Sydenham School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Approved by:	Full Governing Body	**Date:**	November 2026
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1. Safeguarding and Child Protection Structure at Sydenham School

Headteacher: Emma Wijnberg (DDSL)

Named personnel with designated responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection (CP)

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Eleanor George (AHT and DSL)	e.george@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs)	Nicole Brooks (DDSL) SLT: Lucy Hehir (DHT and DDSL KS4+Yr11) Hannah Coleridge (DHT and DDSL KS3+Yr9) Tessa Hall-Wright (AHT and DDSL Yr7) Sian Morrison (AHT and DDSL Yr8) Mark Freakes (AHT and DDSL Yr10) Shanti Healy (AHT and DDSL KS5)	n.brooks@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk l.hehir@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk h.coleridge@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk t.hallwright@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk s.morrison@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk m.freakes@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk s.healy@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk
Safeguarding Governors	Obi James	o.james@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Pat Cullen	p.cullen@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk

Legal Framework	▪ Children Act 1989 (as amended 2004 Section 52) ▪ Children Act 2004 ▪ Children Schools and Families Act 2010 ▪ Education Act 2002 s175/s157 ▪ The Teachers Standards' 2012 ▪ The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (section 26 The Prevent Duty) ▪ Equality Act 2010 ▪ Crime and Policing Act 2026 (regulated activity/DBS provisions) ▪ Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
Statutory Guidance	▪ Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026) ▪ Working Together to Safeguard Children (December 2026) ▪ Children who run away or go missing from home or care (January 2014) ▪ Prevent Duty Guidance: England and Wales (2023) ▪ SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 years (2015)
Department of Education and Local Advice and Guidance	▪ What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (March 2015) ▪ Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers (May 2024)

Related Policies	This policy should be read alongside the following other Sydenham School policies: • Complaints policy • Anti-bullying policy • Whistleblowing policy • SEND policy • Behaviour policy • Attendance policy including Children Missing from Education • Relationships and Sex Education policy • E Safety policy • Mobile Phone policy • Staff Code of Conduct • Staff Wellbeing policy • Student Wellbeing policy

2. Policy review dates

This policy and the procedures will be reviewed every academic year. All other linked policies will be reviewed in line with the policy review cycle.

The DSL will ensure that staff members are made aware of any amendments to policies and procedures.

Review Date	Changes made	By whom
September 2026	Updated in accordance with national guidance	Eleanor George Emma Wijnberg

3. Emergency Procedures

Referring a student to the police, FFCP (Family First Contact Point) (previously known as MASH- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) **or Children's Social Care:**

If you are worried about a child's immediate safety, call the police on 999 or 101.

When completing a Section 47 referral (serious concern), most local authorities request that we call and report the concerns *before* completing the paper or electronic referral form. Once the information is shared over the phone we then have up to 24 hours to complete the official form.

Please first check which borough the student lives in for any Child Protection concerns as you will need to contact the correct local authority safeguarding team or FFCP.

You should be prepared to provide the call handler with the following information:

- your details
- name, role and place of work
- contact details (work telephone number and e-mail address) and times when you will be available to be called back
- details of the designated safeguarding lead
- name, contact details (work telephone number and e-mail address)
- place of work
- the child's details
- name age/date of birth
- address
- parent/carer details.

If applicable, confirm that you have undertaken, or will undertake, safeguarding actions, as required by the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 document: Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

You will be given a reference number for the call; you should ensure that you document this in your records and pass on this information to the safeguarding leads.

In line with safeguarding best practice, you should contact the student and/or parents or carers as appropriate to explain the referral, why it is being made, and what it means.

However, if you believe that telling the student/parents/carers about the report may result in a risk of serious harm to the student or anyone else, or of the family fleeing the country, you should not discuss it. For more information, please see information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners – Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

If you are unsure or have concerns, you should discuss these with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. You can also ask for advice from the NSPCC, Childline 0800 1111 or police.

If you are sending any information to FFCP, it is best to email the document with password protection and mark as 'High Priority'.

If you need to know the name and details of a student's social worker, the safeguarding team can locate this on CPOMs.

3.1 Contact details for serious safeguarding/CP concerns

Family First Contact Point- FFCP for CP referrals (previously known as Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub – MASH). Duty is for out of hours referrals.

- **Lewisham FFCP:** 020 8314 6660 (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)
  Emergency Duty Team: 020 8314 6000 (Outside of Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)
  mashagency@lewisham.gov.uk
  Lewisham Council - Families First Contact Point (FFCP)

- **Bromley FFCP:** 0208 461 7373/7379 (Monday-Friday 8.30am-5pm)
  Emergency Duty Team: 0300 303 8671 (Outside Monday-Friday 8.30am-5pm)
  candfhub@bromley.gov.uk
  Bromley Children and Families Hub

- **Southwark FFCP:** 020 7525 1921 (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)
  Emergency Duty Team: 020 7525 5000 (Outside of Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)
  mash@southwark.gov.uk
  Report a child at risk | Southwark Council

- **Lambeth FFCP:** 020 7926 3100
  Emergency Duty Team: 020 7926 5555
  helpandprotection@lambeth.gov.uk
  Report concerns about a child | Lambeth Council

- **Greenwich FFCP:** 020 8921 3172
  Emergency Duty Team: 020 8854 8888
  Email: mash-referrals@royalgreenwich.gov.uk
  Report your concerns about a child | Royal Borough of Greenwich

- **Croydon FFCP**: 020 8255 2888 (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)
  Emergency Duty Team: 0208 726 6400 (Outside of Monday-Friday 9am-5pm)
  Email: mash@croydon.gov.uk OR SSD-EMERGENCY-DUTY-TEAM@croydon.gov.uk
  Concerned about a child? | Croydon Council

Once an emergency referral has been made, many local authorities will need their specific referral form to be completed within 24 hours of the initial contact. Please speak to the safeguarding team for instructions on how to do this or if at the weekend, ensure that you google the local authority website to find out how to do this.

3.2 Missing students

If a student goes missing during school or at the end of school, ensure that you inform police, parents/carers (and inform parents of CLA where Section 20 applies) and any social workers involved.

3.3 Radicalisation Concerns

(see Section 12.19)

Below are the details for specific concerns in Lewisham. Other borough details can be found on the website of the relevant borough.

Email: preventreferrals@met.pnn.police.uk
Email: Prevent@Lewisham.gov.uk
You can also contact your local police force or dial 101 (the non-emergency number).

The Department for Education has dedicated a telephone helpline (020 7340 7264) to enable staff and Governors to raise concerns relating to extremism directly. Concerns can also be raised by email to counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk. If a child is at immediate risk of harm or there is a security incident, the normal emergency procedures should be followed.

3.4 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The helpline number for young people to call or text anonymously about CSE is 116 000.
If you are aware that a child is at imminent risk or a crime is being committed, please contact the Police on emergency number 999. In less urgent cases you can contact the CSE specialist team at Lewisham Borough or phone 101 or email PL-CSE-Referrals@met.pnn.police.uk.

3.5 FGM concerns

(see Section 12.11)

The duty is a personal duty which requires the individual professional who becomes aware of the case to make a report to the police; the responsibility cannot be transferred. The only exception to this is if you know that another individual from your profession has already made a report; there is no requirement to make a second referral, so tell a member of the safeguarding team that you intend to make a referral; this should be done on the day of the concern.

It is recommended that you make a report orally by calling 101, the single non-emergency number. When you call 101, the system will determine your location and connect you to the police force covering that area. You will hear a recorded message announcing the police force you are being connected to. You will then be given a choice of which force to be connected to – the report must be made to the police force where the child resides, so you may then need to ask to be directed to that force. Explain that you are making a report under the FGM mandatory reporting duty.

Wherever possible, you should have a discussion with the child and/or their parents or carers

as appropriate, in advance of or in parallel to the report being made. Advice and support on how to talk to children and parents or carers about FGM is available in the multi-agency guidance on FGM.

3.6 Forced Marriage concerns
(see Section 12.12)

Call 020 7008 0151 and email fmu@fco.gov.uk
FFCP or 101.

3.7 CAMHS – Call the numbers below and ask for duty or call an ambulance:

Lewisham
020 3228 1000
Find out about CAMHS services for children and young people in Lewisham

Bromley
020 8315 4430
Our Services | Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust

Southwark
020 3228 7777
Find out about CAMHS services for children and young people in Southwark

Lambeth
020 3228 7370
Find out about CAMHS services for children and young people in Lambeth

Greenwich
0203 260 5211
Our services | Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust

Croydon
020 3228 0000
Find out about CAMHS services for children and young people in Croydon

4. Introduction

This policy applies to all adults, including Governors and volunteers, working in or on behalf of Sydenham School.

Safeguarding is the 'golden thread' that runs throughout our school.

At Sydenham School we have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of all pupils in our charge. We are committed to 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 children's mental and physical health or development and ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2026).

Sydenham School staff are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' as far as safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interest of the child.

We encourage a culture in which all staff believe safeguarding to be of the highest importance and understand that their vigilance is critical. We want all staff to feel confident to discuss their concerns with designated staff/Governors and have clear lines of protocol in place for how to do this.

At Sydenham School we explicitly teach pupils about safeguarding themselves in and outside of school, including online, through a broad and balanced curriculum. We establish and maintain a culture in which children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.

At Sydenham School we recognise that 'Adultification bias' is a form of racial prejudice where children of minority groups, typically Black children, are treated by adults as being more mature than they actually are. Actions committed by these children that would be deemed normal for child development are more likely to be treated as opportunities for discipline and children are more likely to be seen as having malicious intentions. A clear example of this bias in action is when a Black child is assumed to be older than their actual age. These perceptions could in turn perpetuate the maturity of Black children and the assumptions of adults can lead to these students experiencing harm and can lead to Black children are not receiving the safeguarding responses they need.

This can inadvertently send a clear message in terms of worth and value to children as to who is and is not perceived as worthy of support. This can then impact on how Black children view themselves and what they then identify and understand to be harmful. Ultimately, this type of behaviour normalises harm and feeds into the narrative that Black people can withstand any form of abuse.

Sydenham School has signed Lewisham's pledge to tackle race inequalities in school. We pledge to take actions that will address access and opportunity for all pupils, by highlighting inequalities and increasing awareness.

We commit to:

- Targeting ambitious outcomes for Black Caribbean heritage and Black and Minority Ethnic pupils
- Reducing exclusions of Black Caribbean heritage pupils of all ages
- Leaders and governors taking a whole school approach to tackling race inequality
- Transparent reporting and sharing of borough-wide data trends

- Working together in new ways and sharing good practice to tackle race inequality in our school cultures and curriculum
- Actively developing high quality relationships with Black Caribbean heritage and Black and Minority Ethnic
- pupils and their parents
- Improving Black representation in school leadership and governing bodies.

5. Aims:

The aims of Sydenham School are:

- To provide a caring environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected.
- To instill confidence so that students can trust adults and know how to approach staff if they are in difficulty.
- To raise awareness among all staff, both teaching and non- teaching, of the need to safeguard children through identification and prompt reporting of all possible cases of abuse.
- To ensure that rigorous systems of identification, reporting and monitoring are in place to protect all children from harm.
- To establish clear and effective channels of communication between staff, and to develop effective working relationships with all other agencies involved in safeguarding children including Children Social Care services, the police and health services.
- To ensure that all adults have appropriate checks and relevant safeguarding training completed before working with children.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with children have a responsibility to protect children.
At Sydenham School, there are, however key people within school who have specific responsibilities.

6.1 Role of our Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure that all policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are fully implemented, and followed by the staff.
- Work towards establishing and maintaining a culture in school where all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children. These concerns will be treated sensitively and proactively in line with the school's Whistle-blowing policy.
- Ensure that all relevant training for all staff and governors is up-to-date and reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff have read Part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education in full and have signed to acknowledge they have read and understood its contents.
- Ensure robust cover arrangements are in place for when the DSL (or a deputy) is not available, for example during term time absence, so that staff and Children's Social Care always know who to contact, including via a confidential shared mailbox.
- A designated Governor (Chair of Governors) is also identified.

6.2 Role of our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will:

- Have received the appropriate official training, which will be undertaken every two years, and obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses, including Prevent.
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's Safeguarding Policy and procedures, including new and part time staff. The DSL should ensure the school's policies are known and used appropriately.
- Deliver annual staff safeguarding training according to the needs of the team and/or in response to current practices.
- Ensure all staff have read and understood part 1 of KCSIE.
- Ensure the Safeguarding policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation may be made and the role and responsibility the school has in this.
- Liaise with agencies that support the child such as social care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Education Welfare Service and Educational Psychology service.
- Support or lead 'team around the family' (TAF) meetings and attend case conference reviews/ core group meetings.
- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as Early Help Assessments.
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate and secure records of all concerns and referrals.
- Have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a Child Protection Case Conference and a Child Protection Review Conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs/disability and young carers.
- Encourage a culture of listening to children among all staff.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and, when deciding whether to make a referral, liaise with the appropriate agencies.
- Refer all cases of suspected or alleged abuse or harm by a member of the school staff**,** colleague or volunteer known to work with children to the local authority children's social care and the LA Designated Officer (LADO)

- Ensure the school's safeguarding policy is reviewed annually, and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, working with the governing body regarding this.
- Where children leave the school or college (including in year transfers) the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. The DSL should ensure a copy of the file is kept for their own records.
- Ensure that safeguarding issues are regularly discussed at Governors, SLT and staff meetings.
- Ensure all members of the governing body have attend Safeguarding and Child protection (including online safety) training as part of their induction.
- Promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and school and college leadership staff.
- Be responsible when a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider. They will remain accountable for the safeguarding of that pupil and must ensure that the provider meets the pupil's needs.
- The DSL will be responsible when a school places a pupil with an alternative provision (AP) provider. As the school retains accountability for the pupil's safeguarding, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will meet with the alternative provision provider at least half-termly to ensure that the provider meets the pupil's needs.
- The DSL will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place).
- To meet weekly with SLT to discuss ongoing safeguarding and behaviour concerns.
- To meet half-termly with designated safeguarding link governor.
- A review of filtering and monitoring effectiveness must be carried out at least annually by the SLT lead responsible for filtering and monitoring, supported by the DSL and IT team. The review should confirm that filtering is working effectively across all internet-connected devices and relevant locations, with records of checks maintained.

6.3 Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body at Sydenham School, will ensure that:

- The school has a Safeguarding policy in place and that procedures are in accordance with statutory and Local Authority (LA) guidance.
- The Safeguarding policy is made available to parents.
- Safer recruitment procedures are used at all times, and all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers who work with children.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with responsibility for safeguarding is a member of the senior leadership team.
- All staff and governors have undertaken the appropriate safeguarding training.
- A nominated governor/s will have responsibility for liaising with the DSL, the LA and partner agencies.
- Oversee procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers that comply with guidance from the LA and locally agreed inter-agency procedures.
- Policies and procedures are reviewed annually.
- All members of the GB will have an Enhanced DBS check and a risk assessment to determine if a barred list check is required. **NB: It is illegal to conduct a barred list check for any person not in regulated activity.**
- The Chair of Governors oversees appropriately anonymised LADO referral information as well as managing investigations into allegations made against the Headteacher

The Designated Governor/s for Safeguarding at Sydenham School, will ensure that:

- Ensure all members of the governing body have attended Safeguarding and Child protection (including online safety) training as part of their induction.
- Ensure all staff attend yearly safeguarding training and have read all of part 1 of KCSIE.

- Report to the governing body the number of cases (without names or details) of child protection issues in the school.
- Ensure safeguarding policy is reviewed annually.
- To oversee procedures relating to allegations made against the Head Teacher.

6.4 Role of staff

All staff will:

- Fully comply with the school's policies and procedures
- Attend appropriate training
- Inform the DSL or DDSLs of any concerns without delay
- Be aware that safeguarding incidents occur every day and could happen anywhere. Individual staff could be the adult the child turns to share their worries. All staff should be alert to signs of abuse and where there is any matter of concern, they must tell the student that they are bound to share the information

7. Safeguarding Information for students

All students at Sydenham School are aware of a number of staff whom they can talk to. All students know that we have members of staff with responsibility for child protection and know who they are. We inform students of adults whom they might talk to, both in and out of school, their right to be listened to and heard, and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm.

Sydenham School is committed to ensuring that students are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe.

Our school will ensure that students are made aware that information can be found in their student planner, in posters throughout school, on our own website and through relevant organisations at the following:

- www.KOOTH.com
- www.nspcc.org.uk
- www.kidsmart.org.uk
- www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- www.childline.org.uk
- http://www.childnet.com

The School's arrangements for consulting with and listening to students are encouraged through a variety of means including Year and School Councils, the Prefect system, Peer Training and Support and through the development of Student Voice in the Curriculum. We make students aware of these arrangements by a range of means including relevant subject lessons, the assembly programme, through displays, meetings with students, residential events and questionnaires.

8. Partnership with Parents

The school shares a purpose with families to educate and keep children safe from harm and to have

their welfare promoted. This is explained to families during the introductory meeting before students start at the school.

We are committed to working with families positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents and carers are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents' and carers' rights to privacy and confidentiality. We a do not share sensitive information unless we have permission or it is necessary to do so in order to protect a child.

Sydenham School will share with parents and carers any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm. Should parents and carers have concerns, we encourage them to discuss these with their child's Head of Year in the first instance. We make parents and carers aware of our policy via the school website and the School's prospectus. Parents and carers are made aware that they can view this policy on req

9. Student Information

Our school will endeavour to keep up to date and to have accurate information in order to keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them. The school requires accurate and up to date information regarding:

- names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives
- names and contact details of all persons with **parental responsibility** (if different from above)
- emergency contact details (if different from above)
- details of any persons authorised to collect the child from school during the day (if different from above)
- any relevant court orders in place including those which affect any person's access to the child (e.g. Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions etc.)
- if the child is or has been on the Child Protection Register or subject to a Care Plan
- name and contact details of G.P.
- any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child.

The school will collate, store and agree access to this information, which is normally kept in the student's confidential file. The confidential files are kept securely, away from students' main school files and have limited access; there is a note on the main file if a confidential file is held. Staff must sign main school files in and out, and confidential files must always remain in the secure area.

10. Partnerships with others

Sydenham School recognises that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies that are partners in the Lewisham Safeguarding Children Partnership. Sydenham School works closely with many outside agencies; these include: Social Services, CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) and family intervention and support groups. There is a joint responsibility on all these agencies to share information to ensure the safeguarding of all children.

We will develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, including agencies providing early help services to children, the police and Children's Social Care.

We will ensure that relevant staff members participate in multi-agency meetings and forums, child protection conferences and core groups, to consider individual children.

We will participate in serious case reviews, other reviews and file audits as and when required to do so. We will ensure that we have a clear process for gathering the evidence required for reviews and audits, embedding recommendations into practice and completing required actions within agreed timescales.

11. Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures and Guidelines

All staff should identify students who would benefit from 'early help' either from interventions from within school, or from external agencies. These are the vulnerable students in school and so staff should be particularly mindful of students who are:

- SEND - Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities
- LAC – Looked After Children
- Children and young people living in poverty
- Excluded students, and those at risk of exclusion
- Students with behaviour and attendance issues
- Young carers
- Young people with mental health issues and medical needs.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed. It is very important that you report your concerns – you do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.

Further information can be found in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused. Advice for practitioners' March 2015 Child abuse concerns: guide for practitioners - GOV.UK

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Although the terms 'Safeguarding' and 'Child Protection' are often used interchangeably, they have different meanings. Safeguarding is what we do for all children, whilst Child Protection refers to the procedures we use for children at risk of significant harm or who have been harmed.

At Sydenham School, we fully recognise our responsibilities for child protection and strive to achieve an environment where children feel secure, supported and valued within and beyond the school gate.

We recognise that some children may be victims of neglect, exploitation, and/or physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Such harm can occur within the home, outside the home, or online. Staff at school, through their daily contact with and knowledge of the children in their care, are well placed to identify signs of abuse or exploitation, provide support, and take appropriate action to safeguard children in need.

All child protection concerns and referrals will be handled sensitively, professionally, and with appropriate confidentiality, ensuring information is shared only with those who need it to safeguard the child. Confidentiality will never be a barrier to reporting or referring concerns, as safeguarding responsibilities take precedence over data protection requirements, including GDPR.

All actions will prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child.

What is Child Protection?

Child Protection is one very important aspect of safeguarding. It refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm. Safeguarding, in addition to Child Protection, encompasses issues such as student health and safety, bullying/cyber-bullying and appropriate medical provision. These areas have specific policies and guidance which should be read in conjunction with this document.

What is significant harm?

The Children's Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention by statutory agencies in family life in the best interests of children. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Sometimes it might be a single traumatic event but more often it is a compilation of significant events which damage the child's physical and psychological development. Decisions about significant harm are complex and require discussion with the statutory agencies.

Responsibilities

The responsibility for child safeguarding falls on everybody who is employed at Sydenham School**.** All adults who work at Sydenham School are expected to support the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, with overall responsibility falling on the Headteacher. All staff, including volunteers have a statutory obligation to report to the DSL if there is suspicion of abuse, neglect and exploitation of a child or if a child discloses abuse or allegations of abuse.

11.1 Recognising abuse

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

Abuse, neglect, and exploitation are all forms of maltreatment that can severely impact a child's well-being. Abuse involves actively causing harm, such as hitting a child, while neglect refers to failing to protect a child from harm, such as leaving a small child home alone or placing dangerous objects like knives or matches within reach of an unattended toddler. Exploitation, another serious form of maltreatment, involves taking advantage of a child for personal gain, which can include forcing them into labour, engaging them in illegal activities, or subjecting them to sexual abuse. Each of these forms of maltreatment can have devastating effects on a child's physical, emotional, and psychological health.

There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

Physical abuse

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

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

Emotional abuse may include **verbal abuse**, such as persistent criticism, belittling, humiliation, rejection, intimidation or name-calling. It may also involve age- or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, including interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, overprotection, limiting opportunities to explore and learn, or preventing participation in normal social interaction.

Emotional abuse may include seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person, including domestic abuse. It may also involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child.

Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of child maltreatment, although it may also occur in isolation.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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 mental and/or physical health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect

may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment; failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care-takers; or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
(Definitions taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children)

Exploitation

Child exploitation encompasses various forms of abuse and maltreatment, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, trafficking, and the use of children in illicit activities such as drug trafficking (County Lines). It also involves the manipulation or coercion of children into performing activities that are harmful to their physical, mental, or emotional development.

Bullying

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. Bullying can have a significant and lasting impact on a child's emotional wellbeing and mental health. While suicide is rarely caused by a single factor, evidence shows that bullying, including online bullying, can be a contributing factor in some child deaths by suicide. Staff should remain alert to signs of bullying, distress, self-harm, or suicidal thoughts and respond promptly in line with safeguarding procedures.

All incidences of bullying should be reported and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents receive a copy of the anti-bullying procedures on joining the school and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. In the event that there is a possibility the bullying may be linked to abuse/, the Headteacher and the DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.

11.2 Indicators of abuse and what you might see

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 person.

Remember, it is the responsibility of all staff members, volunteers and contractors to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been harmed or abused.

A child who is being harmed, abused, neglected and/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 or arrive late
- 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.
- Unexplained fear, anxiety, depression, or aggression.
- Unexplained increase in social media activity, especially at odd hours
- Presence of an older boyfriend/girlfriend or adult friend.
- Evidence of expensive gifts, money, or possessions without clear explanation.
- Regularly missing school or unexplained changes in school performance.
- Extreme secrecy or privacy, especially regarding online activities
- Low self-esteem or self-worth.
- Self-harm or suicidal tendencies

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed. It is very important that staff, volunteers and/or contractors report *all* concerns even if there is no 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk. (**See Appendix C for guidance of how to report a concern using the CPOMS system**.)

11.3 Taking action

There are four key steps to follow to help staff identify and respond appropriately to possible abuse and/or neglect.

1. Be alert
2. Question behaviours
3. Ask for help
4. Refer

It may not always be appropriate to go through all four stages sequentially, if a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, the DSL must refer to the police or social care without delay, so it is important staff share any concerns in a timely manner to ensure children are safe.

Staff members working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

When worried about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child and report any concerns as per Sydenham School procedures as set out below.

Staff concerns about a child/young person's wellbeing is likely to be based on:

a) Something the child/young person/parent/carer has told you
b) Something you have noticed about the child's behaviour, health, or appearance
c) Something another professional said or did.

Even if staff think their concern is minor, it is always their responsibility to share concerns no matter how small. The DSL may have more information that, together with what staff have shared, represents a more serious worry about a child. It is never up to a staff member to make their decision alone on how

to respond to concerns.

1. Use the LEARN booklet to support you when discussing concerns with a student (ask the DSL or DDSLs for a copy if you do not have one. It can also be found in the library section of CPOMS or in the Safeguarding CPD folder on Teams).
2. Let the child/young person/parent/carer know what you plan to do next if you have heard a disclosure of abuse or you are talking with them about your concerns. Do not promise to keep what s/he tells you secret.
3. Inform the DSL immediately. If the DSL is not available, inform a DDSL. If they are not available, speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If they are not available, you must make the referral yourself.
4. Make a written record as soon as possible after the event on CPOMs, as shown in **Appendix C**.

11.4 If you suspect a child is at risk of harm

There will be occasions when staff suspect that a child may be at serious risk, but have no 'real' evidence. The child's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be concerning or other physical but inconclusive signs. In these circumstances, staff will always try to give the child the opportunity to talk. The signs noticed may be due to a variety of factors and it is wholly appropriate to ask the child if they are alright or if you can help in any way.
Staff can use the LEARN booklet to support them in these conversations (ask the DSL or deputy for a copy if you do not have one. It can also be found in in the Safeguarding Info for whole staff folder in the Sydenham Whole Staff Team).

Record these early concerns on CPOMS, as shown in **Appendix C**. If the student does begin to reveal that they are being harmed you should follow the advice in the section 'If a child discloses to you'.

If, following the conversation, staff remain concerned, they should discuss your concerns with the DSL or DDSL.

11.5 If a child discloses information to you

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being neglected and or 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.

If a child talks to any member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing it is very important that staff let them know that they **must** pass the information on. Under **no circumstances** should staff

keep any secrets for children. Instead staff will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality.

A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- Being the sole person responsible for a student's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the student in question
- The support put in place for the student will be dependent on other members of staff being informed
- The support put in place for the student might require input/action from external agencies

Staff should always share disclosures by logging the concerns on CPOMS. This will inform the students' Head of Year, Pastoral Manager, SLT year link, Nicole Brooks (DDSL) and Eleanor George (DSL and mental health lead). If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

Before sharing information disclosed by a student with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the student and explain:

- Who they will share the information with
- What information they will share
- Why they need to share that information

Staff will attempt to receive consent from the student to share their information, but the safety of the student comes first.

Process for managing confidentiality around disclosures

1. Student makes a disclosure
2. Member of staff offers support
3. Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with the safeguarding team
4. Member of staff will attempt to get the student's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the student who the information will be shared with and why
5. Member of staff will record the disclosure on CPOMS
6. A member of the safeguarding team will inform the parent/carer (if appropriate)
7. Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis

During a conversation with the student staff should:

- Allow them to speak freely
- Remain calm and do not overreact – the student may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting you
- 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'
- Don't be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the student
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened,
- whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the student's family thinks about all this
- At an appropriate time tell the student that in order to help them you must pass the information on
- Do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused
- Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing' as the student may interpret it that they have done something wrong

- Tell the student what will happen next. They may agree to go with you to see the DSL. Otherwise let them know that someone will come to see them before the end of the day
- Report verbally to the DSL or DDSL in person straight away
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible on CPOMS by adding an incident. See **Appendix C**.
- Seek support if you feel distressed.

At Sydenham School, all safeguarding concerns are recorded using CPOMS by adding an incident. All details can be recorded on this online tool and only key safeguarding staff have access to the records unless it is deemed necessary for other staff members to be aware.

All information should be treated as confidential and particular care taken with sensitive information. The safeguarding team will share issues concerning students, with selected staff on a 'need to know' basis. Where the concerns are confidential, staff may be alerted that the student is particularly vulnerable at that time.

11.6 Notifying parents and carers

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

However, if the school believes that notifying parents/carers could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, then advice will first be sought from Children's Social Care.

11.7 Referral to Children's Social Care

The DSL, or DDSL with agreement from the DSL, will make a referral to Children's Social Care if it is believed that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The child (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents or carers will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child. (See **Section 3** for details on how this referral can be made).

11.8 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 child and staff involved but also to ensure that being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

We will ensure that staff are confident about what they can and should do under the law, including how to obtain consent to share information and when information can be shared without consent.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Leads, Headteacher or Chair of Governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Child protection and safeguarding information will be collected, stored, shared and retained in accordance with the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)**, the **Data Protection Act 2018**, the **Data (Use and Access) Act 2025**, and the statutory guidance **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)**.

The school recognises that effective safeguarding relies upon the lawful and proportionate sharing of information. Personal information will only be shared where it is necessary, proportionate and lawful to

do so in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Child protection records will be:

- processed lawfully, fairly and transparently;
- collected for specified, explicit and legitimate safeguarding purposes;
- adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary;
- accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;
- retained only for as long as is necessary in accordance with statutory requirements and the school's retention schedule;
- processed in accordance with individuals' data protection rights, except where safeguarding legislation or the public interest requires information to be shared; and
- stored securely, with access restricted to those who have a legitimate safeguarding need to know.

In line with KCSIE 2026, the school recognises that cyber security is part of its safeguarding responsibilities. Governors and school leaders will take reasonable measures to protect personal information, in line with the Cyber Security Standards for Schools and Colleges, so that a cyber-incident, data breach or system failure does not compromise the safety of pupils or the school's ability to monitor and respond to safeguarding concerns.

Record of concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Every effort should be made to prevent unauthorised access and sensitive information should not be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. If it is necessary to store child protection information on portable media, such as a CD or flash drive, these items should also be kept in locked storage. Child protection information will be stored separately from the child's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of GDPR, 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 child or parent to see child protection records, they should refer the request to the head teacher.

GDPR principles do not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child. When information is shared, the reason for doing so as well as the reasons why consent may not have been sought, will be clearly documented within the child protection records.

Information will be shared in accordance with the principles set out in **Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers (May 2024).**

When a child leaves the school (including in year transfers) their Child Protection files will be copied with the copies archived and stored securely for 7 years and the original securely packaged and transferred by hand or secure delivery to the new school. The designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. The DSL should ensure a copy of the file is kept for their own records.

The school's policy on confidentiality and information-sharing is available to parents and children on request.

11.9 Early Help and Family Thrive

Sydenham School is committed to identifying children and families who may benefit from early support and providing help as soon as concerns emerge. Early intervention can prevent needs from escalating and improve outcomes for children and young people.

The school follows Lewisham's Multi-Agency Threshold Guidance, which is based on the London Continuum of Need and the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026). The guidance assists practitioners in assessing a child's level of need and ensuring children and families receive the right support at the right time.

The four levels of need are:

- **Level 1 – Universal Needs:** Children whose needs are met through universal services.
- **Level 2 – Additional Needs:** Children and families who would benefit from early help to prevent needs from escalating.
- **Level 3 – Complex Needs:** Children and families requiring coordinated multi-agency support through targeted early help (Family Help) or other specialist services.
- **Level 4 – Acute Need:** Children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm and require statutory intervention from Children's Social Care.

Community-Based Early Help

Community-based early help is available to all children, young people and families who require additional support before problems escalate. This support is provided through universal and community services and may include:

- schools and educational settings;
- health visitors, school nurses and primary healthcare;
- children's centres and family hubs;
- youth services;
- parenting programmes;
- community and voluntary sector organisations; and
- other local support services.

Where a child's needs can be met through community-based services, the school will work collaboratively with families and partner agencies to ensure appropriate support is accessed at the earliest opportunity.

Targeted Early Help (Family Help)

Where a child or family's needs are more complex, persistent or require coordinated support from several agencies, a referral may be made for Targeted Early Help (Family Help).

In Lewisham, Family Help provides consent-based, targeted support for children, young people and families whose needs cannot be met through community-based early help alone but who do not meet the threshold for statutory Children's Social Care intervention.

Family Help practitioners work with children, families and partner agencies to:

- undertake a Family Help (Early Help) Assessment;
- identify strengths, needs and desired outcomes with the family;
- coordinate a multi-agency plan of support;
- act as the Lead Practitioner where appropriate;
- convene and chair Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings;
- provide direct work with children, young people and parents/carers;
- support families to build resilience and sustain positive change; and
- regularly review progress to ensure support remains proportionate to the child's needs.

The school will actively participate in Family Help assessments, Team Around the Family meetings and review meetings, sharing relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children.

Working with Parents and Carers

Where appropriate, the school will discuss concerns with parents or carers before making a referral for community-based early help or Targeted Early Help (Family Help), seeking their consent and encouraging their participation in the assessment and planning process.

However, safeguarding the welfare of the child is paramount. Where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm, or where seeking consent would place the child at increased risk or compromise a safeguarding enquiry, the school will share information and make referrals without consent in accordance with statutory safeguarding guidance and local multi-agency procedures.

Reviewing Early Help

Where an Early Help or Family Help assessment is in place, the school will contribute to multi-agency planning and review meetings. The support plan will be reviewed regularly to consider progress, identify any changes in need and determine whether support should:

- continue;
- be increased through Targeted Early Help (Family Help) or statutory services; or
- be stepped down to community-based early help or universal services once outcomes have been achieved.

If, at any stage, there is evidence that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will make an immediate referral to Lewisham Children's Social Care in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

11.10 Team around the School (TAS)

TAS is a local network consisting of schools and other family support services that meet on a regular basis (each term) to have a shared conversation about children and young people that we may be worried about and that early help and intervention may stop concerns escalating. Individuals from a range of different agencies working together to pool resources come together, to provide support to families that is outcome driven, focused on solutions and helps the family to become more resilient to prevent a child or young person requiring complex/acute support in the future.

Schools facilitate the TAS, identifying the children and young people and complete the TAS Referral form to facilitate discussion. Parents do not attend these meetings, however, need to consent to their information being shared. The TAS will ensure their views and wishes are expressed and considered in any discussion. During the TAS meeting, the school and partner agencies will explore how best to support the child, young person and family to achieve clear outcomes, sustainable change, and prevent them requiring complex and acute support in the future.

The focus is early intervention for children, young people and their families who have an unmet need but who don’t require specialist services; ensuring that early help support is getting to families as early as possible.

11.11 Lewisham FFCP Referral Process/Reporting directly to child protection agencies

Referrals to Children’s Social Care are only made for children with needs at Levels 3 or 4 of the Continuum of Need. This is determined where children are identified as requiring specialist services in order to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development or to prevent significant

impairment of their mental and/or physical health and development and/or who are disabled. They may require longer term intervention from specialist services. In some cases, these children's needs may be secondary to the adults needs. This is the threshold for an assessment led by Children's Social Care under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 although the assessments and services required may come from a range of provision outside of Children's Social Care.

Staff with concerns 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 DSL, DDSLs, the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the child's safety.

As advised in KCSIE 2026 the DSL (including any deputies) should liaise with the three safeguarding partners in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children and NSPCC – When to call the Police

Making a Lewisham FFCP request

If, as a professional, staff have safeguarding concerns or are requesting additional targeted early help, they can use the online FFCP request form after reading the below information.

Please note that residents and other members of the public can still make referrals in person or over the phone.

All requests that come through the FFCP will be triaged by the Lewisham multi-agency team and staff may be contacted by a professional representing the school to discuss your request.

Before you make a request

The following information will help to determine if it is necessary to make a FFCP request, and which part of the FFCP request form to use:

- Lewisham's Threshold Guidance will help to assess the level of support needed or risks present. Professionals should refer to this guidance before making a FFCP request. This, along with some brief guidance, can be found on the FFCP webpage and the Lewisham Safeguarding Children Partnership website, links below.
- If staff believe a child and their family need some additional support this should be **discussed with the family first** and agree who is best placed to provide that support. An Early Help assessment can help to get a full picture of the family's situation and plan how to meet that need.
- If it is believed a child or family has needs at the targeted level, which are not being met by services currently involved with the family, the form can be completed to **request help and support** from the FFCP.
- If a professional working with a child requires supporting information from Children's Social Care (e.g. CAFCASS, probation, housing conducting statutory safeguarding checks, assessments), use the form to **request supporting information.**
- If there is any worry that a child is at risk of significant harm through abuse or neglect, staff should call the FFCP immediately on 020 8314 6660 to discuss their concerns and then use the form to **request child protection** from the FFCP.

FFCP / Early Help Consultation Service

To help professionals make the most informed decisions the FFCP and Early Help Team will provide a

professionals' advice line. This will be available for consultation from 9am – 5pm.

Where the child may need help and protection they will be given advice and guidance about making a referral, including how to involve parents/carers. Professionals will also receive guidance on the need for parental consent and recorded clarification needed as to why consent was overridden.

During consultation professionals, should:

- Be clear about their concern and what is needed from the consultation
- Clearly identify what their organisation has already done about the concern and the impact of this
- Seek clarification where there are any uncertainties about what is involved
- In the case of the outcome of consultation being to make a referral, discuss the appropriateness of not seeking, or overriding parental consent.

The Consultation Service aims to:

- Offer quick access via the telephone to Children's Safeguarding and Social Care advice
- Provide advice on Children's Safeguarding and Social Care threshold decision making i.e. S17 or S47 of the CA 1989
- Improve information sharing about universal and target services providing early help
- Allow professionals the opportunity to talk through situations (hypothetically if necessary) of concern to help determine an appropriate response, without the need for formal referral. This advice will be recorded to provide an audit trail.

How the Consultation Service works

- Consultation will be offered by FFCP social worker/ Early Help team and their professional partners for all professionals seeking advice about children who they are concerned about
- To undertake a consultation, professionals should telephone the FFCP/ Early Help team on 020 8314 6660. Professionals have the option to speak with their own service colleagues co-located in the FFCP; who in turn will always be able to seek advice and guidance from social workers
- When concerns are raised about a child (ren) the FFCP/ Early Help hub will record the consultation as a contact on the EHM database checking the child's details to ensure appropriate identification. An analysis of need, harm and risk issues will be carried out to provide early action, diversion or intervention to the child and family. Consent on these cases will always be recorded and considered
- Where professionals simply seek advice and or guidance on cases they feel stuck with, the FFCP or Early help staff member who provides the consultation will send an email as a follow up action and with the advice recorded. It is expected that the contacting professional follow the record keeping and information guidelines for their own agency, to record that they have held a consultation. With hypothetical queries the FFCP/ Early Help team will not contact the family but do expect professionals to discuss any concerns they have with the individuals who have parental responsibility for the child
- Professionals and their agencies are not obliged to follow the advice offered. However, staff within the FFCP/ Early Help team will escalate concerns in line with the London Safeguarding Children Procedures where they feel safeguarding activity is required and advice is not followed
- If following consultation more information becomes known or the situation changes, a professional can seek further clarity by calling the consultation line at any time
- Alternatively, if they feel that the response they have received does not meet the needs of

the child/family or leaves a child at risk of harm, they can still make a referral in the usual way or escalate their concerns through their organisation's safeguarding process.

Using the Local Children Safeguarding Partnership (LSCP) Thresholds for Intervention guidance

The Lewisham Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) has developed a document following consultation with partners in October, for professionals to determine the levels of need when making a judgement and assessment of the child and their family. This document provides advice and guidance regarding the level of support and intervention children and their families may require.

Before making a referral to the FFCP, professionals should consider if the needs identified can be met within their own agency, or by other professionals already involved with the family. This is usually relevant for children who have universal or additional needs and this is often referred to as Level 1 or 2 support as demonstrated in the Thresholds Guidance available on the Lewisham FFCP website.

Professionals should seek to discuss any concerns they have with the parents/carers who have parental responsibility, are caring for the child by way of private fostering arrangements (or under a statutory regulation) and inform them that they are making a referral to the FFCP when new safeguarding concerns arise or no change is affected within existing plans. This should only be done where such discussions will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm or cause any significant delay.

The Thresholds for Intervention Guidance can be accessed here.

Identifying a child in need of help/ support or protection

A referral to the FFCP should be made when a child or family needs are identified as requiring Level 3 or 4 support. Additional information including the link to the online request form can be found on the Lewisham FFCP webpage:

Lewisham Council - Families First Contact Point (FFCP)

Contact: Family First Contact Point (FFCP) Tel: 020 8314 6660

Email: mashagency@lewisham.gov.uk

Opening hours: Monday–Friday 9am–5pm.

If you have concerns about the welfare of a child outside these hours, please contact the emergency duty team on 020 8314 6000 and ask to speak to the out-of-hours duty social worker.

11.12 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

At Sydenham School we believe that all our pupils should be kept safe from harm. FGM affects girls particularly from north African countries, including Egypt, Sudan, Somalia and Sierra Leone.

It is illegal in the United Kingdom to allow girls to undergo female genital mutilation either in this country or abroad. People guilty of allowing FGM to take place are punished by fines and up to fourteen years in prison.

At Sydenham School we have a duty to report concerns we have about girls at risk of FGM to the police and social services.

FGM occurs mainly in Africa and to a lesser extent, in the Middle East and Asia. Although it is believed by many to be a religious issue, it is a cultural practice. There are no health benefits.

Communities particularly affected by FGM in the UK include girls from:
Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea, Yemen, Indonesia and Afghanistan.

In the UK, FGM tends to occur in areas with larger populations of communities who practice FGM, such as first-generation immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. These areas include: London, Cardiff, Manchester, Sheffield, Northampton, Birmingham, Oxford, Crawley, Reading, Slough and Milton Keynes. In England and Wales, 23,000 girls under 15 could be at risk of FGM.

Key Points:

- Not a religious practice
- Occurs mostly to children aged from 5 – 8 years old, but up to around 15
- Criminal offence in UK since 1985
- Offence since 2003 to take children abroad for this reason
- Criminal penalties include up to 14 years in prison.

Reasons for this cultural practice include:

- Cultural identity – An initiation into womanhood
- Gender Identity – Moving from girl to woman – perceived enhanced femininity
- Sexual control – reduce the woman's desire for sex
- Hygiene/cleanliness – unmutilated women are regarded as unclean.

Risk Factors include:

- low level of integration into UK society
- mother or sister who has undergone FGM
- children who are withdrawn from PSHE
- a visiting female elder from the country of origin
- being taken on a long holiday to the family's country of origin
- talk about a 'special' event or procedure to 'become a woman'.

High Risk Time

This procedure often takes place in the summer, as the recovery period after FGM can be 6 to 9 weeks. Schools should be alert to the possibility of FGM as a reason why a child in a high-risk group is absent from school or where the family request an 'authorised absence' for just before or just after the summer school holidays. Although, it is difficult to identify children before FGM takes place, where children from these high-risk groups return from a long period of absence with symptoms of FGM, advice should be sought from the police or social services.

Post-FGM Symptoms include:

- difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet
- unusual behaviour after a lengthy absence
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations
- asking for help but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

Longer Term problems include:

- difficulties urinating or incontinence
- frequent or chronic vaginal, pelvic or urinary infections
- menstrual problems
- kidney damage and possible failure
- cysts and abscesses
- pain when having sex
- infertility
- complications during pregnancy and childbirth
- emotional and mental health problems.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 sets out a duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a child under 18. In schools, this will usually come from a disclosure.

Teachers have a legal duty to personally report known cases of female genital mutilation (FGM) on girls under 18 to the police, and should also discuss any such cases with the DSL (Eleanor George) and Children's Social Care. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases.

At Sydenham School, if we have concerns about FGM, we will discuss these with the young person concerned, and parents/carers where appropriate, before taking any further action. In cases where it is deemed likely that discussing preliminary concerns with the family may put a child(ren) at risk of any kind, we may not discuss this with parents/carers before reporting to the relevant authorities.

11.13 Forced Marriage/Honour Based Abuse

It is now a criminal offence for any person to cause a child to enter into marriage before their 18th Birthday, whether or not they used violence, threats or any other form of coercion or deception. A child who is being forced into marriage is at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Significant harm is defined as a situation where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, a degree of physical, sexual and / or emotional harm (through abuse or neglect), which is so harmful that there needs to be compulsory intervention by child protection agencies into the life of the child and their family.

The reasons given by parents/carers who force their children to marry include protecting their children, building stronger families, strengthening family links, protecting family honour (e.g. promiscuity or homosexuality), retaining or acquiring wealth, appeasement etc.

Suspicions that a child may be forced into marriage may arise in a number of ways, including:

- A family history of older siblings leaving education early and marrying early;
- Depressive behaviour including self-harming and attempted suicide;
- Unreasonable restrictions such as being kept at home by their parents/carers ('house arrest') or being unable to complete their education;
- A child being in conflict with their parents/carers;

- A child going missing / running away;
- A child always being accompanied including to school and doctors' appointments;
- A child talking about an upcoming family holiday that they are worried about, fears that they will be taken out of education and kept abroad; or
- A child directly disclosing that they are worried they will be forced to marry.

Information about a forced marriage may come from one of the child's peer group, a relative or member of the child's local community, from another professional or when other family issues are addressed, such as domestic violence between parents/carers.

Situations where a child fears being forced into marriage have similarities with both domestic violence and honour-based abuse. Forced marriage may involve the child being taken out of the country (trafficked) for the ceremony, is likely to involve non-consensual and/or underage sex, and refusal to go through with a forced marriage has sometimes been linked to so-called 'honour killing'.

Professionals should respond in a similar way to forced marriage as with domestic violence and honour-based abuse (i.e. in facilitating disclosure, developing individual safety plans, ensuring the child's safety by according them confidentiality in relation to the rest of the family, completing individual risk assessments etc). Never attempt to intervene directly as a school or through a third party.

11.14 Domestic Abuse (DV)

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional.

In extreme cases this could include murder.

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

11.14.1 Children and young people witnessing domestic abuse

Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse. Living in a home where domestic abuse happens can have a serious impact on a child or young person's mental and physical wellbeing, as well as their behaviour. Children living in a home where domestic abuse is happening are at risk of other types of abuse too. Children can experience domestic abuse or violence in lots of different ways. They might:

- see the abuse
- hear the abuse from another room
- see a parent or carer's injuries or distress afterwards

- be hurt by being nearby or trying to stop the abuse.

11.14.2 Adolescents experiencing domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can happen in any relationship, and it affects young people too.

They may not realise that what's happening is abuse. Even if they do, they might not tell anyone about it because they're scared of what will happen, or ashamed about what people will think.

It's often difficult to tell if domestic abuse is happening, because it usually takes place in the family home and abusers can act very differently when other people are around.

Children who witness domestic abuse may:

- become aggressive
- display anti-social behaviour
- suffer from depression or anxiety
- not do as well at school - due to difficulties at home or disruption of moving to and from refuges.

Where potential cases of Domestic Abuse are identified, the school will conduct an assessment using the Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment (DASH) Risk Indicator Checklist. If a case causes enough concern following this assessment, the DSL will make the necessary referral(s) on to other appropriate agencies.

11.14.3 Operation Encompass

At Sydenham School we are working in partnership with the Metropolitan Police and Lewisham Children's Services to identify and provide appropriate support to students who have experienced domestic violence in their household; this scheme is called Operation Encompass.

The purpose of Operation Encompass is to safeguard and support children and young people who have been involved in or witness to a domestic abuse incident. Domestic abuse impacts on children in a number of ways. Children are at increased risk of physical injury during an incident, either by accident or because they attempt to intervene. Even when not directly injured, children are greatly distressed by witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent/carer.

Encompass has been created to address this situation. It is the implementation of key partnership working between the police and schools. The aim of sharing information with local schools is to allow 'Key Adults' the opportunity of engaging with the child and to provide access to support that allows them to remain in a safe but secure familiar environment.

In order to achieve this, the Lewisham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub will share police information of all domestic incidents where one of our students has been present, with the DSL. On receipt of any information, the DSL will decide on the appropriate support the child requires, this could be silent or overt dependent on the needs and wishes of the child. All information sharing and resulting actions will be undertaken in accordance with the Metropolitan Police and Lewisham FFCP Encompass Protocol Data Sharing Agreement. We will record this information and store this information in accordance with the record keeping procedures outlined in this policy.

The purpose and procedures in Operation Encompass have been shared with all parents/carers and Governors, is detailed as part of the school's Safeguarding Policy and published on our school website.

At Sydenham School our Key Adult is Eleanor George (DSL).

11.15 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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.

This involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

A common feature of CSE is that the child or young person does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see themselves as a victim of exploitation. This means that they are unlikely to report the abuse so police and partners must be alert to the signs of CSE and actively look for victims. CSE can also occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post images on the internet/ mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

Staff should be aware of the key indicators of children being sexually exploited which can include:

- going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late;
- regularly missing school or education or not taking part in education;
- appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- associating with other young people involved in exploitation;
- having older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- suffering from sexually transmitted infections;
- mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing;
- drug and alcohol misuse; and
- displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour.

Staff should also be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation do not recognise themselves as such.

There are three main types of child sexual exploitation:

<u>Inappropriate relationships:</u>

Usually involves just one abuser who has inappropriate power – physical, emotional or financial – or control over a young person. The young person may believe they have a genuine friendship or loving relationship with their abuser.

Boyfriend/Girlfriend:

Abusers groom victims by striking up a normal relationship with them, giving them gifts and meeting in cafés or shopping centres. A seemingly consensual sexual relationship develops but later turns abusive. Victims may be required to attend parties and sleep with multiple men/women and threatened with violence if they try to seek help.

If colleagues have concerns about any students at risk of CSE, they should ensure that their concerns are passed promptly on to the DSL so that a referral is made to the Concerns Hub. Any school can complete the referral form (Appendix J) by sending a request to: PLMailbox-ConcernHub@met.police.uk

11.16 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity:

- In exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- The financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or
- Through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

If colleagues have concerns regarding any students at risk of CCE, they should ensure that their concerns are passed promptly on to the DSL.

11.17 County Lines

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move (and store) 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, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations.

Staff should be aware of some of the key indicators of children who are involved in county lines, including:

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education or not taking part in education
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in county lines
- Having older friends
- Mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing, and
- Drug and/or alcohol misuse.

If colleagues have concerns about any students at risk of county lines, they should ensure that their concerns are passed promptly to the DSL so that a referral is made to the Concerns Hub. Any school can complete the referral form by sending a request to PLMailbox-ConcernHub@met.police.uk

11.18 Organised exploitation and trafficking

Trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation and exploitation of women and children for the purposes of prostitution and domestic servitude across international borders and within countries.

Victims are trafficked through criminal networks – often between towns and cities – and forced or coerced into sex. They may also be used to recruit new victims. This serious organised activity can involve the buying and selling of young people.

Also, modern slavery encompasses human trafficking, as defined in the UN Palermo Protocol and the Council of Europe Convention and as made illegal in UK legislation under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act 2004. It also includes cases of slavery and servitude as made illegal in the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, which criminalises holding a person in slavery or servitude or requiring a person to perform forced or compulsory labour. When referring to modern slavery, it encompasses all of the forms of human trafficking, slavery and servitude that have been defined in national and international laws and agreements.

Signs that a child has been trafficked may not be obvious but you might notice unusual behaviour or events. These include a child who:

- spends a lot of time doing household chores
- rarely leaves their house, has no freedom of movement and no time for playing
- is orphaned or living apart from their family, often in unregulated private foster care
- lives in substandard accommodation
- isn't sure which country, city or town they're in
- is unable or reluctant to give details of accommodation or personal details
- might not be registered with a school or a GP practice
- has no documents or has falsified documents
- has no access to their parents/carers
- is seen in inappropriate places such as brothels or factories
- possesses unaccounted for money or goods
- is permanently deprived of a large part of their earnings, required to earn a minimum amount of money every day or pay off an exorbitant debt
- has injuries from workplace accidents
- gives a prepared story which is very similar to stories given by other children.

Our procedures for responding to concerns about students at risk of or victims of modern slavery are informed by the statutory DfE guidance 'Care of unaccompanied migrant child and child victims of modern slavery', published in November 2017. All concerns about students who may be being trafficked should be passed straight to the DSL.

11.19 Child on Child abuse

Child on child abuse can take many forms including physical (including hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling etc.), sexual (e.g., inappropriate touching) and emotional abuse (including bullying & cyberbullying). Department for Education (DfE).

KCSIE 2026 highlights misogyny as a significant safeguarding risk, recognising its escalatory nature and

its role as a contributing factor in harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence between children. Staff should be alert to misogynistic attitudes and language, including those linked to online content, and should not dismiss this as harmless 'banter'. Concerns of this nature should be reported to the DSL so that early, preventative action can be taken before behaviours escalate.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 statutory guidance for schools and colleges, makes it clear that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or part of 'growing up'. At Sydenham School there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment and it is never acceptable and it will not be tolerated.

The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision was a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. This requires the school to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Child on child abuse often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they abuse to defend themselves. This imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways. It may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), or social (e.g., isolating or excluding someone). It could also include issues such as revenge porn or what are often gender issues (e.g., girls being touched or boys being involved in initiation activities).

At Sydenham School we believe that all children have the right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students.

We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a child's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti- bullying procedures. In particular, research suggests that up to 30 per cent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18.

Child Protection issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a student, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- is made against an older student and refers to their behaviour towards a younger student or a more vulnerable student
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other students in the school
- indicates that other students may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student.

The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. KCSIE 2026 defines one form of child on child abuse described as “upskirting”, which typically involves “taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm”.

At Sydenham School, we are committed to supporting victims of child-on-child abuse by adhering to the DfE guidance in KCSIE 2026. All victims will be reassured that they will be taken seriously and this includes abuse which has taken place outside of school or online. In instances of harmful sexual behaviours between children, child protection procedures will be followed, and staff must follow the guidance on ‘if a child discloses to you’ including the LEARN booklet. Where there has been a report of sexual violence the DSL (or deputy) will make an immediate risk and needs assessment which will be recorded. The DSL will engage with Children’s Social Care, specialist services and the police as required. The DSL will also advise on the school response to the allegation, which will be on a case by case basis that follows the principles as set out in the DfE guidance above.

In addition, Sydenham School uses the Brook Traffic Light Tool to help staff identify, understand and respond appropriately to sexual behaviours in children and young people. The tool supports staff to recognise and identify sexualised behaviours and differentiate between those which are part of healthy sexual development and those which are problematic or harmful. It helps us to understand what a behaviour may be communicating and why the child or young person may be exhibiting the behaviour enabling us to respond appropriately to sexualised behaviours, considering possible motivations, communications and severity.

11.19.1 Child to Parent or Caregiver Abuse

The school recognises that abuse can also involve children causing harm to adults, including their parents or carers. This is sometimes referred to as child to parent or caregiver abuse and may involve physical violence, verbal or emotional abuse, coercive or controlling behaviour, threats, intimidation, financial abuse or damage to property. Such behaviour can have a significant impact on the safety and wellbeing of family members and may indicate that the child has unmet needs, has experienced trauma or abuse, or requires additional support. Staff should not view these incidents simply as behavioural issues but should consider the wider safeguarding context. Any concerns will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will assess the child's needs, consider the safety of all family members and, where appropriate, make referrals for community-based early help, Targeted Early Help (Family Help) or Children's Social Care in accordance with Lewisham's Multi-Agency Threshold Guidance.

11.19.2 Making or sharing of nude or semi-nudes

In line with KCSIE 2026, we no longer use the terms 'sexting', 'indecent' or 'nude/semi-nude images (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)'. Instead we refer to the 'making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes'.

Any incident involving the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes requires a safeguarding response and will be referred to the DSL, whether or not the images were shared consensually. This definition includes images that are digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including so-called 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes'. Any concern involving an AI-generated or AI-manipulated nude or semi-nude image of a child, whether or not a real photograph was ever taken or shared, is treated as seriously as any other image-based safeguarding concern and reported to the DSL immediately. We follow the UK Council for Internet Safety guidance 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people

(See Appendix D- What to do if an incident regarding indecent images comes to your attention)

11.20 Preventing Radicalisation

'Channel' and 'Prevent'

Terrorism is defined in KCSIE 2026 as "an action that endangers or causes violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause".

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'. Channel, a key element of the Home Office's "Prevent" strategy, is a multi-agency approach to protect people at risk from radicalisation. As a school we will work with the local authority, local law enforcement, and religious and community leaders, to identify children vulnerable to radicalisation, and to eradicate extremism if it arises. This includes identifying students:

- Displaying feelings of grievance and injustice
- Feeling under threat
- Searching for identity, meaning and belonging
- Who have a desire for status amongst their peers
- Showing empathy for extremist causes
- Glorifying violence, especially from other faiths or cultures
- Who have a desire for excitement and adventure
- Displaying a need to dominate and control others
- Who have a susceptibility to indoctrination
- Displaying a radical desire for political or moral change
- Who are susceptible to opportunistic involvement
- Who have family or friends involved in extremism
- Susceptible to being influenced or controlled by a group
- With mental health issues
- Displaying secretive behaviour
- Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups

We will always take allegations and concerns of radicalisation and/or terrorism seriously. Radicalisation and extremism can be wider than religious beliefs and linked affiliations and can include radicalisation in relation to far right groups and also by criminal groups connected with gang activity.

We will work with local religious and cultural organisations to instil a strong sense of identity in our students, as well as a clear place and purpose within the school. We use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet.

We will establish appropriate filters to protect children from terrorist and extremist material online.

Sydenham School is stronger thanks to our open, multi-cultural and multi-faith community. We will always aim to integrate and engage every child within the school community, and in the wider community.

We will celebrate the range of different religious and cultural festivals across the year, giving every child the opportunity to take part.

We will monitor and assess incidents which suggest students are engaging, or are at risk of engaging in, extremist activity and/or radicalisation.

Where staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalised in any way, they should discuss this with the DSL.

12 Safer Working Practice

12.1 Safer Recruitment

Sydenham School recognises that sometimes people who want to cause harm to children actively seek employment that provides them access to young people.

The school will protect our students from having to come into contact with people with the propensity to cause harm by thorough and rigorous scrutiny of all applications.
We will:

- Verify applicant's identity
- Check applicant's qualifications/experience/ employment/history
- Obtain professional and character references
- Check applicant's health and physical capacity to undertake the job
- Hold a face-to-face interview for all candidates with at least one member of the Sydenham School panel who has attended safer recruitment training
- Ensure all adults in regulated activity with the children have been DBS checked and barred list checked
- Make staff aware of their contractual, legal, administrative and pastoral responsibilities. A key document to support staff understanding in this area is 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2026) which will be made available to all staff.

In recruiting and appointing staff, the Headteacher and the School's Governing body have key responsibilities to create a culture of safe recruitment and, as part of that, adopt recruitment procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children.

12.2 Employees: Advertising / Shortlisting / Interviews

We ensure that the advertisement makes clear the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

All job descriptions make reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All person specifications include direct reference to suitability to work with children.

We ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete. If a candidate for a teaching post is not currently employed as a teacher, we will check with the school, college or local authority at which they were most recently employed, to confirm details of their employment and their reasons for leaving.

We will always seek at least two references to obtain objective and factual information to support our appointment decisions. These will be scrutinised and any concerns need to be resolved satisfactorily, before the appointment can be confirmed.

We endeavour to seek references on all short-listed candidates, including internal ones, before interview, so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee, and taken up with the candidate at interview.

We will always request references directly from the referee and employers and will not rely on open references, for example in the form of 'to whom it may concern' testimonials.

On receipt, references will be checked by the HR Manager to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee should be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate, for example if the answers are vague. They should also be compared for consistency with the information provided by the candidate on their application form. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the candidate.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered carefully when assessing the applicant's suitability for the post; including information obtained from records held on the Database of Qualified Teachers (DQT). The DQT is maintained by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) which is an executive agency of the Department for Education (DfE).

We verify that the successful applicant has all the academic or vocational qualifications claimed.

We check previous employment history and experience.

We conduct a face-to-face interview that explores the candidate's suitability to work with children as well as suitability for the post.

We verify the successful applicant's identity, when they arrive for an interview.

12.3 Offer of appointment

An offer of appointment to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, will be conditional upon satisfactory completion of our pre-employment checks.

Before new staff are appointed, we will:

- Verify a candidate's identity from current photographic ID and proof of address
- Obtain a certificate for an enhanced DBS check with a barred list information where the person will be engaging in regulated activity

- Obtain a separate barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- Check that a candidate to be employed as a teacher is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State, using the NCTL Teacher Service Portal (formerly known as the Employer Access Online service)
- Verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. This is done through the council's occupational health services
- Verify professional qualifications, as appropriate.

12.4 Additional checks on individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff. In addition, we will make any further checks we think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered.

We will verify the person's right to work in the UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, we will follow the council's guidance and the advice on the GOV.UK website.

All schools have a statutory duty under the Home Office guidance issued on 6 April 2017, which states that: *"All Tier 2 (General) visa applicants who want to work in specified health, education or social care sectors must provide a criminal record certificate and so for all new appointments, schools must consider additional checks, including obtaining a Certificate of Good Conduct, where staff have ever lived or worked abroad".*

The requirement is applicable to **all** Tier 2 (General) staff from any country (excluding the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland), where an individual has lived or worked for more than 12 months+ either in total or continuously as well as within the previous 10 years.

Overseas Criminal Record Checks

In Lewisham, all new employees who declare that they have lived or worked outside the UK for **12 months or more (either continuously or cumulatively) since the age of 18** will be subject to an overseas criminal record check, where this is available and appropriate.

The school recognises that it is not always possible to obtain overseas criminal record information due to differences in national systems, availability of records, language barriers, or where a country does not provide a suitable checking process. Where an overseas criminal record check cannot be obtained, the school will complete a **risk assessment** to consider the circumstances, the role being undertaken, the individual's employment history, and any other available safeguarding information.

The school will retain evidence of all reasonable attempts made to obtain overseas criminal record information, including correspondence, applications, responses and any reasons why information could not be obtained. This evidence, along with the completed risk assessment and any decision-making records, will be securely retained within the employee's personnel file.

The school will ensure that recruitment decisions continue to follow safer recruitment principles and that appropriate safeguarding measures are considered before an individual begins regulated activity with children.

It is not a legal requirement for existing staff who have ever lived or worked abroad for 12 months+ in total or continuously since the age of 18 years, but the governing body and senior leadership at Sydenham School have made the decision that we will/will not risk assess existing staff to make a decision whether or not we will pursue overseas criminal records checks for existing members of staff, volunteers or governors.

12.5 Additional online checks for shortlisted candidates

As part of the shortlisting process we may consider carrying out an online search for shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, which are publicly available online which may be explored with the applicant at interview.

12.6 The Single Central Record (SCR)

We keep a SCR for the school. Generally, the information to be recorded is whether or not the following

checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which the checks were completed and by whom:

- an identity check
- a barred list check
- an enhanced DBS check
- a prohibition from teaching check
- further checks on people living or working outside the UK
- a check of professional qualifications; and
- a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom.

The SCR will cover the following people:

- all staff (including supply staff) who work at the school
- all others who work in regular contact with children in the school including volunteers
- Governors.

In order to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, we will not retain a copy of the individual's Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Certificate. However, copies of other documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications will be kept on their personnel file.

12.7 Visiting Professionals/Agency Workers/Third Party Staff

We only use supply agencies that are able to provide full written vetting information about their staff prior to them starting work at the school.

The vetting information must contain the following:

- Photograph
- ID Evidence
- Teaching Agency Check
- DfE and Welsh Assembly Number
- Qualification Evidence
- Medical Check
- Barred List Check and Date
- Valid DBS Date
- Enhanced DBS number
- Further Disclosure Information, if necessary
- Right to work in the UK Check
- Overseas Checks/Risk Assessment
- References Check
- CV History Check
- Confirmation of Level 1 safeguarding training within the last 12 months

We ask supply agencies to email the vetting information to the School HR Manager.

The HR department checks this evidence on arrival, checking that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made. HR also give all agency staff an induction to the school which includes safeguarding.

Any discrepancies will be reported to the HR Manager immediately and the agency staff will not be able to start their work until satisfactory checks have been concluded.

Safer Recruitment records of regular agency workers are included in the school's Single Central Record.

We provide an induction for supply staff, which includes safeguarding and a briefing on any vulnerable children they will be working with.

12.8 Trainee/Student Teachers

Initial Teacher Training Students, e.g. Schools Direct Students, who are salaried by the school, have to undergo the same safer recruitment checks as regular staff, before they can start working for the school.

Safer Recruitment records for Initial Teacher Training Students, e.g. Schools Direct Students, who are salaried by the school, are included in the school's Single Central Record.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, it is the responsibility of the Training Provider to carry out the necessary checks.

12.9 Regulated Activity

A person will be considered to be in 'regulated activity' if as a result of their work they:

- will be responsible, on a regular basis, in any setting for the care or supervision of children, or
- will regularly work in a school or college at times when children are on school or college premises (where the person's work requires interaction with children, whether or not the work is paid (unless they are a supervised volunteer), or whether the person is directly employed or employed by a contractor).

Important change for 2026: the Crime and Policing Act 2026 has removed the 'supervision exemption' from regulated activity. Previously, a supervised volunteer teaching, training, instructing or supervising children on a regular basis was not in regulated activity. This exemption no longer applies. Any person, paid or unpaid (including volunteers), carrying out these activities on more than 3 days in a 30-day period, or overnight, is now in regulated activity and requires an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information, regardless of whether they are supervised.

Any member of staff, volunteer or Governor that will be working in regulated activity will have a barred list check carried out.

All visiting professionals e.g. PE coaches, Music teachers, Health Professionals and LA advisors have to provide the school with their valid enhanced DBS details.

All kitchen staff have to provide the school with their valid enhanced DBS details. It is the responsibility of the Catering Contractor to carry out the necessary checks.

All kitchen staff safer recruitment records are included in the school's Single Central Record.

All cleaning staff have to provide the school with their valid enhanced DBS details. It is the responsibility of the Cleaning Contractor to carry out the necessary checks.

All cleaning staff safer recruitment records are included in the school's SCR.

All Breakfast Club and After School Club Personnel have to provide the school with their valid enhanced DBS details. It is the responsibility of the Extended School Providers to carry out the necessary checks.

All Extended School Personnel's safer recruitment records are included in the school's SCR.

It is the responsibility of the HR Manager to make sure all enhanced DBS checks are current and recorded.

12.10 Volunteers Eg. Parents/Carers

As per the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education **2026**, all volunteers will be risk assessed, in writing, to determine whether they require a DBS check and whether this needs to include a barred list check. Under no circumstances should a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Important change for 2026: the 'supervision exemption' has been removed

Previously, a volunteer who was directly supervised by a member of staff was not in regulated activity, however frequently they helped. The Crime and Policing Act 2026 has removed this exemption. Any volunteer whose role involves teaching, training, instructing or supervising children on more than 3 days in a 30-day period, or overnight, is now in regulated activity regardless of whether they are supervised, and we will obtain an enhanced DBS certificate with children's barred list information for them. Where a regular volunteer helps at more than one setting and, between them, meets this threshold, we will work with the other setting(s) to agree who obtains the check, and the volunteer may supply that information to each setting.

Existing volunteers who move into regulated activity as a result of this change (from 1 September 2026) will have their children's barred list status checked, either through a new enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information, or, where the volunteer already holds a recent enhanced DBS certificate without barred list information and there has been no break in service, through a standalone barred list check.

For volunteers who are not in regulated activity, for example someone helping on an occasional or one-off basis (such as accompanying a single school trip), there is no requirement for an enhanced DBS check, and a barred list check must not be requested as this is not legally permitted.

The school may still choose to request a standard or enhanced DBS check (without barred list information) for a volunteer not in regulated activity, where this is judged necessary following a written risk assessment considering the nature of the role, what is already known about the volunteer, and whether the volunteer has other roles or references that speak to their suitability.

Under no circumstances should a volunteer whose role involves regulated activity be allowed to start before the necessary checks are complete, except where they are appropriately supervised in line with DfE guidance while the enhanced DBS certificate is awaited.

12.11 School Governors

The school will apply for an enhanced DBS check for all members of the governing body. In addition to this, a risk assessment will be completed to ascertain if any members of the governing body are taking part in regulated activity with children. If it is determined that any person is taking part in regulated activity, a barred list check will be requested. They must do this by 1 September 2016 where a Governor was elected before 1 April 2016 and within 21 days of appointment or election if a Governor is elected or appointed after 1 April 2016.

All new Governors will be asked to declare their overseas history and where necessary, complete a risk assessment. Existing Governors will also/will not be required to complete an overseas criminal history risk assessment in line with our agreed school procedures.

All Governors must also undergo a S128 check to confirm any directions which may have been made against them by the Secretary of State. This check will be carried out using the NCTL Teacher Service Portal (formerly known as the Employer Access Online service).

All Governors and Trustees should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training should be regularly updated.

All Governors and Proprietors should be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 21, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty23), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

12.12 Contractors

The Reception staff and /or a member of the Premises Team will always check the identity of contractors upon their arrival in the school. All visitors sign in and out at Reception to confirm the company they work for and to have a photograph of them taken for our records.

Contractors and contractors' employees for whom an appropriate DBS check has not been undertaken will be supervised by a member of the Premises Team, if they will have contact with children.

If a self-employed contractor is working at the school and will have unsupervised contact with children, the school will obtain a DBS check and/or barred list check as appropriate, as self-employed people are not able to make an application directly to the DBS on their own behalf.

12.13 General Visitors to the School & Site Security

We will not request DBS checks and barred list checks, or ask to see DBS certificates, for general visitors, e.g. children's relatives attending events in the school, etc.

All staff have a responsibility to ensure our buildings and grounds are secure and for reporting concerns that may come to light.

We check the identity of all visitors and volunteers coming into school. Visitors are expected to sign in and out in the electronic Reception visitors' log and to wear a visitor's sticker or lanyard whilst on the school site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable will be challenged for clarification and reassurance. See Appendix Q for our Lanyard Poster.

Sydenham School will not accept the behaviour of any individual, parent/carer or anyone else, that threatens school security or leads others, child or adult, to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse the person access to the school site.

13 Staff Conduct

13.1 Safeguarding Training and Awareness

All staff will be supported to recognise the signs and symptoms of all forms of abuse and neglect, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation, and other safeguarding concerns that may affect children and young people.

As part of their induction process, all new, temporary and supply staff will receive appropriate safeguarding information and training to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding procedures, their responsibilities, and how to report concerns.

All staff working in the school will be required to read and understand:

- the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- the Staff Code of Conduct;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) – Part One: Information for all school and college staff

Staff will be expected to understand the role they play in safeguarding children, including recognising concerns, responding appropriately, recording information accurately, and reporting concerns without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

All staff will receive child protection training at least annually with a particular focus on recognising signs of abuse, managing a disclosure as well as recapping monitoring and reporting procedures of abuse and suspected abuse. In addition, staff will receive regular training updates about safeguarding related issues.

The safeguarding training of third-party staff/contractors will be verified and if necessary, further training may be given as part of the induction process. Third party colleagues will also sign the Staff Code of Conduct. Should a child or a member of staff be concerned about another member of staff's conduct in relation to child protection then procedures are in place. All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. They should strictly adhere to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidelines on teachers' behaviour and the school's policies.

Staff members who miss the whole-school training will be required to watch a recording of the training and complete a quiz.

We will ensure that staff members provided by other agencies and third parties, e.g. supply teachers and contractors, have received appropriate child protection training commensurate with their roles before starting work. They will be given the opportunity to take part in whole-school training if it takes place during their period of work for the school.

The school will maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

13.2 Safer Working Practice

We make use of the Safer Recruitment Consortium document 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings' February 2022 as the basis for our Code of Conduct. All staff are expected to follow the Sydenham School Staff Code of Conduct and sign to say they have read and understood this. We also recommend that all staff read the full Safer

Recruitment Consortium guidance.

Staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for adults working with individual children to do so in view of other adults. If staff anticipate being in a situation that could be open to misinterpretation they should alert a Senior Leader in advance and inform the child's parent or carer. Staff should escort children of the same sex to the toilet but are not expected to be involved with toileting, unless the child has an additional need that has been brought to their attention by the parent/guardian and a strategy agreed in writing. We recognise that physical touch between adults and children in relation to the activity being provided is acceptable in public places.

13.3 Managing Allegations Against Staff

We understand that a student may make an allegation against a member of staff (including volunteers and supply staff). If such an allegation is made:

- The member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Headteacher or the HR manager if the Headteacher is not present

- The Headteacher or DSL on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Child Protection. If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult as above, without notifying the Headteacher first.

- The school will follow the Lewisham Local Authority procedures in the LADO protocol, updated in May 2018, for managing allegations against staff, and statutory guidance 'Keeping Children safe in Education.' (2026)

- Individuals who are the subject of allegations should be informed of these as soon as possible, as should the parents and carers of any children involved. However, every effort must be taken to maintain confidentiality, in order to comply with the reporting restrictions in the Education Act 2011

- Suspension of the member of staff against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration, and we will consult the LADO for Child Protection, or the school's HR Manager

- The name of any member of staff considered not suitable to work with children will be given to the Department for Education Misconduct Team, with the advice and support of Education Personnel and in accordance with the Barring Regulations

- Any child making such an allegation will be treated sensitively and made to feel safe and listened to. If there are any immediate concerns of safety, action must be taken to remove the child from harm. Parents or carers of a child or children involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it.

- Police need to be contacted at the earliest opportunity when a victim of a crime makes an allegation of serious sexual assault. Any delay will be likely to have a serious impact upon safeguarding/the reassurance of the victim and the securing all available evidence. Criminal procedures and considerations must be placed above internal disciplinary/suspension protocols in such instances.

13.3.1 Organisations or Individuals using school premises

- Allegations relating to an incident when an individual or organisation was using school premises for the purposes of running activities for children, schools should follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

13.4 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 to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues in relation to children. If necessary, they should speak to the designated Safeguarding Governor or the LA Designated Child Protection Officer (LADO) via the DSL, if they are not the same person – see Whistleblowing Policy.

The NSPCC runs a whistleblowing helpline on behalf of the Home Office the number is 0808 800 5000.

14. General Safeguarding

14.1 Health and Safety

Our Health and Safety policy, set out in a separate document, is reviewed annually by the Governing Body. It reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

14.2 Information Sharing of Child Protection Files

Where children leave Sydenham School, (including in year transfers) the DSL will ensure their Child Protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This will be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt will be obtained. In addition to this, the DSL may also consider if it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving to help them put in place the right support to safeguard this child and to help the child thrive in the school or college. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

14.3 Attendance

Our policy on attendance is set out in a separate document and is reviewed annually by the governing body. Sydenham School recognises that poor attendance can be an indicator that a child is experiencing abuse. The attendance officer, Jennifer Skinner, and senior leadership team monitor attendance weekly, and report concerns to the Attendance & Welfare Officer at regular meetings.

Sydenham School has enrolled in a programme called 'Study Bugs' to monitor children's attendance. The recorded data will be accessible to the Local Authority, in line with the new requirement from the DfE in **Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)** (August 2024). The objective is to share this information with the local authority in a bid to support the improvement of school attendance and the provision of the most appropriate support.

14.4 Online Safety, Digital Safeguarding and Mobile Technology

(See separate – E-Safety Policy and Mobile Phone Policy)

We ensure students at Sydenham School are protected while using digital technologies at the school. The school is committed to including digital technologies, in particular, internet use, in our curriculum. In so doing we recognise the inherent risks posed by this useful learning tool. If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), will consider referring into the Cyber Choices programme. Full compliance with the school E-Safety Policy will mitigate these risks and help to ensure students are safe online.

Mobile Phone Policy

In line with KCSIE 2026 and DfE statutory guidance on mobile phones in schools, Sydenham School is a mobile phone-free environment by default. Pupils do not have access to their mobile phone during the school day, including lessons, time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime, other than by exception**.**

Phones should not be seen or heard on the school premises. They should be switched off before students enter the school gate and remain in their bags at all times. Students should not carry phones in their blazer or on their person.

Generative AI

We recognise the growing use of Generative AI by children and staff, and the associated safeguarding, data

protection and intellectual property risks highlighted in KCSIE 2026. Staff and pupils are supported to use AI safely and effectively in line with DfE guidance and training materials on the safe and effective use of Generative AI in education, and any concerns about AI-generated or AI-manipulated content, including sexual imagery of children, are treated as child sexual abuse material and reported to the DSL immediately.

14.5 Filtering and Monitoring Systems

As part of our statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils, Sydenham School is committed to providing a safe online environment that supports effective teaching and learning while protecting children from online risks.

In line with DfE guidance, the governing body ensures that robust filtering and monitoring systems are in place to limit children's exposure to harmful and inappropriate content through the school's IT systems. These systems are reviewed regularly to ensure their effectiveness, and updates are made in response to new risks, changing technology, or emerging guidance.

The leadership team and relevant staff are expected to:

- Be aware of the filtering and monitoring systems in place.
- Understand how these systems function and how to manage them effectively.
- Know how to escalate any concerns arising from online activity.

When reviewing filtering and monitoring arrangements, the school takes into account:

- The number and age range of pupils.
- The specific needs of vulnerable pupils who may be at greater risk of harm.
- The frequency and ways in which pupils access the school's IT systems.

The school follows the Department for Education's Filtering and Monitoring Standards, which recommend that schools:

- Clearly identify and assign roles and responsibilities for managing filtering and monitoring.
- Review the systems and provisions at least once every academic year. Reviews are carried out by the SLT member responsible for filtering and monitoring, with the support of the DSL and IT support, and include checks that filtering is working appropriately on all internet-connected devices in all relevant locations. A record is kept of these checks.
- Block harmful and inappropriate content without unnecessarily restricting access to learning resources.
- Implement effective monitoring strategies that are appropriate to the school's safeguarding needs.

We use the DfE's 'Plan Technology for Your School' self-assessment tool to evaluate our current provision and receive tailored recommendations for improvement.

The governing body regularly reviews these standards and works in collaboration with IT staff and service providers to ensure continued compliance and protection for all users of the school's digital infrastructure.

14.6 Anti-Bullying Policy

(See separate – Anti-Bullying Policy)

Our policies on anti-bullying and cyber-bullying are set out in the anti-bullying policy which is reviewed annually by the Governing Body. We expect staff to acknowledge that to allow or condone bullying, constitutes a lack of duty of care, which may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

The anti-bullying policy is written in line with advice and statutory guidelines set out in the DfE guidance *Preventing Bullying*, in July 2017 and *Approaches to Preventing and Tackling Bullying*, June 2018.

14.6.1 Supporting children who are questioning their gender

The school recognises that some children and young people may question their gender identity. Staff will respond to all children with dignity, respect, sensitivity and compassion, ensuring that the child's welfare remains paramount in accordance with **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)** and **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)**.

The school recognises that some younger children may go through a period of questioning their gender and that, for many, this may not continue into adulthood. Staff will avoid making assumptions and will take time to understand the child's views, wishes and feelings through a supportive, professionally curious and safeguarding-informed approach.

Children who are questioning their gender may experience a range of vulnerabilities, including bullying, discrimination, social isolation, anxiety, self-harm, poor mental health or other complex psychosocial needs. Any safeguarding concerns will be considered within the wider context of the child's circumstances, and appropriate support will be offered or referrals made where necessary.

The school will:

- provide a safe, respectful and inclusive environment where all pupils are treated with dignity;
- take a robust and proactive approach to preventing and responding to all forms of bullying, harassment, discrimination and prejudice;
- avoid reinforcing rigid gender stereotypes through its policies and practice wherever possible;
- ensure that any safeguarding concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL);
- work closely with parents or carers wherever appropriate and involve them in decisions relating to support for their child unless doing so would place the child at increased risk of harm or compromise their safety;
- consider requests for support on an individual basis, taking account of safeguarding responsibilities, the child's best interests, relevant legislation and statutory guidance.

Requests Relating to Social Transition

Our policies on anti-bullying and cyber-bullying are set out in the anti-bullying policy which is reviewed annually by the Governing Body. We expect staff to acknowledge that to allow or condone bullying, constitutes a lack of duty of care, which may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

Where a child or their parent/carer requests support relating to social transition, the school will consider each request carefully on a case-by-case basis. Decisions will not be made by individual members of staff but through the school's established decision-making processes, led by the Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead, with appropriate involvement of parents or carers unless there are safeguarding reasons why this would not be appropriate.

The school will:

- carefully assess the safeguarding implications of any request;
- consider the child's wishes and feelings alongside their age, understanding and individual circumstances;
- seek appropriate advice where necessary;
- document the decision-making process and maintain accurate records;
- review decisions regularly to ensure support remains appropriate and in the child's best interests.

No member of staff should agree to or implement changes relating to a child's social transition without the school's agreed decision-making process being followed.

The school also recognises that a child's views or circumstances may change over time. Requests to review previous decisions or support a child who wishes to detransition will be considered sensitively, with appropriate safeguarding support and involvement of parents or carers where appropriate.

Single-Sex Facilities

In accordance with statutory guidance, pupils will use toilets, changing rooms and shower facilities designated for their biological sex.

Where a pupil who is questioning their gender does not wish to use these facilities, the school will consider whether suitable alternative arrangements can be provided, where reasonably practicable. Any alternative arrangements will not compromise the safety, privacy, dignity or wellbeing of the pupil concerned or other pupils.

Where mixed-sex toilet facilities are provided, the school will ensure appropriate safeguarding measures are in place and undertake regular risk assessments to maintain the safety and privacy of all users.

The school will keep appropriate records of any agreed arrangements and review these regularly.

Physical Education and Sport

The school is committed to ensuring all pupils can participate safely in physical education and sporting activities.

Where activities require separation by biological sex for reasons of safety, fairness or the nature of the sport, pupils will participate in accordance with statutory guidance. Where there are no safety considerations and a pupil requests support relating to participation, the school will consider the request individually through its safeguarding and decision-making processes, balancing the rights, safety and wellbeing of all pupils.

Throughout any decision-making process, the school will continue to comply with its safeguarding responsibilities and its duties under equality and human rights legislation.

14.7 Physical Intervention Policy

Our policy on physical intervention by staff is set out in the Behaviour Policy and is reviewed annually by the Governing Body. We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimum force necessary to prevent injury to themselves, another person or property. Where physical intervention has been used, staff must complete a physical intervention form and pass to the Headteacher and DSL as soon as possible after the incident. Individual Risk Assessments are completed for particular students who have a higher likelihood of needing physical intervention and/or restraint and staff who work closely with these students are provided with additional training if required.

14.8 School Visits

We have clear protocols in place to ensure the safety of children whilst on school trips (see Educational Trips and Visits Policy). These include:

- Visit procedures to be documented by staff and agreed with the Educational Visits Coordinator (a member of SLT will complete EVC training with a regulated provider of EVC training)
- A briefing for parents/carers going on the trips including detailed information about complying with safeguarding responsibilities and what to do if a child discloses to them
- Defined roles and responsibilities for school staff

- Risk assessments
- DBS/barred list checks for parents/carers where appropriate.

14.9 Looked After Children

Our Headteacher and Eleanor George, DSL and Designated Teacher (DT), are responsible for Looked After Children and ensure that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. The Headteacher and the DT also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child.

The DT has details of the child's social worker and the name of the Virtual School head in the authority that looks after the child.

The Chair is the designated Governor for Looked After Children.

A separate policy (see also Appendix H) sets out our systems and procedures in relation to Looked After Children, which has been written with reference to the two statutory DfE guidance documents, 'Designated Teacher for looked after and previously looked after children' and 'Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children' released in February 2018.

14.10 Children Missing/Absent from Education

- Children absent from education are on the school roll, but are regularly not attending.
- Children missing education are not on any school roll or are being educated elsewhere.
- These are vital warning signs of safeguarding risks to a child.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in the future.

Sydenham School places a great emphasis on regular and punctual attendance and we promptly follow up any unexplained absence. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage. Sydenham School has both an admission register and attendance register as required by law. All students are placed on both registers. Sydenham School informs and seeks guidance from the Local Authority before any child is deleted from the admission register. No child is deleted unless there are appropriate checks conducted to ensure that the child is not at risk from being missing from education. A child may be deleted from the admission register for the following reasons.

- The child has been taken out of school by their parents/carers and is being educated outside the school system e.g. home education
- The child ceased to attend the school and no longer lives within reasonable distance from the school at which they are registered
- The child has been certified by the education medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither they nor the parent/carer has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the Headteacher does not reasonably believe that they will be returning to the school at the end of that period
- Have been permanently excluded. The Local Authority must be notified when the school is to delete a student form its register under the above circumstances. This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the student's name from the register. It is essential that schools comply with this duty so that Local Authorities can, as part of their duty to children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

Sydenham School informs the Local Authority of any student who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days.

14.11 Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

For a variety of reasons, children with additional needs face an increased risk of abuse and neglect, therefore adults are expected to take extra care to interpret correctly apparent signs of abuse or neglect. Indications of abuse will be reported as for other students.

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges because:

- There may be assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- Children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionally impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs
- Difficulties may arise in overcoming communication barriers.

At Sydenham School we identify students who might need more support to be kept safe or to keep themselves safe by:

- Ensuring staff are well-trained and can pass on concerns
- Ensuring that we develop positive relationships with students and their parents/carers
- Monitoring behaviour and encouraging students who display emotional outbursts to form a positive working relationship with a member of the Inclusion team
- We monitor attendance, particularly of vulnerable students
- We have regular meetings to review student concerns, joining up dots between SEN, attendance and safeguarding concerns
- We ensure that all students are given support and advice about needs and safeguarding through tutor activities and assemblies
- Inclusion staff are always available for students to directly access, whether regarding their own needs or those of other students
- We actively encourage students to develop emotional resilience and social skills, both through direct teaching, for instance in PSHE and tutor time and indirectly with every conversation/interaction adults have with students throughout the day
- For some students with the most need for support in this area, we also provide the following: KS3 and KS4 mentoring, Social, Emotional, Behavioural and Mental Health support through targeted interventions and breakfast, break and lunch clubs
- Students in the early stages of emotional and social development because of their special educational needs will be supported to enable them to develop and mature appropriately. This will usually require additional and different resources, beyond those required by the majority of students in the school.

14.12 Young Carers

The school recognises that young carers are children and young people who take on caring responsibilities for a family member who may have a physical or mental health condition, disability, substance misuse issue, or other support need. Young carers may face additional barriers to their safety, wellbeing and education, including tiredness, missed learning, difficulties with attendance, social isolation, emotional pressures, and reluctance to disclose challenges at home due to concerns about what may happen to their family.

Staff will remain alert to signs that a child may have caring responsibilities and understand that young carers may not always identify themselves or ask for support. The school will provide a safe and supportive environment where children feel able to share their experiences and access appropriate help.

Where a child is identified as a young carer, staff will discuss their needs with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and consider what support may be appropriate. This may include pastoral support, signposting to community-based early help, referral for a Family Help (Targeted Early Help) assessment, or working with relevant partner agencies to ensure the child and family receive appropriate support.

The school will work collaboratively with children, parents/carers and partner agencies to ensure that young carers are supported to achieve their full potential and that their caring responsibilities do not negatively impact on their safety, wellbeing, attendance, education or development.

Where there are concerns that a young carer's circumstances indicate they may be at risk of harm or that their needs are not being met, the DSL will follow Lewisham's Multi-Agency Threshold Guidance and take appropriate safeguarding action.

14.13 Children with Medical Conditions

Children with a medical condition may be more vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and other safeguarding risks, including missed education due to ill health, and staff should ensure that any concerns are considered alongside, rather than dismissed because of, a child's medical condition. Our First Aid (Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions) policy sets out our arrangements in more detail.

14.14 Fabricated Induced Illness

Fabricated or induced illness (FII) is a rare form of child abuse. It occurs when a parent or carer, usually the child's biological mother, exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child.

FII is also known as 'Munchausen's syndrome by proxy' (not to be confused with Munchausen's syndrome, where a person pretends to be ill or causes illness or injury to themselves).

FII covers a wide range of symptoms and behaviours involving parents/carers seeking healthcare for a child. This ranges from extreme neglect (failing to seek medical care) to induced illness.

Behaviours in FII include a parent or other carer who:

- persuades healthcare professionals that their child is ill when they're perfectly healthy
- exaggerates or lies about their child's symptoms
- manipulates test results to suggest the presence of illness – for example, by putting glucose in urine samples to suggest the child has diabetes
- deliberately induces symptoms of illness – for example, by poisoning their child with unnecessary medication or other substances.

If you suspect that a parent/carer may be fabricating or inducing illness in their child, you should not confront them directly. It's unlikely to make the person admit to wrongdoing, and it may give them the opportunity to dispose of any evidence of abuse. You must immediately report any

concerns to the DSL via CPOMs.

Please see further guidance on the DfE website via the link below:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277314/Safeguarding_Children_in_whom_illness_is_fabricated_or_induced.pdf

14.15 Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. (Please refer to the Private Fostering Policy for more details).

A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and stepparents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence.

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or be involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

Schools have a mandatory duty to report to the local authority where they are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. Although schools have a duty to inform the local authority, there is no duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the school. However, it should be clear to the school who has parental responsibility.

School staff should notify the DSL when they become aware of private fostering arrangements. The DSL will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the LA. The school itself has a duty to inform the local authority of the private fostering arrangements.

A referral should be made to Children's Social Care in writing using Lewisham's referral form. The referral should have as much information as possible, including full details of all children concerned and their parents/carers/those with PR and any information about how these children came to be in their current situation. In some cases you may not have been provided with all the details so it is important that you discuss the referral with the carers in order to obtain them. However, if the information is not forthcoming, the referral should not be delayed. Referrals should be made online at: MASH - Important Information · Lewisham Forms

Once notified about a private fostering arrangement, the local authority is required to assess the home to ensure that is suitable. If it is happy with the arrangements, then it is required to arrange a visit once every six weeks for the first year and then at three-monthly intervals whilst the placement continues. Children's Social Care will be appointing a dedicated worker to work with private fostered children. Details will be provided as soon as possible. This worker will be available to offer advice and assistance if required.

14.16 Parents, Parental Responsibility and Separation

For the purposes of education law, the definition of a parent is wider than in everyday use. Under the Education Act 1996, a parent includes:

- all natural parents, whether married or not;
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child, such as a legally appointed guardian or a person named by the court or Local Authority; and
- any person who has care of a child, meaning a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, regardless of their relationship to the child.
- Parental Responsibility

Parental responsibility is defined in the Children Act 1989 as having all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which, by law, a parent has in relation to a child and their property.

People other than a child's birth parents can acquire parental responsibility through, for example:
- being granted a Child Arrangements Order (previously a Residence Order);
- being appointed as a guardian;
- being named in an Emergency Protection Order (with responsibilities limited to safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare); or
- adopting a child.

Where parents are not married at the time of a child's birth, the mother automatically has parental responsibility. A father may acquire parental responsibility through legal means, including being named on the child's birth certificate (where the birth was jointly registered after the relevant legislative changes), through a parental responsibility agreement, or by a court order.

Separated Parents and Parental Conflict

The school recognises that separation and parental conflict can be extremely difficult for children and families. The school's priority in all circumstances is the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child.

The school will work in partnership with parents and carers who have parental responsibility and will provide information and support to all parties in accordance with their legal rights and responsibilities. However, the school will remain neutral and impartial in disputes between parents or carers and will not become involved in parental disagreements, arguments, grievances or conflicts.

The school is not a mediator, legal advisor or decision-maker in family disputes and will not be expected to:

- take sides in disagreements between parents or carers;
- determine who is right or wrong in relation to parental conflict;
- pass messages between parents or act as a communication channel for disputes;
- become involved in disagreements regarding arrangements that are matters for parents or the family courts; or
- restrict a parent's involvement unless there is a legal reason or safeguarding concern requiring this.

The school will not make decisions based solely on the wishes or preferences of one parent where both parents have parental responsibility. In the absence of a court order or other legal restriction, the school will continue to treat all parents with parental responsibility equally and will provide information, communications and access to school-related matters accordingly.

Where parents are unable to agree arrangements relating to their child, these matters should be resolved between parents, through appropriate mediation services, legal advice or the family court. The school will comply with any court orders or legal directions provided to it.

Safeguarding and Child-Centred Practice

While remaining neutral in parental disputes, the school will always act to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. Where parental conflict is having a negative impact on a child's emotional wellbeing, attendance, education, safety or development, the school will consider whether additional support or safeguarding action is required.

Any concerns about domestic abuse, coercive control, emotional harm, neglect or any other safeguarding issue will be considered separately from parental disputes and managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and Lewisham's Multi-Agency Threshold Guidance.

The school will always approach situations involving separated parents from a child-centred perspective, ensuring that decisions are based on what is in the child's best interests rather than the views, disagreements or conflicts of adults.

See Appendix N for Sydenham School's Separated Parents Policy.

14.17 Photography and Images

To protect children we will:

- Seek parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example on our website or in newspapers and/or publications)
- Only take photos and videos of children to celebrate achievement
- Use only the child's first name with an image
- Ensure that the children are appropriately dressed
- Encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

Parents/carers who are taking photographs at school assemblies and other productions or school trips are instructed that these are to be for personal use only and are not to be shared on social media.

14.18 Commissioned Extended School Provision and Lettings

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any other services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. **(Chapter 2 - Working Together 2026)**

In relation to extended school provision and lettings, these include:

- A clear line of accountability for the commissioning and /or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- A designated professional lead for safeguarding
- Safe recruitment practices for individuals whom the organisation will permit to work regularly with children
- Clear policies, in line with those from the LSCP for dealing with allegations against people who work with children
- For allegations relating to an incident when an individual or organisation was using school premises for the purposes of running activities for children, schools should follow their safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

'Employers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role.' Working Together 2018. Where any extended service is directly commissioned by Lewisham Council, they will be responsible for the safeguarding.

Where extended school provision is offered directly under the supervision or management of school staff, for example an after-school sports club led by a member of school staff, the school's safeguarding arrangements will apply.

Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, the Governing Body should seek assurance that the body concerned has **appropriate policies and procedures in place** in regard to safeguarding children and child protection and there are arrangements to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

Sydenham School will have arrangements in place with extended school providers and contractors to make sure that anyone who will be coming onto the school site and working with children has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check and safer recruitment processes.

14.19 Mental Health/Self Harm

Mental health problems can affect children and young people and may include conditions such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, emotional difficulties, and conduct disorders. They can sometimes develop in response to experiences in a child's life, including trauma, abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, or other adverse childhood experiences. In some cases, mental health difficulties may be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, harm and should be treated as a potential safeguarding concern.

At Sydenham School, all staff will receive regular training as part of our safeguarding and child protection training to help them recognise and respond appropriately to mental health concerns, including self-harm, suicidal thoughts (suicidal ideation), and the risk of suicide. Staff will be supported to understand that changes in a child's emotional wellbeing or behaviour may require safeguarding action.

Staff are well placed to recognise potential warning signs that a child may be experiencing mental health difficulties or may be at risk of self-harm or suicide. These may include significant changes in behaviour, mood or relationships; withdrawal from friends, family or usual activities; changes in attendance or performance; difficulty sleeping; increased anxiety or distress; expressing hopelessness or feeling like a burden; giving away possessions; talking about death or wanting to harm themselves; and physical signs of self-harm such as unexplained injuries or changes in clothing to hide injuries. Any concerns should always be taken seriously and shared promptly with the DSL.

Where children have experienced abuse, neglect, exploitation, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact on their mental health and wellbeing. School staff will work to provide appropriate support, identify concerns early, and ensure children receive timely help.

Where the school provides or signposts mental health support or interventions, these will be considered carefully to ensure they are safe, effective, appropriate, and responsive to the individual needs of the child. Support will be provided by appropriately trained staff or professionals, and referrals will be made where specialist support is required.

If a member of staff believes a child is at immediate risk of harm, including risk of serious self-harm or suicide, they must act immediately by following the school's safeguarding procedures, informing the DSL (or deputy DSL), and contacting emergency services where necessary. Safeguarding concerns must never be delayed due to confidentiality concerns or uncertainty.

For further details of our school's procedures around supporting children who are self-harming or experiencing any other mental health issues refer to our Student Wellbeing Policy and Raising Awareness of and Preventing Self-Harm Policy.

14.20 Faith Based Abuse

Faith abuse is abuse of a child, linked to faith or belief. It is not about challenging people's beliefs, but where these beliefs lead to abuse, this should never be tolerated. This includes: belief in concepts of witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or leading them astray (traditionally seen in some Christian beliefs), the evil eye or djinns (traditionally known in some Islamic faith contexts) and dakini (in the Hindu context); ritual or multi murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies; and use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation. This is not an exhaustive list and there will be other examples where children have been harmed when adults think that their actions have brought bad fortune, such as telephoning a wrong number which is believed by some to allow malevolent spirits to enter the home.

In Sydenham School we have provided all staff, as part of our safeguarding training, information about potential signs and indicators of faith based abuse.

In working to identify such child abuse it is important to remember every child is different. Some children may display a combination of indicators of abuse whilst others will attempt to conceal them. In addition to the factors above, there are a range of common features across identified cases. These indicators of abuse, which may also be common features in other kinds of abuse, include:

- a child's body showing signs or marks, such as bruises or burns, from physical abuse
- a child becoming noticeably confused, withdrawn, disorientated or isolated and appearing alone amongst other children
- a child's personal care deteriorating, for example through a loss of weight, being hungry, turning up to school without food or lunch money, or being unkempt with dirty clothes and even faeces smeared on to them
- it may be directly evident that the child's parent or carer does not show concern for or have a close bond with the child
- a child's attendance at school becoming irregular or the child being taken out of school altogether without another school place having been organised, or a deterioration in a child's performance at school
- a child reporting that they are or have been accused of being 'evil', and/or that they are having the 'devil beaten out of them.'

All staff should be alert to the indicators above and should be able to identify children at risk of this type of abuse and intervene to prevent it.

Following the potential identification, confirmation or disclosure of faith abuse by a child, young person or family member to an adult in school, the following actions will be considered:

- Standard child safeguarding procedures apply and must always be followed in all cases where abuse or neglect is suspected including those that may be related to particular belief systems
- A FFCP referral may be necessary in order to safeguard the child or young person (see below for contact details)
- An Early Help Assessment may be appropriate for some children and young people in order to meet need.

14.21 Exclusions

Decisions to exclude a child are not taken lightly and the final decision will always be made by the Headteacher. In line with the recent DfE statutory guidance, 'Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and student referral units in England', September 2017, when the school is considering excluding, either fixed term or permanently, a vulnerable student and / or a student who is the subject of a child protection plan or where there is an existing child protection file, we will call a multi-agency risk-assessment meeting prior

to making the decision to exclude. In the event of a one-off serious incident resulting in an immediate decision to exclude, the risk assessment *must* be completed prior to convening a meeting of the Governing Body.

14.22 Searching Screening and Confiscation

The DfE advisory guidance, Searching, screening and confiscation guidance for Headteachers, school staff and Governing Bodies sets out the power schools have when searching students, both with or without consent, and their right to confiscate items found during the searches.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) embodies the idea that every child should be recognised, respected and protected as a rights holder and as a unique and valuable human being. It applies to all persons under the age of 18. At Sydenham School we will ensure that we give due diligence to Article 3 and 16 as outlined below when we conduct any such searches.

Article 3 (best interests of the child)

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 16 (right to privacy)

Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child's private, family and home life, including protecting children from unlawful attacks that harm their reputation.

At Sydenham School there are times that we routinely screen students for safeguarding reasons while on other occasions it may be necessary to conduct searches more randomly. Any such searches/screening will always be done in accordance with advisory guidance and full details of our school's approach are detailed in our Behaviour Policy.

If a more intimate search is required, this can only be carried out by the police under specific instructions of the Borough Command Unit (BCU) Inspector and the search will only go ahead when the parent or carer or appropriate member of school staff, in loco parentis, is present. Colleagues must ensure that they have confirmed instructions from the BCU Inspector to permit such a search being carried out.

At Sydenham School we will at all times consider our duty to advocate for the child and pay due diligence to promoting anti-racist practice and be aware of the potential of adultification in these cases. We will also make the appropriate referrals to FFCP following any such requirement.

14.23 Serious Youth Violence and Knife Crime

At Sydenham School, we recognise that serious violence is a significant safeguarding concern. Serious violence may include physical assault, the carrying, threatening with, or use of weapons, and may occur in the context of peer conflict, bullying, gang-related activity, or criminal exploitation.

All staff must remain alert to signs that a child may be at risk of, involved in, or affected by serious violence. This includes children who may be vulnerable to exploitation, those who are being harmed by others, and those involved in causing harm, who may also be victims themselves.

Any concerns that a child is carrying a weapon, has access to a weapon, has threatened to use a weapon, or is at risk of involvement in serious violence must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL. The DSL will assess the level of risk to the child, other pupils, staff, and the wider school community, considering all available information and any wider safeguarding concerns.

Where appropriate, the school will put in place a safety and support plan, which may include actions to reduce risk, support the child's wellbeing, manage peer conflict, and prevent further harm. The school will work with relevant partners, including external agencies and the police where necessary, to ensure children receive appropriate protection and support.

Staff should be particularly aware that the risk of involvement in serious violence may increase for some children, including those experiencing disrupted education, such as repeated suspensions, permanent exclusion, or periods in alternative provision, as well as children with previous involvement in offending or exploitation. Staff should also consider that risks may increase at particular times or locations, including before or after the school day and outside of the school environment.

Early identification and support are essential. Where concerns are identified, the school will seek to provide appropriate help, which may include access to trusted adults, mentoring, emotional wellbeing support, social skills development, targeted interventions, and referrals to specialist services where required.

For further guidance on recognising indicators of serious violence, assessing risk, making referrals, and when to involve the police, staff should speak to the DSL and refer to the school's safeguarding procedures.

In Lewisham a weekly Concerns Hub is held to discuss children at risk of being victims to this crime and we will follow the referral process to direct the relevant children accordingly by emailing PLMailbox- ConcernHub@met.police.uk.

14.24 Contextual Safeguarding

Sydenham School is aware that the young people in our school may face additional extra-familial risks outside of the school context. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 states that, "These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including:

- exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines
- trafficking
- online abuse
- teenage relationship abuse
- sexual exploitation and
- the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

As part our whole-school approach to these contextual safeguarding risks, we have developed a curriculum, policy and practice that promotes a culture that focuses on educating about risks and potential threats as well as responding to these. In addition to this, Sydenham School will regularly use student-led feedback to identify potential risks in and outside of our community and mitigate against them through regular safety mapping exercises.

Where safety mapping exercises identify people, places and environments where extra-familial harm could take place, we will focus on interventions that address these wider environmental factors by partnering with other professionals, external agencies and community establishments to create more safe spaces for our young people.

We will train colleagues to understand how to identify these potential contextual safeguarding risks/threats and refer any new concerns in the normal way.

Schools have been identified as sites in which young people can experience and/or be safeguarded from abuse and violence. From experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence through to physical assaults, relationship-based abuse, bullying and grooming into exploitative networks, young people have told practitioners, researchers and journalists about risks they have faced in educational settings.

As such it is critical that when young people experience abuse and violence and this is in some way associated to their school environment or school relationships – that the school itself features within the process of assessment and intervention. If we want to address the factors that cause abuse, or provide an opportunity for abuse to occur, then these factors need to be identified explored and addressed – and school assessments is one way to achieve this.

School assessments uncover risks and strengths within school contexts, that are associated to young people's experiences of abuse.

A school assessment draws on aspects of the environment to build a picture of how the school can be safer for young people. A range of methods will be used to gather this information including:

- Speaking to young people
- Student and parent/carer surveys
- Speaking with staff
- Reviewing behaviour logs

- Observing the school environment.

At Sydenham School we take contextual safeguarding very seriously. If colleagues have concerns or become aware of circumstances within school where young people are currently experiencing or are at risk of harm, please report to the DSL or DDSLs and make a written record as soon as possible after that on CPOMS. A decision will then be made by the Senior Leadership Team about the potential need to carry out a school assessment.

14.25 Alternative Provision

When our school places a pupil in an alternative provision, we maintain responsibility for the safeguarding of that pupil. We will ensure that the placement meets the pupil's needs and that their safety and well-being are prioritised.

Given that pupils placed in Alternative Provision (AP) often have complex needs and may be at increased risk of harm, Sydenham School recognises the importance of robust safeguarding oversight in these settings. The school will obtain written confirmation from all alternative providers that appropriate safeguarding checks have been completed for all individuals working with pupils equivalent to those that schools would undertake for their own staff.

This includes a commitment from the provider to inform the school of any changes that could pose a risk to pupils, such as new staff appointments, so the school can be assured appropriate vetting has occurred. The school will also maintain accurate records of each child's placement, including the address of the AP or subcontracted provision being accessed.

To ensure ongoing safety and suitability, placements will be reviewed at least half-termly, with checks on attendance, safeguarding practices, and the child's overall wellbeing. Where safeguarding concerns arise, the placement will be immediately reviewed and terminated, if necessary, unless or until those concerns are satisfactorily resolved.

14.26 Children and the Court System

Children may sometimes be required to provide evidence in criminal courts, whether as victims of crimes or as witnesses. At Sydenham School we recognise the significant impact this can have on a child's emotional and psychological well-being, our school is committed to supporting children throughout this challenging process.

To assist children in understanding the court system, there are two specific guides available:

- **For children aged 5-11 years.** This guide explains the court process in simple terms, including the special measures available to support young children.
- **For children aged 12-17 years.** This guide offers a more detailed explanation of the court process, appropriate for older children.

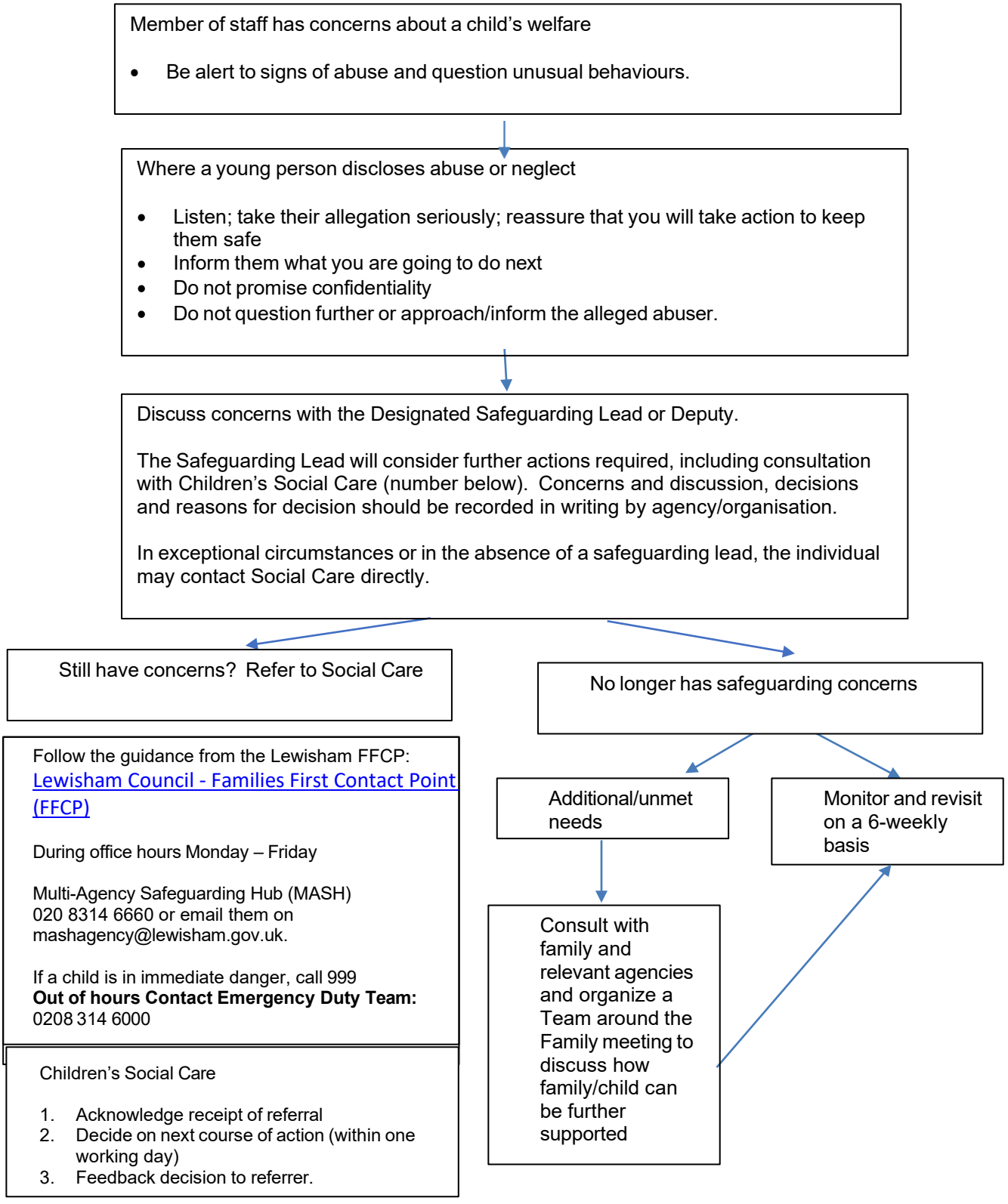
Both guides include diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and explain the use of video links to help children understand what to expect.

When children are required to give evidence, our school will:

1. Provide Emotional Support: Offer counseling services and emotional support through our school's support staff.
2. Educational Support: Ensure that children understand the court process by discussing the age-appropriate guides in a safe and supportive environment.
3. Coordination with Families: Work closely with families to understand the child's needs and coordinate support strategies.

Appendix A – What to do if you're worried a child is being abused or neglected flowchart

This flowchart is intended for use as a brief guide. Please refer to the DfE Guidance 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, which includes definitions and possible indicators of abuse.



Appendix B – Safeguarding Information Poster for Students

2026-2027

SYDENHAM SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION GUIDE

You are a professional working in a school and so have certain responsibilities regarding safeguarding and Child Protection.
If a student asks if they can talk to you or starts talking to you:

1) Tell them you may not be able to keep it confidential and ask if you can take notes.

2) Stay calm – they have chosen you as the person they trust.

3) Do not ask direct questions (you are not taking a statement or coaching the student).

4) Only use their language in your notes (if they use slang then you write the slang down).

5) Actively listen (maintaining eye contact) and keep listening even if you find what's being said difficult. When they finish speaking, ask if there's anything else they want to say and if they have told anybody else and then:

Explain to the student that you are going to talk to another member of staff about what they have told you because you are concerned by it; ask if they are happy to go back to lessons or want some time in the medical room or somewhere else.

SCHOOL: Talk to one of the following people:



Ms. George
Designated Safeguarding Lead
EXT: 605



Ms. Brooks
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead & Pastoral Manager
EXT: 473



Ms. Wijnberg
Headteacher DDSL
EXT: 426



Ms. Coleridge
DDSL Y9 & KS3
EXT: 449



Ms. Hehir
DDSL Y11 & KS4
EXT: 456



Ms. Hall-Wright
DDSL Yr7
EXT: 439



Ms. Morrison
DDSL 8
EXT: 458



Mr. Freakes
DDSL Yr10
EXT: 525



Ms. Healy
DDSL KS5
EXT: 508



Ms. Bentil
Learning Mentor
EXT: 597



Ms. Fullilove
SENCO
EXT: 400



Pastoral Manager Year 7
EXT: 545



Ms. Brown
Pastoral Manager Year 8
EXT: 503

Ms. Murray
Pastoral Manager Year 9
EXT: 478



Ms. Penfold
Pastoral Manager Year 10
EXT: 470



Ms. Appleton
Pastoral Manager Year 11
EXT: 678



Ms. Owusu-Frimpong
HOY 7
EXT: 578



Ms. Shirfield
HOY 8
EXT: 433



Ms. Bailey
HOY 9
EXT: 432



Ms. Nkrumah
HOY 10
EXT: 483



Ms. Johnson
HOY 11
EXT: 457



Ms. Nash
HOY 12
EXT: 454



Ms. Syers
HOY 12
EXT: 599



Ms. Harbon
HOY 13
EXT: 599



Mr. Joseph
SLWH Manager
EXT: 422

In an emergency RING: Police 999 or non-emergency 101.

Don't hesitate if you think that the child shouldn't go home AND its 6 o'clock on a Friday evening or you're on a residential trip or you are the most senior member of staff left on site.

Lewisham FFCP Team: 020 8314 6660
(Family First Contact Point for Children's Social Care referral)

YOU: Can talk to any of the above people about what you've heard and how you're feeling about it, but please don't talk to anybody else in the school about it. See the green booklet.
Staff can speak to Worklife support: 08000 856 148
Students can call: Childline 0800 1111

If worried about other staff, talk to Emma Wijnberg, Allison Costello or the Chair of Governors Pat Cullen: **p.cullen@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk**

Whistle Blowing: The Sydenham School Whistleblowing Policy, available on the school's website, has a clear reporting procedure for children, parents and other people to report concerns or complaints, including abusive or poor practice.
The NSPCC 'Whistleblowing Advice Line' offers free advice and support to professionals with concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in their own or another organisation.
Advice is available from **8:00 am to 8:00 pm, Monday to Friday**.
The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line number: **0808 800 5000** Email: **help@nspcc.org.uk**.
To make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), please email a Referral Form to **LewishamLADO@Lewisham.gov.uk**

Appendix C – Reporting a Concern using CPOMS Reporting a Concern using CPOMS

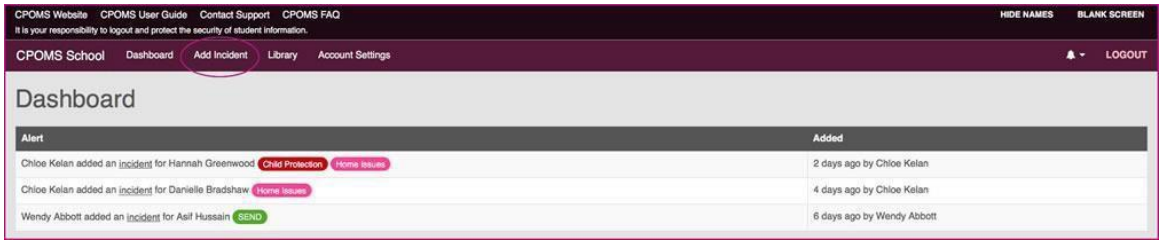
Sydenham School uses CPOMs to record, track and monitor safeguarding concerns. If you become aware of safeguarding concerns this must be reported and recorded, in accordance with government guidance and the child protection policy. All child protection concerns MUST be raised in person before recording them. Allegations against staff should be made directly to the Headteacher and not recorded on CPOMs.

The DSL will monitor concerns and report where appropriate to Children's Social Care if a child is deemed at risk of significant harm. This information will be disclosed only to those staff who need to know for the purposes of child protection. Please do not use acronyms. Exact words must be used even if they may offend. It is helpful to use the student's own words as quotations as far as possible.

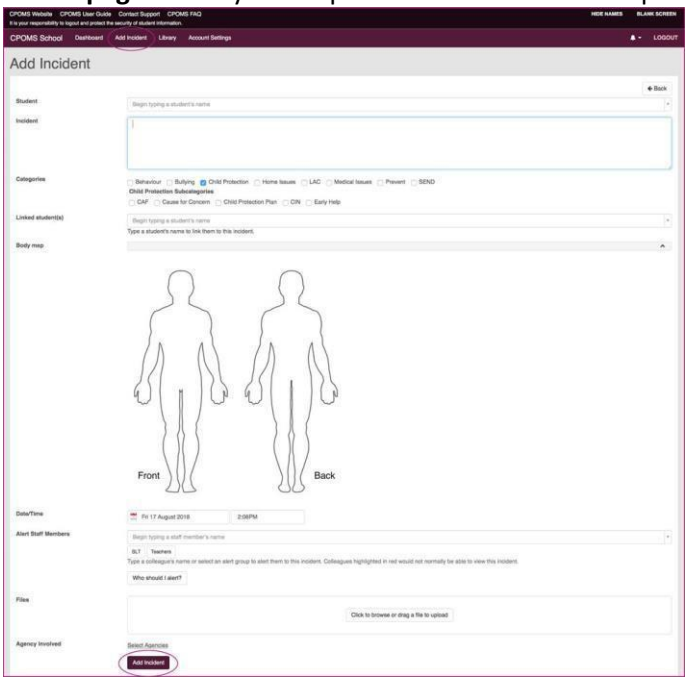
How to record a safeguarding concern:

1. Log onto CPOMS by accessing the Sydenham School site and using your username and password: https://sydenhamsch.cpoms.net

2. To add a new incident to the system click on the **'Add Incident'** link at the top of your screen.



3. This will take you to the **incident page** where you can proceed to fill in all the required information:



4. **Select the child** to whom you want to add the incident by beginning to type the name in the student box at the top of the page. This will begin to filter through all the student names held within the system. Once you have selected a name, the box will turn grey. If you have selected the wrong name click the red 'X' delete button to choose the correct student name.

5. **Fill in the incident text box** with all of the details about the incident which you are adding. This is a free text box so you can add as much or as little as needed. Be careful to be accurate and specific. Consider the following:

- Write the incident as a statement of events, not as an email or letter addressed to anyone
- Include any actions you have taken or will take, e.g call home or speak to the student if appropriate
- Don't direct staff members to take any specific actions- these will be recorded and actioned by the DSL/Deputy DSL.

6. After you have filled in all of the details of the incident you **need to select at least one category** to assign it to (if there is an overlap you can select more than one). We recommend using 'Safeguarding (to be recategorized)' as a generic category. The DSL and Deputy can re-categorise incidents if needed.

7. You can then choose to **link in other students** if more than one is involved in a particular incident. This will copy the incident to all students selected. When inputting any linked student names into the incident text box, please ensure that you **use their initials.**
You can also click to monitor the linked student under the same category, if necessary, and also share any documents attached to the incident.

8. The '**Body map'** feature allows you to apply numbered markers to a body map image to support your incident text. Describe the marks in the text box indicating which number on the body map the mark refers to.

9. Following this you can select a **time and date**. These will both default to the current time and date you are adding the incident. However, if you wish to change it to when the incident actually occurred you can do so here.

10. Next, you can choose which members of staff you wish to **alert**. Begin typing a name and CPOMS will filter through all CPOMS registered staff members. The DDSL (SLT link)/HoY/PM for the year group are alerted to all incidents automatically and the DSL and DDSL are alerted to specific categories.

11. If you would like to **attach a document** to support the incident e.g. a social services letter, previous school case notes, or meeting minutes etc. you can do so at this point. Simply click to browse and find the relevant document on your computer and add as you would an email attachment, or drag a file from one of your folders to upload.

12. Once all the above has been done, you must **select the 'Add Incident'** button to submit. This will then send out email alerts to all of the selected staff members telling them that they need to log in to CPOMS to look at a newly added incident.

Appendix D – What to do if an incident regarding indecent images comes to your attention

What to do if an incident regarding indecent images comes to your attention

Report it to your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or equivalent immediately.

- **Never** view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a child to share or download – **this is illegal**

Note: In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary for the DSL (or equivalent) only to view the image to safeguard the child or young person. That decision should be based on the professional judgement of the DSL (or equivalent).

- If you have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), report this to the DSL (or equivalent) and seek support.

Do not	Do
• **Do not** delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it. • **Do not** ask the child/children or young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the DSL (or equivalent). • **Do not** share information about the incident with other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers. • **Do not** say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.	• **Do** explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL (or equivalent). • **Do confiscate the phone or device if the image is on there and pass this onto the DSL**

Further resources to help adults respond to disclosures of abuse can be found on the NSPCC website.

Guidance taken from Government Guidance: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (updated March 2024) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Appendix E - Guidance for the use of touch

We recognise that there are times at school when we may need to 'touch' students. For instance, when responding to an accident, teaching a musical instrument or administering First Aid. It may also be the case that if there is an incident involving physical aggression between students that we have cause to step in and 'restrain' those students. There should be a written outline of the incident as soon as is practically possible following the event. There are additional in-school guidelines on how adults should safely restrain a student if the need arises. These guidelines can be found in the school Behaviour Policy and exist to protect both students and staff.

Unlike some other schools, at Sydenham School we do not feel that a 'no touch' policy is either desirable nor realistic. Instead, we would like the adults in the school to be mindful about 'touch' in relation to students. We have a 'no physical contact' policy between students. This is because touch can be misinterpreted and lead to conflict. Also linking arms –even in friendship-can make easy passage along corridors, stairwells etc. unsafe and unruly.

We recognise that 'touch' depends on its social context and for this reason it is hard to create firm rules on touch. The guidance below is issued in order to support adults in using their professional judgement about touch in relation to students and to therefore keep both students and themselves safe.

Touch must take place in ways that minimise the chance of a student misconstruing an adult's intention or motives. Some students will not feel that 'touch' in any circumstances is appropriate and therefore will find any 'touch' unwelcome. If there is a need to 'touch' a student, it should take place, as far as possible, within the view of other people. If there is a need to physically comfort a student who may be in distress, confine any 'touch' to the hands, arms, shoulder or area at the top of their back.

If a student attempts to embrace you either turn to a sideways position or take a clear step back. You may need to explain to the student that it is not appropriate for there to be any direct contact of that sort. If you feel at all uncomfortable or concerned about a student who seeks to make physical contact with you, then please do refer this to the DSL. If you have had cause to physically restrain a student this should also be reported formally in writing in the form of an account of the incident using the standard proforma and sent to the DSL and Headteacher. The need to report 'touch' is also the case if you are concerned about any physical contact you have had with a student, or have reason to believe that the student may have been concerned by it.

Appendix F - Resolving professional differences

The guidance below will be read in conjunction with the Lewisham Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-Agency Escalation Policy (March 2023):
Lewisham Safeguarding Children Partnership - (safeguardinglewisham.org.uk)

Having different professional perspectives within safeguarding practice is a sign of a healthy and well-functioning partnership. These differences of opinion are usually resolved by discussion and negotiation between the professionals concerned. It is essential that where differences of opinion arise they do not adversely affect the outcomes for children and young people, and are resolved in a constructive and timely manner.

Differences could arise in a number of areas of multi-agency working as well as within single agency working. Differences are most likely to arise in relation to;

- Criteria for referrals
- Outcomes of assessments
- Roles and responsibilities of workers
- Service provision
- Timeliness of interventions
- Information sharing and communication.

If you have a difference of opinion with another professional, remember:

- Professional differences and disagreements can help us find better ways to improve outcomes for children and young people
- All professionals are responsible for their own cases, and their actions in relation to case work
- Differences and disagreements should be resolved as simply and quickly as possible, in the first instance by individual practitioners and/or their line managers
- All practitioners should respect the views of others whatever the level of experience. Remember that challenging more senior or experienced practitioners can be hard
- Expect to be challenged; working together effectively depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies
- Professional differences are reduced by clarity about roles and responsibilities and the ability to discuss and share problems in networking forums.

If a professional cannot resolve the difference at their level, they should liaise with their line manager.

Appendix G - Visiting Speakers – Guidelines for Staff

"Specified authorities will need to…[have] robust safeguarding policies in place to identify children at risk...These policies should set out clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers – whether invited by staff or by children themselves – are suitable and appropriately supervised. (Prevent Duty Guidance in England and Wales HM Government July 2015)

If you are inviting a speaker into school please be aware of the following guidelines:

- Any invited speaker should be approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and you should make it clear why the speaker has been chosen
- Reasonable checks should be made on the suitability of the person. These may include internet searches and/or contacting other schools where the person has spoken previously
- Although not always possible, it is useful to invite speakers from an established company, charity or other group whose aims are well-documented
- When booking the speaker ensure that they understand they must abide by the school's equality commitments; that there must be no statements which might cause offence to others, or otherwise undermine tolerance of other faiths or beliefs; and there must be no extremist material
- Discuss briefly the content of the presentation before the event; this may be on the day or beforehand
- Talks and presentations should not be used to raise funds, without the prior written permission of the Headteacher
- Visiting speakers must arrive at reception in good time to book in, and must bring suitable identification
- Visitors must be supervised at all times and not left alone with students
- Visiting speakers should understand that their presentation will be brought to an early end, if the content proves unsuitable.

Appendix H - Looked After Children (LAC)

Looked After Children have often been the victim of significant abuse and therefore may not have developed emotionally or physically in the way of other students.

Although, once they are looked after they are in a position of relative safety, they may not fully appreciate that fact and still look for ways to gain attention (cries for help).

Many LAC have suffered disrupted learning and may have missed extended periods of school. The gaps in their learning, and in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress.

It is important that all members of staff:

- have high expectations of LAC and their involvement in learning and educational progress
- are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families, the reasons for that separation and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences
- understand the reasons which may be behind a looked after child's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children but the adults in a school should not allow this to be an excuse for lowering expectations of what a student is capable of achieving
- understand how important it is to see LAC as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group and to not publicly treat them differently from their peers
- appreciate the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's looked after status
- appreciate the central importance of the student's PEP (Personal Education Plan) in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and most importantly, depending on age and understanding, the student themselves, of what everyone needs to do to help them to achieve their potential
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, Virtual School Headteachers (or equivalent) in local authorities and how education – and the function of the PEP – fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child. Virtual School Headteachers are responsible for overseeing the progress of LAC.

The role and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children

In promoting the educational achievement of Looked After Children, the Designated Teacher (DT) should:

- contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put LAC at a disadvantage
- make sure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support a looked after child's learning. Particular account should be taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what he or she can achieve
- promote a culture in which LAC believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education
- promote a culture in which LAC are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning

- be a source of advice for teachers at school about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual students who are looked after

- make sure the school makes full use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of LAC and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning, where they need to go and how to get there

- make sure that LAC are prioritised in any selection of students who would benefit from one-to-one tuition and that they have access to academic focused study support

- promote good home-school links through contact with the child's carer about how they can support his or her progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers. In particular, they should make sure that carers understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home

- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the student's PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary.

Appendix I - County Lines, Gang Violence, Exploitation and Drug Supply

For the purpose of this policy, a county lines gang features these criteria:

- The gang / gang members are based or have origin within an urban city location
- They have established a market in a rural town, into which they supply class A drugs
- They utilise a mobile phone number to facilitate drug orders from and supply to customers in the county town
- Violence, incidents of kidnap, use of weapons (including firearms) and ruthless debt control prevail as a consequence of county lines markets
- Their criminality systematically exploits young and vulnerable persons. County lines gangs pose a significant threat to vulnerable adults and children, upon whom they rely to conduct and/or facilitate this criminality. Exposure to gang exploitation has the potential to generate emotional and physical harm.

Exploitation of children

- Children (under 18) are exploited by county line gangs. Children from urban areas are recruited by gangs to courier drugs and money to the county location, often via train but also in cars or on coaches
- Children are reported to have stayed in very poor conditions at cuckooed addresses that generally belong to class A drug users. Many children are also used by gangs to deal drugs within the county markets. This includes local children and those travelling from urban hubs
- Gangs utilise vulnerable children because they are a relatively inexpensive resource and easily controlled
- Ages for those children exploited by gangs, varies from 12-18 years, with 15-16 being the most common age range
- Whilst boys are most commonly exploited, girls are also used. Children can be groomed by gangs, either with gifts or promises that they will earn money
- Most commonly children from poor backgrounds engaged in offending behaviour, facing difficulties at home or in care of social services are amongst those most vulnerable to gangs. They are often listed as a missing person and/or have poor school attendance
- Although CSE is not the driving factor in county line gangs exploiting children, a clear link between county lines exploitation and child sexual exploitation exists. Girls who are being exploited to hold and deal drugs are vulnerable to becoming more accessible to gang members wishing to sexually exploit them. It is conceivable that gangs or gang members use county line drug dealing as an opportunity to also target young females for sexual exploitation
- Violence is used towards members of the gang, usually runners, when they make mistakes or are accused of stealing. If drugs or profits are lost by a gang member due to being robbed or arrested they will be held responsible for the loss and take on that debt, which can have serious consequences for the individual
- Heroin and crack cocaine remain the principal drugs supplied, but gangs selling powder cocaine and cannabis are sometimes sold in addition.

Appendix J - Operation Encompass – Domestic Violence and Abuse

At Sydenham School we are working in partnership with the Metropolitan Police and Lewisham Children's Services to identify and provide appropriate support to students who have experienced domestic violence in their household; this scheme is called Operation Encompass.

The purpose of Operation Encompass is to safeguard and support children and young people who have been involved in or witness to a domestic abuse incident. Domestic abuse impacts on children in a number of ways. Children are at increased risk of physical injury during an incident, either by accident or because they attempt to intervene. Even when not directly injured, children are greatly distressed by witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent/carer.

Encompass has been created to address this situation. It is the implementation of key partnership working between the police and schools. The aim of sharing information with local schools is to allow 'Key Adults' the opportunity of engaging with the child and to provide access to support that allows them to remain in a safe but secure familiar environment.

In order to achieve this, the Lewisham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub will share police information of all domestic incidents where one of our students has been present, with the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL). On receipt of any information, the DSL will decide on the appropriate support the child requires, this could be silent or overt dependent on the needs and wishes of the child. All information sharing and resulting actions will be undertaken in accordance with the Metropolitan Police and Lewisham FFCP Encompass Protocol Data Sharing Agreement. We will record this information and store this information in accordance with the record keeping procedures outlined in this policy.

The purpose and procedures in Operation Encompass have been shared with all parents/carers and Governors, is detailed here as part of the school's Safeguarding Policy and published on our school website.

The Key Adults at Sydenham School who will receive the Operation Encompass information are:

- **Eleanor George – Assistant Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead**
- **Nicole Brooks- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Appendix K: No Recourse to Public Funds

Definitions

NRPF is a condition imposed by the Home Office on:

- A person subject to immigration control; giving them no entitlement to welfare benefits or public housing
- Families with no recourse to public funds are not entitled to any of the following benefits: income based job seeker's allowance, income support, child tax credit, working tax credit, a social fund payment, child benefit, housing benefit, council tax benefit, state pension credit, attendance allowance, carer's allowance, disability living allowance and allocation of local authority housing including homelessness assistance
- All people who are living in the United Kingdom are entitled to Primary Healthcare, their immigration status is irrelevant. Secondary health care is only free to those ordinary resident in the UK. Those who have entered the UK illegally, overstayed their visa or refused asylum seekers are not entitled to free secondary health care
- All children are entitled to medical services, a full education (until 18 years old) and Local Authority Child in Need services.

The role of the Local Authority

Upon a person or family presenting to the Local Authority seeking support, the Local Authority will conduct the appropriate assessment under the National Assistance Act 1948, Children Act 1989 and/or Human Rights Act 1998. There may be some cases where people are supported under the Mental Health Act. The Local Authority will conduct a check with the Home Office on the family's current immigration status.

National Asylum Support Service (NASS) holds responsibility to support asylum seekers. The exception is when a person has community care needs recognised by the Local Authority which amount to **'care and attention'**. The term 'care and attention' has been defined by case law.

Any family referred to the local authority would firstly have to undergo an assessment to establish if they are destitute. The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 defines a person to be destitute if they do not have adequate accommodation or any means of obtaining it (whether or not their other essential living needs are met), or they have adequate accommodation or the means of obtaining it, but cannot meet other essential living needs.

As part of this assessment process, it is a requirement that families produce all relevant documents including birth certificates, passports, proof of legal representation and any current applications to the Home Office and details of their finances, e.g. bank statements.

The expectation is that families should make their own arrangements within the community and their own family to be supported rather to rely upon the local authority. Children in the family will be assessed for their eligibility to Children in Need services. If eligible a duty will be owed to the children, and in addition human rights duties to the child and their family.

If the Local Authority has received confirmation that the family has no pending application with the Home Office, the Local Authority will then conduct a human rights assessment to consider whether the family are able to return to country of origin. Within the assessment consideration would be given to whether the child would be in need if they returned to country of origin. The Human Rights Assessment will consider the human rights of the whole family, to conclude whether there would be a breach of human rights if support was withdrawn by the Local Authority and they returned to their country of

origin.

The threshold for a breach of Human Rights by returning a person to their home country is very high, and if the Home Office has already made a decision to refuse an application to remain which has been made on the same grounds, or they have never made an application to the Home Office, it is very unlikely that the Local Authority will hold a human rights duty to the family/person.

The role of the school

The role of the school includes:

- Awareness if indicators of NRPF families include if parents or carers: do not have a National Insurance number; have no employment history until they are in their 20s or 30s; are not working or claiming benefits
- Meeting the needs of children in NRPF families. The children are not entitled to free school meals, however, schools have the power to fund them
- Liaising with the allocated Social Worker if appropriate including completed FFCP checks.

Safeguarding issues for children whose families have no recourse to public funds

Children's Social Care and professionals working with a family needs to be aware of safeguarding issues for this group of children. If a parent(s)/carers do not have the means to support their child and this is putting him/her at risk of harm or serious prejudicing their welfare then serious consideration and further assessment will need to be made by Children's Social Care about whether they need to exercise their legal powers to protect.

The role of the Home Office

If there is a family that comes to the attention of the Local Authority and it is discovered they are in the UK unlawfully, then there is a legal duty on the Local Authority to inform the Home Office of their whereabouts. The legal duty applies to families that are also being supported by the Local Authority, this is so their application can be prioritised by the Home Office.

Relevant external agencies:

UKBA –
www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk
Refugee Action/Assisted Voluntary Return
http://www.refugee-action.org.uk

Appendix L: Sydenham School Drug Prevention Policy

Aims of this policy

- To clarify the legal requirements and responsibilities of the school
- To reinforce and safeguard the health and safety of students and the whole school community
- To clarify the school's approach to drugs for all staff, students, Governors, parents/carers, external agencies and the wider community
- To give guidance on developing, implementing and monitoring the drug education programme
- To clarify the procedures for responding to and managing any drug-related incidents that may occur so that they are managed with confidence and consistency and in the best interests of those involved
- To ensure that the response to incidents involving drugs and the drug education programme complement the values and ethos of the school
- To provide a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the school drug education programme and the management of incidents involving illegal and other unauthorised drugs
- To reinforce the role of the school in contributing to local and national strategies.

Policy Context

As part of their statutory duty to promote students' wellbeing, schools have a clear role to play in preventing drug misuse. The Drugs Prevention Policy has been developed with reference to the Department for Education advice and guidance: DfE and ACPO drug advice for schools, which is non-statutory and was produced to help answer some of the most common questions raised by school staff in this area.
The drugs education of students takes into account the statutory requirements within the National Curriculum and the non-statutory framework for PSHE at Key Stages 3 and 4.

Other related policies and documents include:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Trips and Visits Policy
- First Aid and Administering Medicines Policies
- Staff Code of Conduct.

Where and to whom the policy applies

This policy applies to all school staff, students, parents/carers, Governors and other partner agencies working with the school. The policy applies to the school premises, the school day, while travelling to and from school, journeys in school time, work experience, day and residential trips.

Definition of Drugs

The definition of a drug given by the United Nations office on Drugs and Crime is: "A substance people take to change the way they feel, think or behave". Here, "drugs" and "drug education" is used to refer to:

• All illegal drugs (those controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971)
• All legal drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances (those giving off a gas or vapour which can be inhaled), ketamine, khat, alkyl nitrites (known as poppers) and new psychoactive drugs ('legal highs')
• All over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

The school's stance towards drugs, health and the needs of students

The possession, use or supply of illegal and other unauthorised drugs in Sydenham School is not acceptable. The school is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community. In providing drugs education and responding to incidents involving drugs our first concern is the pastoral care and health and safety of students.

Drugs Education

Aims of Drug Education

Drug education is a major component of drug prevention. The following aims of drug education at Sydenham School will be consistent with the values and ethos of the school and laws of society as well as being appropriate to the age, ability and maturity of the students, and relevant to their particular circumstances:

• To increase students' knowledge and understanding and clarify misconceptions about - the short and long-term effects and risks of drugs - the rules and laws relating to drugs - the impact of drugs on individuals, families and communities - local and national use - the complex moral, social, emotional and political issues surrounding drugs

• To develop students' personal and social skills to make informed decisions and keep themselves safe and healthy, including - promoting positive attitudes to healthy lifestyles - assessing, avoiding and managing risk - communicating effectively - resisting pressures - finding information, help and advice - devising problem-solving and coping strategies - developing and maintaining self-awareness and self-esteem in order to motivate them to value their welfare and conscientious care of themselves

• To enable students to explore their own and other peoples' attitudes towards drugs, drug use and drug users, including challenging stereotypes, and exploring media and social influences

• To ensure that students have access to and knowledge of up to date information as sources of help. This includes local and national helplines (including FRANK for drugs, NHS Smoking Services for tobacco and Drinkline for alcohol), youth and community services and drug services. These sources are used in addition to the school's own drug and alcohol education.

Drug Education Content

Sydenham School provides a planned drug education curriculum through the following:

(i) The National Curriculum Science National outlines the content of the statutory drugs education:

Year 7 - Reproduction - discuss healthy pregnancies and the avoidance of drugs etc. during gestation.

Year 8 - Health and Disease - discuss the effects of smoking, vaping and recreational drug use

Year 10 - Health and Disease - discuss the effects of alcohol and diseases.

Year 12 Chemistry - Chromatography - how to test for illegal substances.

Year 12 BTEC - effects of smoking in Unit 1,

(ii) RSE topics covered:

Year 7:

Relationships- Self-worth, romance and friendships (including online) and relationship boundaries .

Healthy Lifestyle- Influences on health, puberty, unwanted contact and FGM Healthy routines, personal safety in and outside school

Year 8:

Relationships- Identity and relationships, Gender identity, sexual orientation, consent, 'sexting', and an introduction to contraception, Discrimination in all its forms including: racism, religious discrimination, disability, discrimination, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia

Health- Drugs and alcohol, Alcohol and drug misuse, Pressures relating to drug use

Year 9:

Relationships- Respectful relationships- Conflict resolution, and relationship changes, Relationships and sex education including consent, contraception, the risks of STIs, and attitudes to pornography

Health- Healthy and unhealthy friendships, assertiveness, substance misuse, and gang exploitation

Year 10

Relationships- Healthy relationships : Relationships and sex expectations, pleasure and challenges, including the impact of the media and pornography

Health- Exploring the influence and impact of drugs, gangs, role models and the media, Mental health and ill health, stigma, safeguarding health, including during periods of transition or change

Year 11

Relationships- Communication in relationships, Personal values, assertive communication (including in relation to contraception and sexual health), relationship challenges and abuse, Different families and parental responsibilities, pregnancy, marriage and forced marriage and changing relationships

(iii) Other curriculum areas such as Religious Education and Physical Education also contribute to aspects of the drug education curriculum.

Organisation

a) Responsibility for coordination: The coordination of Drugs Education is the responsibility of the Subject Leader for PSHE. The Curriculum Leader for Science also has responsibility for elements of drugs education.

b) Delivery: This is through discrete PSHE lessons, timetabled into the curriculum and led by trained teachers.

c) Staffing: All PSHE lessons are taught by trained teachers. Other staff who may deliver specific aspects of Drug Education will have access to on-going advice, support and appropriate training as part of their own professional development.

d) Visitors: Occasionally, appropriate and suitably experienced and/or knowledgeable visitors from outside school may be invited to contribute to the delivery of drug education e.g. Compass Counselling.

Safeguarding

Staff always ensure that students know that adults in the school cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. All students are offered sensitive and appropriate support as needed. Students are encouraged to talk to their parents and carers and supported to do so. Information about sources of help is made available (e.g. helplines). If there is any possibility that a child may be at risk or putting others at risk, the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding procedure is followed (see Sydenham School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy).

Management of drug related incidents

A drug related incident may include any or all of the following:

- drugs or drugs paraphernalia found on school premises
- students in possession of illegal or unauthorised drugs
- students supplying unauthorised or illegal drugs

- students under the influence of drugs, or exhibiting signs of intoxication or illness
- disclosure of drug use
- information which suggest student(s) are involved in substance misuse
- illegitimate sale/supply of drugs in the school vicinity.

If there are any suspicions, observations, disclosures or discoveries of situations involving illegal and other unauthorised drugs (possession, supply or imbibing):

(i) Utmost priority will be placed on safety, meeting any medical emergencies with first aid and summoning appropriate help before addressing further issues. If in doubt, medical assistance will be sought immediately.
(ii) When there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student(s) may have an illegal or unauthorised drug, they will be escorted to a senior member of staff who will make every effort to encourage the individual to hand the item(s) over voluntarily, in the presence of a second member of staff. If a search is required this will be carried out in accordance with the Sydenham School Behaviour Policy.
(iii) Any substance suspected of being a drug will be confiscated. In taking temporary possession of a suspected substance, a second adult witness will be present, the sample will be sealed in a plastic bag with details of the date, time and witness present and then locked in the security cupboard.
(iv) If the substance is suspected to be an illegal drug, the police will be notified immediately, in order that they may collect it for identification and then store or dispose of it in line with locally agreed protocols. In the majority of cases, parents will be notified immediately unless this is not in the best interests of the student.
(v) The school will maintain vigilance about drug-related incidents in the local community through contact with police and other relevant agencies.

Responses to drug related incidents

Responses to all drug related incidents will be in accordance with the Sydenham School Behaviour Policy. Support from Inclusion or external agencies will also be sought as appropriate.

Early Intervention

The school has a key role in identifying students at risk of drug misuse. The process of identifying needs should aim to distinguish between students who require general information, those who could benefit from targeted prevention and those who require a detailed needs assessment and more intensive support.

The school will also be alert to behaviour which might indicate that the child is experiencing difficult home circumstances. Where problems are observed or suspected or if a child chooses to disclose that there is drug or alcohol abuse in the home we will signpost students to support and refer families at home for support if required. Safeguarding procedures will be followed according to the Sydenham School Safeguarding Policy.

Smoking

Sydenham is a non-smoking school for all staff, students and visitors.

Dissemination

The policy will be available on the website for all staff, visitors, parents, carers and Governors.

Appendix M- Sydenham School Intimate Care Policy

Introduction

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure (such as cleaning up a student after they have soiled themselves) to intimate personal areas. In most cases such care will involve cleaning for hygiene purposes as part of a staff member's duty of care.

The issue of intimate care is a sensitive one and will require staff to be respectful of the child's needs. The child's dignity should always be preserved with a high level of privacy, choice and control. There shall be a high awareness of child protection issues. All staff providing intimate and personal care are DBS checked and are not included on the barred list. Staff behaviour may be open to scrutiny and staff must work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.

Sydenham School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We recognise that there is a need to treat all children with respect when intimate care is given. No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain. To support the child in feeling safe and comfortable with the provision of intimate and personal care, we will ensure that the care is provided by staff known to the child, who have been trained to carry out this duty.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Anti-Bullying
- Behaviour and Exclusion
- Health and Safety
- Code of Conduct setting out standards and acceptable behaviour for staff
- E-Safety and ICT acceptable use
- Equalities
- Whistleblowing.

Our Approach to Best Practice

The management of all children with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. The child who requires intimate care is treated with respect at all times; the child's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance. Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so (including Child Protection and Health and Safety training as needed for specific students with EHC plans/disabilities) and are fully aware of best practice. Apparatus will be provided to assist with children who need special arrangements following assessment from physiotherapist/ occupational therapist as required.

Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual children, taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation. Wherever possible, staff who are involved in the intimate care of children or young people will not usually be involved with the delivery of sex education to the children or young people in their care as an additional safeguard to both staff and children and young people involved. Exceptions may be made for students with learning disabilities with parental consent or agreement (Template 3).

The child will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each child to do as much for themselves as they can. This may mean, for example, giving the child responsibility for washing themselves. Individual Intimate Care Plans will be

drawn up for particular children as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the child (Templates 1-2).

Each child's right to privacy will be respected. When a child is in need of intimate care, two adults should be present. One to carry out the necessary care and one to support and safeguard the adult and child. The carers will generally be the same people who are involved with the care and have had the suitable training but there should be several people who are capable of supporting the child and are aware of their needs. All of these staff should be known to the child unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Intimate care arrangements will be discussed with parents or carers on a regular basis and recorded on the child's care plan (Template 1). The needs and wishes of children and parents will be taken into account wherever possible within the constraints of staffing and equal opportunities legislation.

The Protection of Children

The Sydenham School Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures will be adhered to. All children will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding. If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a child's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. they will immediately report concerns to the DSL.

If a child makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed (as per Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).

Changing Facilities

Children who have long-term incontinence will require specially adapted facilities. The dignity and privacy of the child should be of paramount concern. Consideration is given to the sighting of this area from a health and safety aspect. The area should not be situated in a thoroughfare, as a changing mat may have to be used on the floor when a child is being changed. This method of changing a child is recommended, as it avoids having to lift a child and cause possible back injury (see Templates 1-3).

Toileting

If a child has soiled themselves, it is essential staff protect the child (and themselves) by:

1. Phoning the parent or carer for permission to clean or change the child. If the parent or carer refuses, they must come to the school straight away to manage the situation
2. Two adults are involved in the process if the parent or carer gives permission (one to clean and the other to stand by the door to manage privacy)
3. Depending on the age of the child – the child should have autonomy at all times
4. The situation must be dealt with in a toilet.

In the case of supporting a child who requires regular toileting, Sydenham School has a Management Plan which is completed prior to support taking place (Templates 1-3). If the Management Plan has been agreed and signed by parents and staff, it is acceptable for two members of staff to assist a child unless there is an implication for safe moving and handling of the child.

Equipment Provision

Parents have a role to play when their child is still wearing nappies. The parent should provide nappies, disposal bags, wipes; changing mat etc. and parent should be made aware of this responsibility. The school is responsible for providing gloves, plastic aprons, a bin, non-allergic wet wipes, and liners to dispose of any waste.

Health and Safety

Staff should wear a plastic apron and gloves when dealing with a child who is bleeding or soiled or when changing a soiled nappy. Any soiled waste should be placed in a polythene waste disposal bag, which can be sealed. This bag should then be placed in a bin (complete with liner) which is specifically designated for the disposal of such waste. Staff should be made aware of Sydenham School's Health and Safety Policy.

Special Needs

Children with special needs have the same rights to safety and privacy when receiving intimate care. Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability or learning difficulty must be considered with regard to individual teaching and SEND profiles for each child. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child, those with parental responsibility and the school should be easily understood and recorded (Templates 1-3).

Parents and carers of students with regular soiling or wetting will be encouraged to leave a change of clothes in school for the use of their child.

Template 1 - Sydenham School Intimate Care Plan

Child's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Name of staff Involved: _____

Area of Need: _____

Equipment Required: _____

Location of Suitable Facilities: _____

Frequency of Support: _____

Other details:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Working towards Independence

The child will try to:

Staff assisting will support by:

Review date:

Agreed and signed:

Parent/Carer: _____Date: _____

Child (if appropriate): _____Date: _____

Staff involved: _____Date: _____

Inclusion Lead: _____Date: _____

Template 2 - Sydenham School Toilet Management Plan – Agreement between Staff and Child

Toilet Management Plan -Agreement between Staff and Child

Child's name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Support staff name(s): _____

Support Staff

As the person helping you in the toilet you can expect me to do the following:
• I will stop what I am doing to help you in the toilet as soon as you ask me
• I will avoid all unnecessary delays
• When you use our emergency agreed signal, I will stop what I am doing and come and help
• I will treat you with respect and ensure privacy and dignity at all times
• I will ask permission before touching you or your clothing
• I will check that you are as comfortable as possible, both physically and emotionally
• If I am working with a colleague to help you, I will ensure that we talk in a way that does not embarrass you
• I will look and listen carefully if there is something you would like to change about your Toilet Management Plan.

Child

As the child who needs help in the toilet you can expect me to do the following:
• I will try, whenever possible to let you know a few minutes in advance, that I need to go to the toilet, so that you can come and help me
• I will try to use the toilet at break time or at the agreed times
• I will only use the agreed emergency signal for real emergencies
• I will tell you if I want you to stay in the room or stay with me in the toilet
• I will tell you straight away if you are doing anything that makes me feel uncomfortable or embarrassed
• I will work with you to practice the things I need to do to become more independent in using the toilet.

We will review this agreement on:

Signed: _____

Child (if appropriate): _____

Support staff: _____

Date: _____

Template 3 - Sydenham School Parental Permission for School Staff to Provide Intimate Care

I understand that:

- I give permission to the school to provide appropriate intimate care support to my child e.g. changing soiled clothing, washing and toileting
- I will advise the head teacher of any medical reason my child may have which affects issues of intimate care
- I understand that the intimate care provided for my child at Sydenham School will be given by familiar members of staff
- I understand that the members of staff providing the care for my child have had appropriate training, including in Safeguarding and Child Protection.

Parent/Carer Name: _____

Signature: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Date: _____

Child's Name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Address and contact details:

Appendix N- Sydenham School Separated Parents Policy

Legal Framework

This policy takes into account the following legislation:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Child Arrangement Order (Section 8, Children Act 1989)
- Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008
- Private Fostering Arrangements (Children Act 1989, Private Fostering Regulations 2011)
- Special Guardianship Order (Regulations 2005 and 2016)

Introduction and Context

Research and experience have shown that separated parents can work well together in the best interests of their children and can together play a role in their child's education. However, some parents become estranged, and do not work together or in the best interests of their children, especially during the initial stages of their separation. This is very often traumatic for any children concerned where personal family problems can have an impact on the child and on the schools the children attend.

This policy is an attempt to minimise any impact, clarify to all parties what is expected from separated parents and what can be expected from the school and staff.

The definition of a parent for school purposes is much wider than for any other situation. The Education Act 1996 defines a parent as: all natural parents, including those that are not married; any person who has parental responsibility but is not a natural parent e.g. a legally appointed guardian or the Local Authority named in a Care Order; any person who has care of a child i.e. a person with whom the child resides and who looks after the child irrespective of the relationship.

Who has "Parental Responsibility" (Children Act 1989)?

Having parental responsibility means assuming all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that a parent of a child has by law. People other than a child's natural parents can acquire parental responsibility through:

- Being granted a Residence Order
- Being granted a Child Arrangements Order
- In the case of stepparents, in agreement with the child's mother (and other parent if that person also has parental responsibility for the child) or as a result of a court order
- Being appointed a Guardian
- Being granted a Special Guardianship Order
- Being named in an Emergency Protection Order (although parental responsibility in a such a case is limited to taking reasonable steps to safeguard or promote the child's welfare)
- Adopting a child
- A parent by virtue of the human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008.

If the parents of a child were not married to each other when the child was born, the mother automatically has parental responsibility; however, the father only has parental responsibility from 1st December 2003 and by jointly registering the birth of the child with the mother. He can, however, subsequently acquire parental responsibility by various legal means.

What does having "care" of a child mean?

Having care of a child or young person means that a person who the child lives with and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law. This could be shown by: interaction with the school – attending meetings, making phone calls, being on the school's record as being involved (in whatever capacity) etc. Residence with the child where, for all intents and purposes, the person is part of the family, a man or woman married to a parent of a child.

For example:

- Are they listed on school records?
- Does the school have contact details for them?
- Do they meet with teachers and/or attend parents' evenings?
- Have they been involved with the measures designed to improve attendance?
- Do they contact the school on behalf of the child when they are ill?
- Do they live with the child?
- How long has the school known of them being connected with the child?
- Does the adult bring and/or collect the child to and/or from school?
- Is the adult married to the parent of the child?

It would not be appropriate to assume that someone having a "casual" relationship with the parent of a child necessarily has 'care of the child' unless we have cause to believe the person has some involvement with the child's life – living with the child could be a determining factor as could the other examples outlined above.

It is therefore those adults who are having significant input to a child's life who can be classified as "parent", having "parental responsibility" or who have "care of a child".

Parents as defined above are entitled to share in the decisions that are made about their child and to be treated equally by schools. In particular, these entitlements include: -

- Appeal against admission decisions
- Ofsted & school based questionnaires
- Participate in any exclusion procedure
- Attend parent meetings/school events
- Have access to school records, receive copies of school reports, newsletters, invitations to school events, school photographs relating to their child and information about school trips.

The Governing Body recognise that while the parents of some students may be separated they are entitled to the above and this entitlement cannot be restricted without a specific Court Order. In particular, the school does not have the power to act on the request of one parent to restrict another.

The information provided to the school when the child is admitted, detailing whether parents have parental responsibility for the child, will be presumed to be correct unless a court order or original birth certificate proving otherwise is provided to the school. Similarly, the information provided on the address(es) where the child resides will be presumed to be correct unless a court order proving otherwise is provided to the school.

If a child or young person is under 16 and is living with someone other than a close family relative e.g.- grandparent, then this may be a private fostering arrangement and the local authority will need to be notified. We will notify the local authority if this is found to be the case and we have a separate policy on 'Private Fostering' which we will also refer to in this situation.

If at any time it appears that the person caring for a child does not have parental responsibility, or if it is unclear, we will involve the Local Authority to help clarify and resolve. This may mean the provision of

support and services for the adult/s in the care of that child.

Our responsibilities

Sydenham School fully recognises its responsibilities, and it is our sole wish to promote the best interests of the child, working in partnership with all parents.

Sydenham School will maintain our open-door policy with parents, and the relevant teacher(s) will be available by appointment to discuss any issues or concerns which separated/divorce estranged parents may have in relation to their child or children at the school.

Parents will be encouraged to resolve any issues around estrangement, contact and access to information without involving Sydenham School directly.

Issues of estrangement is a civil/private law matter and Sydenham School cannot be involved in providing mediation, helping an estranged parent to communicate with their child or children, or using the school premises for purposes of contact.

In the event that the parents are unable to agree with one another on decisions regarding their child's educational programme, including but not limited to placement, participation in extracurricular activities, and consent to evaluation and services, the school will arrange a meeting with all parents (preferably together or separately if required) to attempt to assist the parents to resolve the situation; if it cannot be resolved the school may refer the matter to the relevant department of the Local Authority.

The interests of the child will always be paramount when deciding whether to accommodate a request from an estranged parent. We recognise that a Court Order can restrict a parent in having contact/access to information and we may be bound by this. In this situation we will consult with the Local Authority to obtain advice as this may constitute a safeguarding concern.

Should there be any disagreement then the school may advise the separated parent to use the Complaints process.

In any event whereby the parents being estranged is appearing to impact upon the health, wellbeing and safety of a child, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority for advice.

Our Policy

It is the responsibility of the parents to inform Sydenham School when there is a change in family circumstances. The school needs to be kept up to date with contact details, arrangements for collecting children and emergencies.

We encourage parents to tell us at an early stage if there is a change in family circumstances. Whenever possible, staff will be informed of such changes so that suitable support can be offered. We will, however, recognise the sensitivity of some situations and maintain the level of confidentiality requested by parents as far as possible

Newsletters and general school updates are available to all parents via the school's website and via email. These updates will contain all the main events within school including: productions, sports days, parents evenings etc. Occasionally letters are sent to individual classes or students regarding subject specific trips or events. We would expect parents to communicate these messages to each other as and when appropriate.

We will hold a yearly parent evening for your child. These dates are on the school website. We would

expect parents to communicate with each other regarding these arrangements. Whilst Sydenham School will consider separate appointments for parents at these events by prior agreement only, or when a court order is in place restricting contact between both parents, the school has no obligation to do so.

We expect that parents should liaise and communicate directly with each other in matters such as the ordering of school photographs; tickets for performances, enrichment activities and other instances.

A parent as defined in this policy has the right to receive progress reports and review student records of their children. If the parents are separated or divorced, progress reports will be sent to the parent at the address in the school's records specifying where the child resides with the expectation that they will share the report with the other parent. If the child is subject to a joint Child Arrangements Order and the school's records formally capture that the child resides at two addresses, then progress reports will be sent to both addresses. This also includes information relating to attendance and exclusions, unless outside agency advice has been sought and it is felt that it would be detrimental to the child to communicate this information to the parent the child no longer resides with.

The school will send copies of the progress reports to a parent with whom the child does not reside only if that parent submits a written request.

In the matter of the release of a child or children during the school day:

- Sydenham School will follow the standard agreed procedure in the release of a child or children

- In the case of separated parents, Sydenham School will release a child or children to a parent or named contact, in accordance with any specific arrangements notified to the school.

If one parent seeks to remove the child from school in contravention of the notified arrangements, and the parent to whom the child would normally be released has not consented, the following steps will be followed:

- The Headteacher, DSL, DDSL or the Head of Year will meet with the parent seeking to collect or remove the child and, in their presence, telephone the parent to whom the child would normally be released and explain the request
- If the parent to whom the child would normally be released agrees, the child may be released and it will be recorded that permission was granted in this instance
- In the event that the parent to whom the child would normally be released to cannot be reached, the staff member dealing with the issue may make a decision based upon all relevant information available to them
- The staff member may have to refuse permission if agreement or consent cannot be obtained and may need to take advice before a child or children are collected or released.
- Sydenham School cannot prevent the other parent collecting the child or children but we will endeavour to reach an agreement and this may mean keeping the child or children safe whilst Sydenham School try and reach such an agreement
- If there is a Court Order restricting contact or it is in contravention of any access agreement, the child or children will not be released into their care and the other parent advised to take the necessary action which does not involve the school
- During any discussion or communication with parents, the child or children will be supervised by an appropriate member of school staff in a separate room
- In circumstances if there is a belief that a possible abduction of the child may occur, or if the parent is disruptive, the police will be notified immediately and the Local Authority notified.

Management of the Policy

The Headteacher, DSL and DDSLs will familiarise themselves with this policy and ensure all staff,

Governors and volunteers are aware of the procedures to follow should the need occur.

The policy will be made available to parents and carers and published on our school website.

Appendix O - Sydenham School Raising Awareness of and Preventing Self-Harm Policy

This policy is based on work supported by the National Institute for Health Research under its programme 'Grants for Applied Research Scheme' and 'Self-Injury - a short guide for Schools and Teachers Including how to write a self-injury policy.' This guidance was written into a draft policy by Dr Pooky Knightsmith as part of her work with the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust.

1. Introduction

We believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical, emotional and moral development of each student.

Recent research indicates that about one in ten young people in the UK engage in self-harming behaviours, and that this figure is higher amongst specific populations, including young people with special educational needs. School staff can play an important role in preventing self-harm and also in supporting students who are engaging in self-harm behaviours, their peers and parents. Self-harm can be a short term behaviour that is triggered by particular stresses and resolves fairly quickly or it may be part of a long term pattern of behaviours that are associated with more serious emotional/mental health issues.

2. Scope

This document describes the school's approach to self-harm. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff, including support staff, Governors, parents and carers.

3. Aims

- To increase understanding and awareness of self-harm
- To alert staff to warning signs and risk factors
- To provide support to staff dealing with students who self-harm
- To provide support to students who self-harm and their peers and parents/carers.

4. Definition of Self-Harm

Self-harm is any behaviour where the intent is to cause harm to one's own body for example:

- Cutting, scratching, scraping or picking skin
- Swallowing inedible objects
- Taking an overdose of prescription or non-prescription drugs
- Swallowing hazardous materials or substances
- Burning or scalding
- Hair-pulling
- Banging or hitting the head or other parts of the body
- Scouring or scrubbing the body excessively.

Some risk-taking behaviours, including those involving sexual or psychological risk, could also be included.

Self-harm is usually conducted at times of anger, distress, fear, emotional worry, low mood or low self-esteem in order to manage negative feelings. To gain an understanding of why people self-harm, see Appendix 1.

5. Risk Factors

The following risk factors, particularly in combination, may make a young person particularly vulnerable to self- harm:

Individual Factors:

- Depression or anxiety
- Poor communication skills
- Low self-esteem
- Poor problem-solving skills
- Hopelessness
- Impulsivity
- Drug or alcohol abuse.

Family Factors

- Unreasonable or unsustainable expectations of self or parents
- Neglect or physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- Poor relationship with parents
- Depression, self-harm or suicide in the family
- Being a currently or previously looked after child
- Being a young carer.

Social Factors

- Difficulty in making relationships or loneliness
- Being bullied, teased or rejected by peers.

6. Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing difficulties that may lead to thoughts of self-harm or suicide. These warning signs should **always** be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should seek further advice from the DSL or DDSLs.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Truancy from PE
- Lateness to or absence from school.

7. The Cycle of Self-Harm.

If a person inflicts pain on themselves, their body produces endorphins. These are natural pain relievers and can give temporary relief from distress and induce a feeling of peace. This can become an addictive sensation which in turn makes it difficult for the person to stop the self-harm behaviours.

8. Staff Roles in working with students who self-harm

Students may choose to confide in a member of school staff if they are concerned about their own welfare, or that of a peer. School staff may experience a range of feelings in response to self-harm in a

student such as anger, sadness, shock, disbelief, guilt, helplessness, disgust and rejection. However, in order to offer the best possible help to students it is important to try and maintain a supportive and open attitude – a student who has chosen to discuss their concerns with a member of school staff is showing a considerable amount of courage and trust.

Students need to be made aware that it may not be possible for staff to offer complete confidentiality. **If you consider a student is at serious risk of harming themselves then confidentiality cannot be kept.** It is important not to make promises of confidentiality that cannot be kept even if a student puts pressure on you to do so.

All staff are expected to:

- Listen to students in emotional distress calmly and in a non-judgmental way
- Report self-injury in person or over the telephone to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy or Safeguarding and Pastoral Manager within the same school day
- Not make promises (e.g. assuring confidentiality) which cannot be kept. Reassure students that in order to seek health and happiness people need to know about their problems so that they can help.
- Guide students towards seeking health and happiness
- Promote problem-solving techniques and non-harmful ways to deal with emotional distress
- Enable students to find places for help and support
- Provide accurate information about self-injury
- Widen their own knowledge about self-injury and mental health disorders
- Be aware of health and safety issues such as first-aid and clearing up if a self-injury incident takes place at school
- Be aware of their legal responsibilities – when they can help, and when they cannot.

9. Protocol

Any member of staff who is aware of a student engaging in or suspected to be at risk of engaging in self-harm should consult one of the lead safeguarding staff – the DSL or DDSLs.

Following the report, the lead staff will decide on the appropriate course of action. This may include:

- If a student has self-harmed in school, first aid issues should be addressed as a priority
- Immediately removing the student from lessons if their remaining in class is likely to cause further distress to themselves or their peers
- In the case of an acutely distressed student, the immediate safety of the student is paramount and an adult should remain with the student at all times
- Completing a self-harm/suicidal ideation assessment (save this for records)
- Contacting parents or carers or asking if the student would prefer to do this (as long as it is felt that this would not place the student at further risk of harm).
- Where appropriate, advising professional assistance e.g. A&E, GP, nurse, Early Help support, Children's Social Care, CAMHS etc.
- Parents or carers being given guidance materials and student given alternatives to self-harm information and information about Kooth and Childline
- Supporting parents or carers in sourcing counsellors
- Following the meeting with the parent or phone call to confirm that they are aware of the self-harm, we will send a standard letter home, if it is felt helpful, confirming the meeting/discussion, our advice to take their child to their GP and providing a list of support agencies for themselves and their child
- Parents or carers and students need to be advised not to self-harm in school and to wear a long- sleeved top to cover injuries and any scars (including in PE).

The DSL or relevant staff member will check on the member of staff or friend/s who made the referral, to see if they need some support to deal with their feelings about the self-harm.

10. Further Considerations

Any meetings with a student, their parents/carers or their peers regarding self-harm should be recorded onto CPOMs in writing including:

- Dates and times
- An action plan (if considered appropriate)
- Concerns raised
- Details of who should be informed, what they should be told and why.

It is important to encourage students to let you know if one of their friends in trouble, upset or showing signs of self-harming. Friends can worry about betraying confidences so they need to know that self-harm can be very dangerous and that by seeking help and advice for a friend they are taking responsible action and being a good friend. They should also be aware that their friend will be treated in a caring and supportive manner.

The peer group of a young person who self-harms may value the opportunity to talk to a member of staff either individually or in a small group. Any member of staff wishing for further advice on this should consult one of the designated leads for safeguarding children.

When a young person is self-harming it is important to be vigilant in case friends begin self-harming. Occasionally schools discover that a number of students in the same peer group are harming themselves.

11. Responding to self-harm

A zero-tolerance policy will be implemented for self-harm in school. The following rules should be enforced:

- Injuries and scars must be covered, including long sleeves in PE if necessary
- Students self-harming on school premises may be sanctioned
- Any inappropriate self-harm discussion with peers, posting on social media or showing off self-harm marks will also potentially warrant a sanction
- Self-harm incidents should be responded to calmly and practically.

As a guide, each time a student discloses or we become aware of self-harm, they will be met with and their parents or carers informed or invited in for a meeting. Each student's circumstances are different, but if the self- harm was carried out in school, we may apply the following:

- 1st and 2nd time - send the student home for medical reasons
- 3rd time – refer the student to Internal Exclusion and referral to an external agency if not already carried out
- 4th time – Suspension for Health and Safety reasons.

In addition to addressing the needs of the individual, we may need to attend to other students who have become distressed by the self-harming. We may need to speak to a group of students, but we acknowledge that it will also be important to talk privately with each individual as a minority may turn to self-harm as a coping mechanism even once their friends have stopped.

12. Suicidal thoughts

People who self-harm are at increased risk of suicidal thoughts or actions. Death may occur as the result of an accident or miscalculation of the risks of the self-harming behaviour. In some cases, it

can be intentional.

All talk of suicide must be taken seriously and reported to the DSL or DDSL in person. Where possible a member of staff trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid should speak with the student. The student should remain with a member of staff at all times in a safe environment. Appropriate help and intervention must be offered at this point. The priority is to safeguard the student. In most cases school staff would contact parents or carers and advise them to seek urgent medical advice from their GP unless they believed that by doing so it would put the student at further risk.

13. Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

Working in partnership with parents and carers is key to supporting the student who is self-harming. Parents are expected to:

- Support the school's approach to self-harm education of the whole-school community and pastoral care
- Work in partnership with the school and any other relevant agencies.

Understanding Why People Self-Harm

There are a wide range of reasons why people turn to self-harm and every single case is different but there are certain themes that recur time and time again. Here are some quotes from young people who have self-harmed to illustrate some of the most common reasons given in order to help you understand some of the reasons young people turn to this unhealthy coping mechanism.

Control
During adolescence, a time when young people are keen to assert their independence, they can begin to feel very out of control of their own lives. This can be for a number of reasons, perhaps their life is in chaos with difficult relationships at home or school, or perhaps they feel like they're being told what to do every minute of the day and don't have the freedom they would like from adults. When you cannot control anything else in your life, you can completely control your own body.

*"I know it's a really negative kind of control but when your whole life is complete S**t you take what you can, Y'know? And as I burnt myself I would feel in control for a while. I guess I was on self-destruct and that was bad but at least it was me driving this."*

"The day I realised that nobody could take control of my body but me, I felt really powerful. In the past I'd been weak and other people had controlled my body but now it's mine. I can care for it if I want to care for it and I can hurt it I want to hurt it. It's MINE."

"I'm 16. Every day of my life I've been told what to do from the moment I wake up to the moment I go to sleep. I'm sick of it. This is just my secret way of asserting a bit of control in my life."

Release and Communication of Feelings
For people who struggle to communicate or express their feelings in another way, self-harm can feel like the only way to communicate and release those feelings.

"I'm not good with words. I'm good at cutting. When there are more cuts it means I need more help."

"Sometimes I'd have so many different feelings inside me I thought I was going to explode. Then I'd cut myself and I'd instantly feel a bit better, like releasing a valve."

"It gave me a buzz. Like a drug. It didn't last long and soon I'd be back to square one, but for a few blissful moments I'd be free from all my problems."

Physical Rather Than Emotional Pain

For some people, physical pain can be a way of communicating emotional pain which is too hard to talk about. Or it can provide a more manageable form of pain that they can tend to rather than facing up to the emotional and psychological injuries they may be suffering with e.g. as a result of abuse.

*"I was proper f****d up and I didn't know how to make it go away, but some days I felt like maybe I could physically cut away the pain."*

"It was a physical expression of the emotional pain I was feeling but couldn't begin to explain."

"Cutting was something I could talk about and ask for support with unlike the other things that were going on."

Punishment
Some people talk about using self-harm as a way of punishing themselves when they don't live up to expectations – this tends to either be young people who are perfectionist in nature, or those with a history of systematic abuse who have learned that they deserve to be punished.

"If I didn't do as well as I'd hoped I would then I'd take a load of pills and go to sleep. It made me numb. Kind of like a mini coma. It was the only way I could stop thinking about how I'd let myself down."

"I was always punished as a kid. If I was late, if I did something stupid, if I didn't do well enough at school. My Dad used to punish me physically. Once I went into care I guess I kind of took over the punishment myself. People would tell me that it was okay to make mistakes and I shouldn't punish myself but it made me feel better."

Nowhere else to turn
Some young people talk about not being aware of a better way to deal with their problems.

"Some people drink, some people take drugs, some people paint pictures, I burn myself. It's not really that big a deal, it's just the way I deal with things."

"It's the only thing that makes me feel better. Nothing else I've tried gets through."

Changing self-harming behaviours

Here are some simple ideas that you can use to support someone who is trying to reduce how much they self- harm. Be realistic in your expectations and be sure to celebrate progress, no matter how minimal.

Time and Place
People who frequently self-harm will often do so in the same place and at similar times each day. Talk to them about whether it's possible to try to disrupt this routine. Can you work with them to think of an alternative activity they might be able to do at their trigger time, or is there somewhere different they could go? As a minimum perhaps you can think with them about how to ensure they are not alone at the times when they are most vulnerable from self-harm. If it's not possible for them to be physically accompanied, you might suggest they phone a helpline such as Childline or the Samaritans so they feel less alone.

Means for Self-Harm
Some people will always use the same implement to self-harm with. If they are ready, they might think about throwing away this implement. Doing so prematurely may leave them feeling very desperate and vulnerable so this needs to be carefully considered. If they are not yet ready to dispose of their implement then they might consider locking it away, either in a safety deposit box or even simply in a shoebox wrapped up with tape or ribbon. Making their preferred implement less available will provide valuable thinking time and remove some of the impulsivity from the act of self-harming, making it a little more likely they'll be able to think of an alternative coping mechanism.

Another helpful approach is to encourage them to reduce their easy access to items that might be used

for self- harming. This might mean locking away or removing things like blades, knives and medicines where they cannot be so easily accessed.

Try to Break Rituals

Self-harming activities can become highly ritualised, adding a feeling of control to the process and providing a sense of relief and release to the person harming. Trying to remove some of the more ritualised or repeated parts of their self-harming behaviours can reduce the reinforcement that young people feel from the activity. It also makes it harder for them to self-harm on auto pilot which, again, reduces the likelihood of them going through with an act of self-harm.

If a young person feels comfortable enough to talk to you about their self-harm rituals, take a real interest and try to understand their motivations behind each part of the process. Question why they do each thing and where possible make suggestions for alternative behaviours. Occasionally your words and questions will have an impact on the sufferer and play back to them during a self-harm act and empower them to stop.

Challenge Thoughts

A more general approach to challenging self-harming behaviours is to challenge the thoughts and feelings that surround and trigger those behaviours. Often there are a whole host of negative thoughts that surround each act of self-harm which the sufferer never thinks to challenge. Explore these thoughts and actively challenge them, providing evidence to back up your viewpoint where you can; for example you might challenge the thought 'I'm a complete failure' with 'Do you think perhaps that your standards are unrealistic? Other people would be happy to get 60% on a test but you are upset because you got 80%. Why is 80% not good enough?' Or 'Would you consider your friend Daniel a failure if he'd scored 80% on that test? Why not…' Over time, you can encourage the sufferer to challenge their thoughts in the same way, but it is likely to take quite some time.

Useful sources of support

www.youngminds.org.uk – Young Minds are committed to supporting the emotional wellbeing of all students. This website has lots of resources and advice for teachers on a range of mental health issues.
www.selfharm.co.uk – support for young people impacted by self-harm

Samaritans - The Samaritans helpline is available 24 hours a day 365 days a year and their trained advisers are a great source of support if you need to talk to someone.
Helpline: 08457 90 90 90 | **Email:** Jo@Samaritans.org | **Website:** www.samaritans.org/

Papyrus - Papyrus is aimed specifically at preventing suicide in young people. They have a free UK helpline which provides support and advice for young people at risk or those who care about them.
Helpline: 0800 068 41 41 | **Email:** pat@papyrus-uk.org |
Website: www.papyrus-uk.org/

Childline - 0800 1111 http://www.childline.org.uk/talk/Pages/Talk.aspx Online chat, message boards, email etc.

Self-Harm Assessment Sheet

Name of student:				**Tutor group:**	
Name of staff:		**Date:**		**Time:**	Period:

Facts	
Are you self-harming? When did this begin?	
When was the last time you self-harmed?	
Do you think you need medical attention?	If the child says yes or you feel it appropriate take child to the medical room now.
What do you think triggers you to self-harm?	
Where on your body do you do this?	
What did you hope would happen by disclosing this?	
Are you or have you recently had any suicidal thoughts?	If yes, stop here and use the 'Suicidal Ideation Assessment'
Should I be worried about you?	
Sharing	
Does anyone else know about this?	
Do you have a counsellor/CAMH's support? If so, are they aware that the child is self-harming?	Please specify:
At this point, explain to the student that you will need to pass this information on to a member of the CP team who will need to contact home.	
Support	
Who do you trust to help or support you?	
Can you think of any other ways of expressing your feelings? (e.g. Talking, writing/a diary, drawing)	

What can you do to help yourself? Do you have any interests or hobbies? Something you are good at?	

Action to be taken by student:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Action to be taken by staff:

Give student "Student Wellbeing Pack' including the 'Alternatives to self-harm' sheet.

- **Remember this is a Child Protection issue.**
- **Tell a member of the CP team NOW in person.**
- **If you consider the child to be at immediate risk of harming themselves, you must keep them with you.**

Please add a note here about the student's emotional and physical presentation:

Parents informed and any actions agreed by them (CP Team Only)

Date: Student disclosed Self-Harm Where: used: Trigger:

Actions:

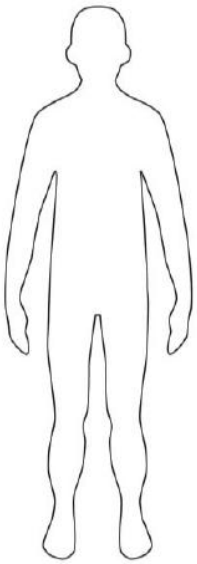
- I called Parent/carer & informed of the above by reading through the self-harm assessment to them.
- I advised Parent/carer to contact GP for further advice / support.
- I advised Parent/carer if at anytime they are concerned for the well-being of their child to either contact the CAMHS Crisis Line or Present to A&E.
- I advised mum to remove sharp objects, items of risk in the household.

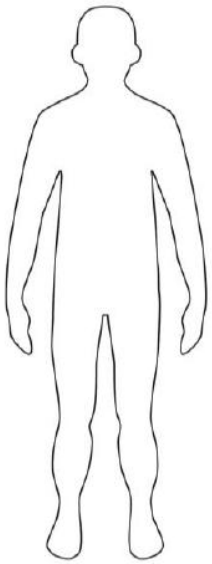
- Check if the student is receiving school counsellor / Art Therapy or on WL – If not ask Parent/carer if they want us to ref & that they consent to this.
- Check that the student would engage in this intervention.
- Parent consented to / declined offer of School Counsellor or Art Therapists
- Added to the School Counsellor's Waiting List - Fathiya Farah
- Added to the Art Therapists Waiting List - Lene Shepherd
- I signposted the student to Childline & Kooth for further support.

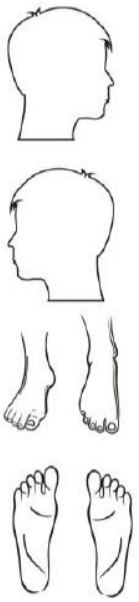
Body Map

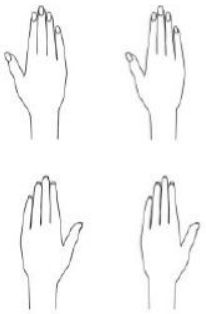
N.B. Under no circumstances should a member of staff ask a child to remove clothing to see a suspected injury. If a child has described where an injury is, or it is clearly visible without needing to remove outer clothing, please indicate below:

FRONT BACK LEFT RIGHT









Suicidal Ideation Assessment Sheet

Name of student:				**Tutor group:**	
Name of staff:		**Date:**		**Time:**	Period:

Assessment										
Have you been having suicidal thoughts?										
When did you start getting these thoughts?										
How are you feeling now?										
What do you think triggers these thoughts?										
Have you thought about how you would kill yourself?										
How likely do you think you are to act on these thoughts?	Scale 1 – 10 (1= Unlikely, 10 = Very likely)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Do you want to die or do you want to get out of a situation that feels difficult?										
Have you started any risk-taking behaviour? Drugs, drink Self-harm Previously attempted suicide										
What did you hope would happen by disclosing this?										
Should I be worried about you?										
Sharing										
Does anyone else know about this?	Please specify:									
Does the student have a counsellor/CAMH's support? If so, are they aware that the child is experiencing suicidal ideation?	Please specify: Inform the young person that the school may have to share info with any professionals that are supporting them.									
Are any of the following factors present?										
1. Family conflict										

2. Change to familial structure	
3. Parental instability	
4. Extended exposure to trauma that may be affecting coping effectiveness	
At this point, explain to the student that you will need to pass this information on to a member of the CP team who will need to contact home.	
Support	
Who do you trust to help or support you?	Give child KOOTH and Child line numbers.
Can you think of any other ways of expressing your feelings? (e.g. Talking, writing/a diary, drawing)	
What can you do to help yourself? Do you have any interests or hobbies? Something you are good at?	
Action to be taken by student:	
Action to be taken by staff:	
• **Remember this is a Child Protection issue.** • **Tell a member of the CP team NOW in person.** • **Log the incident on CPOMS & attach this assessment.** • **If you consider the child may be at immediate risk of harming themselves <u>keep them with you.</u>**	
Please add a note here about the student's emotional and physical presentation:	
Parents informed and any actions agreed by them (CP Team Only)	

Date: Student disclosed Self-Harm Where: ***** used: ****** Trigger: *******

Student Disclosed Suicidal Ideation

Have you thought about how you would kill yourself? **********
Student is scaling at ****

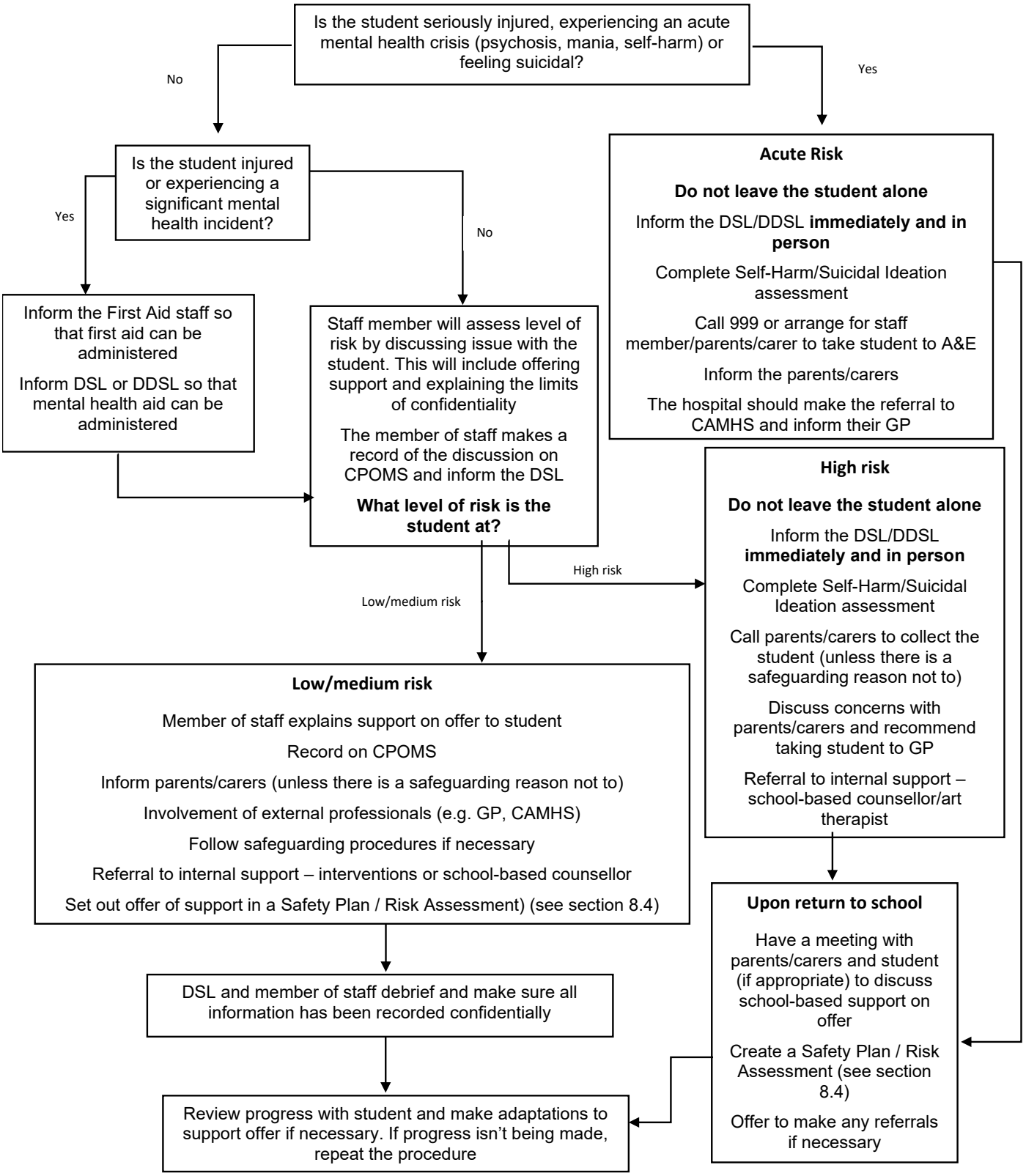
Actions:

- I called Parent/carer & informed of the above by reading through the suicidal ideation assessment to them.
- I requested Parent/carer collect ******* from school.
- I advised Parent/carer to contact GP for further advice / support.
- I advised Parent/carer if at any time they are concerned for the well-being of their child to either contact the CAMHS Crisis Line or Present to A&E.
- I advised Parent/carer to remove sharp objects, items of risk in the household.

- Check if the student is receiving school counsellor / Art Therapy or on WL – If not ask Parent/carer if they want us to ref & that they consent to this.
- Check that the student would engage in this intervention.
- Parent consented to / declined offer of School Counsellor or Art Therapists
- Added to the School Counsellor's Waiting List - Fathiya Farah
- Added to the Art Therapists Waiting List - Lene Shepherd
- I signposted the student to Childline & Kooth for further support.

Signpost parents to GP/papyrus-uk.org/www.mind.org.uk

4. Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis



Appendix P - Sydenham School Private Fostering Policy

Introduction and Context

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and stepparents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

There are many private fostering situations. These may involve children or young people:

- Who are sent to this country for education or health care by their birth parents from overseas
- Whose parents work or study long or antisocial hours
- Who are living with a friend's family as a result of parental separation, divorce or arguments at home
- Who are living with their partner's family.

Our responsibilities

Sydenham School fully recognises its responsibilities for understanding Private Fostering to know how to identify a child or young person who may be in a privately fostering arrangement and to have a duty to report this to the local Authority if it is believed the child or young person is possibly living in such an arrangement.

This policy should be read in conjunction with "how to Identify a Privately Fostered Child" Appendix A, found at the end of this policy.

Our Policy

Under the Children Act, 1989, the Local Authority has a duty to make sure the arrangement that the child or young person is in will provide for the child's or young person's needs and safeguard their welfare.

Sydenham School will ensure all staff, Governors and volunteers in the school are aware of this duty.

If a member of staff, Governor or volunteer becomes aware that a child or young person may be living in a Private Foster arrangement it is the responsibility of that person to report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and this person may need to make further enquiries to try and establish this.

The DSL should seek advice from Children's Social Care as to whether the child or young person is a privately fostered child under the regulations. If so, a referral must be made to Children's' Social Care.

Essential information for making a referral includes:

- Full names and dates of birth for the child
- Address and daytime phone numbers for the current carer including mobiles
- The child's address and phone number
- Whereabouts of the child (and siblings)
- 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, accredited sign language interpreter or other language support
- 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 in a referral about a possible Privately Fostered child or young person:

- Address and daytime phone number of the parent or parental responsibility holder
- Address and phone numbers of any other family members
- Any other helpful information about the parent or parental responsibility to assist an understanding of why this child or young person is not living with them.

Sydenham School will work together with the Local Authority to help safeguard and promote the child's or young person's safety and welfare.

Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

All staff, volunteers and Governors have responsibility for the following:

- To ask parents or carers questions around their relationship with the child or young person if this is unclear, confusing or concerning
- To follow up any discussion with a child or young person about their living arrangement which is unclear, confusing or concerning
- To have robust consent/trips/outings letters which clearly define the child's relationship to the adult giving consent.

If a child or young person is living in a Private Fostering arrangement:

- To work with the Local Authority to ensure the child or young person's needs are been met, to monitor and report to ensure the safety and welfare of that child or young person whilst been privately fostered
- To assist with advising and supporting the carer to undertake their duties whist the child or young person is living in such an arrangement.

Management of the Policy

The DSL will ensure all staff, Governors and volunteers are aware of this policy and the legal requirements and duties.

The DSL will endeavour to provide information and training on Private Fostering to school staff on a regular basis.

The DSL will ensure that private fostering forms part of staff safeguarding induction and is used in safeguarding training in the school.

The DSL will report on issues relating to private fostering and any impact for the school to the Governing Body.

The Governing Body will oversee the policy, ensure its implementation and review its content on an annual basis in line with the Section 175 Safeguarding audit.

Appendix 1: How to identify a private fostering arrangement and what to do next

A privately fostered child is one who is:
- Under the age of 16 (18 if disabled)

- Living with someone other than a parent or person with parental responsibility or close relative or stepparent
- With the intention that it lasts for 28 days or longer – either as a single episode or cumulatively.

This means:

- The local authority is not involved in making the arrangement
- The child is not in care.

There is a duty under the Children Act 1989 to notify the Local Authority of a private fostering arrangement – this duty applies to:

- Any parent or other person with parental responsibility proposing to place a child in a private fostering arrangement
- Any person proposing to privately foster a child
- Any other person involved in the proposed arrangement
- Education, health and other professionals who become aware of a possible private fostering arrangement where they are not satisfied that the local authority have been, or will be, notified of the arrangement.

Universal children's services – such as primary care, health visiting, school nursing, schools and early years, voluntary sector – are especially well placed to identify children who are not living with a parent, person with parental responsibility or close relative or stepparent, who may be privately foster

Appendix Q - Sydenham School Lanyard Poster

LANYARDS AT SYDENHAM SCHOOL





Staff employed by Sydenham School- lanyard says SYDENHAM SCHOOL STAFF



Visitors to Sydenham School- lanyard says VISITOR



Governors for Sydenham School- lanyard says SCHOOL GOVERNOR

If you see an adult **without** a lanyard, please report this to a member of staff straight away.

Staff will then raise this concern with SLT and the Safeguarding Team.