCC helpline if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

Information sharing is guided by the following principles. The information is:

- necessary and proportionate;
- relevant;
- adequate;
- accurate;
- timely; and
- secure

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share.

Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil's pastoral file within CPOMS.

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents/carers to share sensitive information within the school or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information without consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent/carer to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent Venture Learning staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

Early Help

Early Help (Single Assessment, formally known as CAF).

An Early Help Single Assessment coordinated by a Lead Professional enables those professionals working closely with children and young people to ensure that children, young people and families get the help they need.

Venture Learning recognises that effective Early Help relies upon local agencies working together and using the Early Help Single Assessment to:

- Identify children and young people and their families who would benefit from early help;
- Undertake a Single Assessment of the need for early help; and
- Provide additional, targeted or enhanced early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family, which focus on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child.

Any child may benefit from early, but staff at Venture Learning should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- Has a mental health need.

- Is a young carer
- Is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- Has experienced multiple suspensions, is at a risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- Is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- Is a privately fostered child.

Before determining what services are to be provided for a particular child or young person, so far as is reasonably practicable and consistent with the child's welfare, we will consider the child or young person's perception of their circumstances and what they want to change and any ideas they have about what will help.

Where parents or a young person do not consent to Early Help or do not use the services offered, then we will make a judgement as to whether, without significant help, the needs of the child will escalate. If so, a referral to Social Care may be necessary.

Where a child or young person or their family has very complex needs or the Early Help Family Support Plan has not resulted in the desired improvement outcomes for the child or young person, an assessment by Social Care may be appropriate and will be referred under the 'step-up procedures'.

Referral to children's social care

The DSL will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or likely to suffer from harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents/carers will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

Reporting directly to child protection agencies

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- the situation is an emergency and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, their deputy, the Principal and the Chair of Governors are all unavailable;
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety; and
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

Escalating concerns

Staff need to be aware of those times when concerns may look as though they are not progressing to

an outcome or some form of action. This may be indicated by:

- difficulty in getting hold of a DSL;
- staff not being satisfied about the decision of the DSL or Headteacher;
- staff aware that a colleague has not passed on a concern;
- external agencies not accepting a referral from Venture Learning when it is felt one is needed; or
- staff not aware of what has happened to their concern because of a lack of feedback.

It is important that staff do not close down a concern because they feel “stuck” or “they can’t do anymore”. It is important to escalate concerns to DSLs, the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors.

If there are concerns about the work of an external agency Venture Learning will follow the escalation steps outlined in the locally agreed procedures documents.

The important principle is not to allow a concern to be “closed down” without it having received the necessary attention, assessment and resolution.

If the options above have been explored fully and the concern still isn’t being handled effectively and therefore placing the child or young person at risk, it is important that you continue to escalate your concerns by contacting the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285.

Specific Safeguarding and Child Protection Issues

Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. It can be committed by parents or other family members, by people known but not related to the victim (neighbours, friends, acquaintances) and by strangers.

Staff should be vigilant regarding community safety incidents within the vicinity of the school and ensure that all information is passed to the DSL in a timely manner – examples of incidents of concern may be loitering by unknown people or unknown adults engaging in conversation with pupils.

Children should also be given practical advice in order to ensure they are able to keep themselves safe focussing on building confidence and abilities rather than simply stranger warnings.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Staff should be aware that different forms of harm overlap and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation.

Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or in groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation. Where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.

There are a range of factors that could contribute to a child’s vulnerability to exploitation, including, sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status and access to economic or other resources.

Exploitation does not just include face to face contact, it can also occur online.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. 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.

Indicators of child sexual exploitation may include:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation;
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks;
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work;
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late;
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls;
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol;
- inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections;
- Evidence of/suspicions of physical or sexual assault;
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups;
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers);
- Frequenting areas known for sex work;
- Concerning use of internet or other social media;
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

Potential vulnerabilities include:

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues.

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic abuse or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example);
- Recent bereavement or loss;
- Social isolation or social difficulties;
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality;
- Economic vulnerability;
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status;
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited;
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work;
- Having a physical or learning disability;
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories); and
- Sexual identity.

The definition of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity

appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

CSE can affect any young person, male or female, under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to sexual activity.

Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

Indicators of CSE (in addition to those indicators for CCE) can include:

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

CSE can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Venture Learning includes the risks of sexual exploitation in the PSHE and RSHE curriculum. A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

All staff should be made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.

County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK – no specified distance of travel is required.

Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools (mainstream and special), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children's homes and care homes.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of CCE and CSE indicators may also be applicable to where children are exploited through involvement in county lines. Some additional specific indicators are children who:

- go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their home;
- have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime);

- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs;
- are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging'; where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection;
- are found in accommodation they have no connection with, often called a 'trap house' or cuckooing or hotel room where there is drug activity;
- owe a debt bond to their exploiters; and
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing

Venture Learning staff will remain vigilant to those children and concerns will be shared with the DSL.

Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. The families of children may also be subject to child arrangements processes through the family court system.

We recognise that both circumstances may be stressful for children and appropriate support will be provided in line with local and national guidance.

Children who are absent from education, unexplained and/or persistent absence from education.

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child with unexplained and/or persistent absences from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation as well as criminal exploitation, including involvement in county lines. It may also indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour based' abuse or risk of forced marriage. Venture Learning will monitor unauthorised absence and implement appropriate Early Help intervention to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. DSL's and Attendance Officer will ensure that Children Missing from Education procedures are followed, including liaison with commissioning schools and the Local Authority, particularly where children go missing for extended periods of time, on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day.

[The National Gov.uk Local Authority Guidance can be found here](#)

[Nottingham City Guidance](#)

Children with family members in prison

Children who have family members that are sent to prison are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. Venture Learning recognises that these children may need support. Support will be provided in line with guidance from the National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO) and local agencies.

Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed online) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include;

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking') for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded;

- denial of service (Dos or DDos) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources; and
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence

Children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cybercrime.

If there are concerns regarding a pupil in this area, this must be reported to the DSL and Headteacher (or other member of SLT) without delay in order to access additional support.

Domestic abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- (a) physical or sexual abuse;
- (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
- (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
- (d) economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and
- (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.

The act creates a statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the ill treatment of others, particularly in the context of domestic abuse.

For the definition to apply, both parties must be aged 16 or over and 'personally connected'

'Personally connected' is defined in the act as parties who:

- are married to each other;
- are civil partners of each other;
- have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- are or have been in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
- have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child; and/or
- are relatives.

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

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

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child on child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse'. However, as with any child under the age of 18, standard safeguarding procedures should be followed with both young victims and young perpetrators to provide appropriate support.

Staff will remain vigilant to incidents of this type and will ensure support and intervention is available and provided to young victims and young perpetrators.

Operation Encompass

This operates in all police forces across England. DSL's (or Principals) will receive notification of when Police have been called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident. This should occur before the next school day.

Usual Venture Learning safeguarding procedures should be followed if any further action is required following an Operation Encompass notification.

Homelessness

Being homeless, or being at risk of becoming homeless, presents a real risk to a child's welfare.

Indicators of risk of homelessness include:

- household debt
- rent arrears
- domestic abuse
- anti-social behaviour
- family being asked to leave their property

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

The DSL (and deputies) should be aware of the contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so concerns can be raised and progressed in a timely manner. They will then be better able to support pupils facing homelessness by supporting and signposting through appropriate agencies and support networks within the locality.

It should be noted that referrals to Children's Social Care should be considered alongside any referrals to homelessness support services to ensure all concerns are addressed appropriately.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental Health problems can in some cases be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to

make a diagnosis of a mental health problem, however, Venture Learning staff are well placed to identify where a child's behaviour suggests they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Where children have suffered abuse, neglect or exploitation, or other potentially traumatic experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of potential mental health concerns and will share these with the DSL.

Mental Health and well-being is an key element of our PHSE curriculum delivered in tutor times.

Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

Concerns regarding these issues must be reported to the DSL and Headteacher without delay.

Preventing Radicalisation

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

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

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use of 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.

Some children are at risk of being radicalised: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family or friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Radicalisation can occur through many different methods, such as via social media or internet and within settings, for example within the home environment.

Venture Learning staff receive 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 SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2014).

Venture Learning has an identified Prevent Lead who will co-ordinate all concerns and necessary referrals related to extremism, radicalisation and terrorism.

All Venture Learning staff are required to complete mandatory Prevent Training which should be co-ordinated and logged by the DSL.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children (Child-on Child Abuse)

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary

through to secondary school and into college. It can also occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and **are never acceptable**. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will in all likelihood adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) also attends Venture Learning.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

All staff are trained to recognise incidents of child on child abuse and will report instances including sexual violence and harassment through the normal safeguarding concern process and recognise that support must be provided to both the alleged victim and abuser.

It will be made clear that no form of child on child abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment will be tolerated or accepted as an inevitable part of growing up or banter, any behaviour of this type will be challenged by all adults working within the school and not normalised. Staff are aware that addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears relatively innocuous) **can** be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

Venture Learning staff need to recognise, acknowledging, and understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. **Venture Learning takes the stand point that it could be happening.**

All pupils are taught the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum.

The appropriate means for disclosing an allegation of abuse relating to another pupil is always to inform a member of Venture Learning's safeguarding team. In the event that an allegation is made against a member of staff, this must be sent to the Headteacher or directly to the Chair of Governors. We will always act on concerns raised.

See KCSIE 2025: Part 5 and Appendix 3 for further information regarding sexual violence and sexual harassment between children and the school's response and reporting procedures.

Serious Violence

Nottingham City and the surrounding areas have prevalent levels of serious violence and serious youth violence. In 2022, the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire's Violence Reduction Partnership's released their Response Strategy [Serious Violence Response Strategy 2022-25 \(nottsvrp.co.uk\)](https://nottsvrp.co.uk). This strategy has informed our practice and our relevant policies have been updated in line with the guidance.

All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include:

- increased absence from school;
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups;
- a significant decline in performance;
- signs of self-harm or significant change in wellbeing;
- signs of assault or unexplained injury; and/or
- unexplained gifts or new possessions.

These can all suggest that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of CCE.

There are a range of risk factors which all staff should be aware of which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

All staff should be aware that violence can often peak in the hours just before and just after school. These are particularly risky times for pupils involved in serious violence.

So-called 'Honour'-based Abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes that 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.

All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

Adults working within Venture Learning who have a concern regarding a pupil who may be at risk of HBA or has suffered from HBA should report this to the DSL immediately who will follow agreed school and national procedures for multi-agency safeguarding liaison.

Female Genital Mutilation

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long lasting consequences.

Where FGM **has taken place** it is a mandatory requirement that teaching staff personally report this to the police. This will be with full support from the DSL.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage 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 consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities for example). Some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices as a way to coerce a person into marriage. In England and Wales, the practice is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Children may be married at a very young age, and well below the age of consent in England. Venture Learning staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a pupil about being taken abroad and not being allowed to return to England, they play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

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 18th birthday, even if violence, threats, or another form of coercion are not used. This applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

Private fostering arrangements

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible.

Where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement they will raise this with the DSL and the school should notify the Local Authority of the circumstances.

Looked after children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Venture Learning ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the Local Authority's virtual head for children in care.

Work experience

Venture Learning has detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise pupils on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

Children staying with host families

If Venture Learning make arrangements for pupils to stay with a host family during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour, we will follow the guidance in Annex D of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) to ensure that hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

Appendix One

Definitions of Types of Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child, whether that is inside or outside the home and includes online. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing 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 in relation to the impact of domestic abuse on children. Children may be abused in a family or institutional or community setting by those known to them, or more rarely by others. Abuse can take place online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults of another child or children.

Physical abuse

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

Emotional abuse

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

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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 (also known as child on child abuse).

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, for example, 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); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school, arrive late or leave the school for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their school work
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'

This is not an exhaustive list and individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse, neglect or exploitation. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of

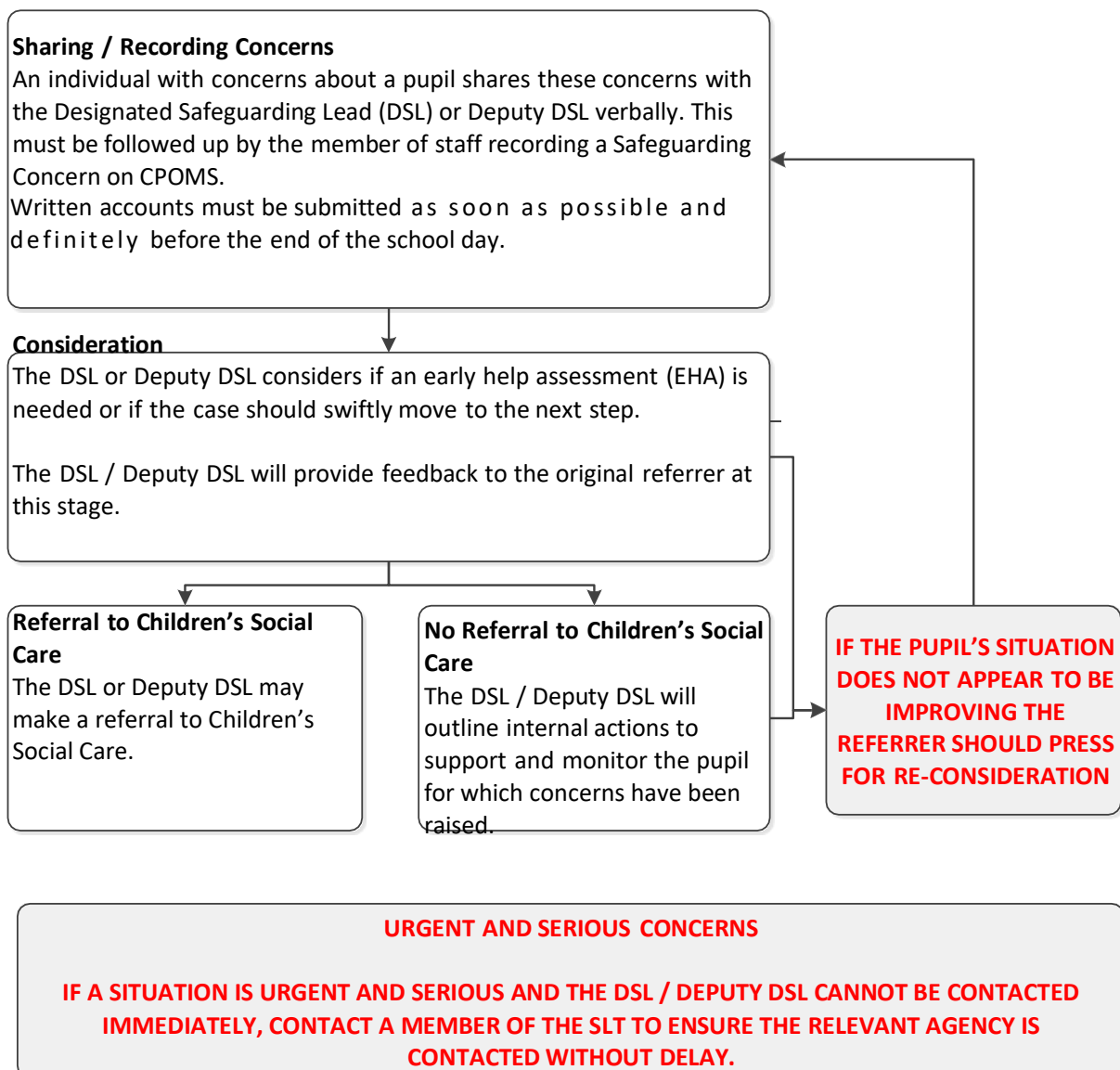
information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

All staff must be aware that safeguarding indicators and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of school and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. Extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms.

All staff must also be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse or exploitation online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life.

Children can also abuse or exploit their peers online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images and the sharing of abusive and pornographic images to those who do not wish to receive such content.

Appendix Two – Concerns Flowchart



Appendix 3 – Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

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

Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls will most likely be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely that it will be perpetrated by boys, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are also at three times greater risk of being abused by their peers.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that there is a **zero-tolerance** approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment
- challenging inappropriate behaviours;
- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as 'banter', 'part of growing up', 'just having a laugh' or 'boys being boys'; and
- challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

What is sexual violence and sexual harassment?

Sexual Violence

It is important that school and college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact that children can, and sometimes do, abuse other children in this way and that it can happen inside and outside of school/college. When referring to sexual violence KCSIE 2025 is referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

Rape:

A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration:

A Person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault:

A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (Schools should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault).

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent:

A person (A) commits an offence if s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party).

What is consent?

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. Further information can be found at Rape Crisis England & Wales – Sexual consent.

It is important to remember that:

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- the age of consent is 16;
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

Sexual Harassment

When referring to sexual harassment KCSIE 2025 means 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school/college. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

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

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual 'jokes' or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing past someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence – it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
 - consensual and non-consensual sharing nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos – taking and sharing nude photographs of under 18's is a criminal offence;
 - sharing of unwanted explicit content;
 - sexualised online bullying;
 - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media;
 - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats;
 - coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they're not comfortable with online

Upskirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and/or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks

(with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any sex, can be a victim.

The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment

The initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important. How the school or college responds to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to come forward. Schools and colleges not recognising, acknowledging or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and/or downplaying of some behaviours can actually lead to a culture of normalised unacceptable behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

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

Appropriate and adequate support should also be provided to the alleged perpetrator of any incidents.

A Risk Assessment should be considered in all circumstances, regardless of perceived seriousness – this should be completed by the DSL in conjunction with other agencies as appropriate.

Any child within Venture Learning will be listened to and supported by experienced and trained safeguarding staff. All staff should report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

All DSL's and Deputy DSL's should be familiar with Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent.

Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage.

HSB can occur online and/or face to face and can occur simultaneously between the two.

All HSB should be considered in a child protection context.

The DSL and Deputy DSL's should have a good understanding of HSB and ensure that all staff have received training at an appropriate level to their role within the school.

Appendix Four – Online Safety

As our pupils increasingly use electronic equipment on a daily basis to access the internet, share content and images via social media and for online learning, Venture Learning recognises the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. There is an effective school wide approach to online safety followed which empowers us to protect and educate pupils, pupils, and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

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

- content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories, 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: personal 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; and
- commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Venture Learning ensures online safety is a running and interrelated theme and considers how online safety is reflected as required in all relevant policies and whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead and any parental engagement.

Remote learning

All staff must refer to the school’s specific remote learning guidance and follow the school’s Safeguarding Guidance for the use of Microsoft Teams for delivering online learning and communicating with pupils.

Whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, the school is committed to doing all that we reasonably can to limit children’s exposure to the above risks from the school’s IT system. As part of this process, we will ensure Venture Learning has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and that all staff are aware of how this filtering is undertaken and monitored.

DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards are met by compliance with the following:

- identification and assigning of roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems in conjunction with our external IT provider
- annual review of filtering and monitoring provision
- blocking of harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning
- consistent and ongoing monitoring mechanisms in place to meet school safeguarding needs

Appendix 5 – Further Reading / Additional Information Sources (recommended for all Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#)

[Working Together To Safeguard Children 2023](#)

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)

[Searching, screening and confiscation advice for schools](#)

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)

[Mental health and behaviour in schools](#)

[Child sexual exploitation - definition and guide for practitioners](#)

[Lucy Faithfull Foundation Harmful Sexual Behaviour Toolkit](#)

[Contextual Safeguarding Network - Beyond Referrals](#)

[When to call the police - guidance for schools and colleges](#)

[Advice to schools and colleges on gangs and youth violence](#)

[Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults - County Lines](#)

[Safeguarding Practitioners: information sharing advice](#)

[Data Protection Toolkit for Schools](#)

[Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education](#)

[Remote education safeguarding guidance](#)

[Ofsted Inspection Guidance 2022](#)

[Use of Reasonable Force in Schools](#)

[Education Recovery Support](#)

[Equality Act 2010 Guidance](#)

Please also see Additional advice and support pages within KCSIE 2025 (pages 153 – 160)

Appendix 6

Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) – Code C

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) are aware of the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult when in contact with Police officers who suspect them of an offence.

PACE states that anyone who appears to be under 18, shall, in the absence of clear evidence that they are older, be treated as a child for the purposes

PACE also states that If at any time an officer has any reason to suspect that a person of any age may be vulnerable, then that person is entitled to be accompanied by an appropriate adult at any point.

The Designated Safeguarding (or deputy) will communicate any vulnerabilities known by the school to any police officer who wishes to speak to a pupil about an offence they may suspect. This communication will be recorded on CPOMS.

If having been informed of the vulnerabilities, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) does not feel that the officer is acting in accordance with PACE, they should ask to speak with a supervisor or contact 101 to escalate their concerns.

A person whom there are grounds to suspect of an offence must be cautioned¹ before questioned about an offence², or asked further questions if the answers they provide the grounds for suspicion, or when put to them the suspect's answers or silence, (i.e. failure or refusal to answer or answer satisfactorily) may be given in evidence to a court in a prosecution.

A Police Officer must not caution a juvenile or a vulnerable person unless the appropriate adult is present. If a child or a vulnerable person is cautioned in the absence of the appropriate adult, the caution must be repeated in the appropriate adult's presence.

The appropriate adult' means, in the case of a child:

1. the parent, guardian or, if the juvenile is in the care of a local authority or voluntary organisation, a person representing that authority or organisation.
2. a social worker of a local authority
3. failing these, some other responsible adult aged 18 or over who is not:
 - a. a police officer;
 - b. employed by the police;
 - c. under the direction or control of the chief officer of a police force; or
 - d. a person who provides services under contractual arrangements (but without being employed by the chief officer of a police force), to assist that force in relation to the discharge of its chief officer's functions,

Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - [PACE Code C 2019](#).

¹ The police caution is: *"You do not have to say anything. But it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in Court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence."*

² A person need not be cautioned if questions are for other necessary purposes, e.g.: (a) solely to establish their identity or ownership of any vehicle; to obtain information in accordance with any relevant statutory requirement; in furtherance of the proper and effective conduct of a search, e.g. to determine the need to search in the exercise of powers of stop and search or to seek co-operation while carrying out a search; or to seek verification of a written record.