



Mowden Schools

Safeguarding (Including Child Protection) Policy

Policy reviewed	November 2025
Review frequency	Annually
Next review date	Autumn 2026
Approving body	Standards Committee

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

Contact Names:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Mr Alistair Johnson (Deputy Headteacher)

Deputy Safeguarding Leads (DDSL): Mrs Lexi Wilkinson (Headteacher)
Mrs Lisa Bainbridge (Deputy Headteacher)

Nominated governor to deal with Safeguarding: Mrs Rebecca Foster Snook

Single Point of Contact (SPoC) for concerns about radicalisation and extremism: Mrs Lexi Wilkinson (Headteacher)

The Federation of Mowden Schools is committed to adopting a child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to play their full part.

This is defined as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge;
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home;
- preventing impairment of children's mental or physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The Federation recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect, bullying, radicalisation and extremism. The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors and are consistent with those of the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership.

Further guidelines upon which this policy is built, along with definitions of abuse and the signs and indicators, are detailed in the DfE document '***Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025***'.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf

All teaching staff, support staff and volunteers working within the Federation have read Part 1: Information for All School and College Staff; a copy is also kept in both staff rooms for reference.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68b02d1efef950b0909c1734/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2025_part_one_Information_for_school_college_staff.pdf

The Federation of Mowden Schools will ensure that:

- It has a Designated Safeguarding Lead who is level 3 trained and will undertake biannual, appropriate training for this role
- It has a nominated Single Point of Contact (SPoC) who is WRAP trained
- It has a member of staff who will act in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and SPoC
- The Single central record is maintained and accurate
- There is a suitable filtering and monitoring system in place to reduce the risk of harmful online behaviour and content

- It has a nominated governor responsible for safeguarding children
- Every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and the governing body knows the name of the DSL, SPoC and their role
- All staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the DSL or SPoC
- All staff are committed to providing a safe environment in which children can learn
- That the duty of care towards its pupils and staff is promoted by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour and assist staff to monitor their own standards and practice
- All children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to be protected from harm
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- The welfare of the child remains paramount
- All new members of staff will go through an induction process ensuring this policy can be actioned

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility for all adults in our teaching community to be vigilant in safeguarding procedures. All staff and volunteers working with children are aware of their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and of their responsibility to report and record any concerns.

The Headteacher will ensure that the safeguarding policies and procedures are fully implemented and followed by all staff and that sufficient resources are allocated to enable staff to discharge their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding.

The Headteacher will co-ordinate action on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within the school ensuring that all staff, volunteers and visitors to the school know who the DSL is and who acts in his absence. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Adhering to the statutory guidance for schools 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025'
- Adhering to the Child Protection Procedures agreed by the Local Authority multi-agency safeguarding partners and school procedures with regards to referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse or child in need
- Liaising closely with other services such as children's social care
- Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to communicate them with our safeguarding partners
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil's record/SEN record
- Ensuring that there is an online filtering system in place, that monitoring of online activity is carried out effectively and that this is reviewed at least yearly
- Ensuring that any pupil currently on a child protection plan who is absent from school without a satisfactory explanation is referred to Social Care

All Staff

All staff will read and understand part 1 of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and review this guidance at least annually.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including the staff code of conduct, the role of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), the behaviour policy, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- The early help process and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment

- The process for reporting concerns, including to the local authority Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT)
- How to record concerns in writing using the school's software solution for monitoring safeguarding: CPOMS
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, CSE, CCE, County Lines and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child criminal exploitation (CCE), child sexual exploitation (CSE), FGM, domestic abuse and radicalisation
- The fact that mental health issues can be an indicator that a child is suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation
- That mental health issues can arise as a result of an issue related to child protection experienced in the past
- The dangers associated with being online and current issues which may be affecting children, as well as how to monitor children's online activity while in school

The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is Alistair Johnson (Deputy Headteacher). The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding. This includes taking lead responsibility for online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems in place.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Out of school hours, he can be contacted via email: ajohnson@mowden.nalp.org.uk

When the DSL is absent or unavailable, Lexi Wilkinson (Headteacher) and Lisa Bainbridge (Deputy Headteacher) will act as cover.

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

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

The DSL will also keep the headteacher informed of any issues, and liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate.

Early Help Assessment and Intervention

We promote the detection of early signs of abuse to ensure early intervention. We follow the safeguarding procedure of notice, check, and share. We also recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help to protect children.

The school will therefore:

- Ensure all staff are trained in detecting possible early signs of abuse
- Ensure all staff have received appropriate training for radicalisation and extremism
- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to

- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- Carry out an Early Help Assessment for families in need
- Include in the curriculum, activities and opportunities for PSHE which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe, and information about who to turn for help
- Include in the curriculum, material and learning which will help children understand what 'being safe' means
- Include e-safety training in the curriculum

If early help is appropriate, the DSL will support staff in liaising with other agencies and setting up a multi-agency assessment as appropriate.

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

Statement of Equality

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

There is a need to protect all children, however we are aware that some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm than others. These groups might include children who:

- Have special educational needs or disabilities
- Have a health issue
- Are young carers
- Are looked after or have been looked after in the past
- Have a social worker
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion or gender identification
- Are lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBT)
- Have English as an additional language
- Are regularly missing from education
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, criminal or sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers

Children with Special Educational Needs

We recognise that statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. School staff who deal with children with profound and multiple disabilities, cerebral palsy, sensory impairment and or emotional and behavioural problems are particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

Types of abuse and neglect

All staff, volunteers and governors have read the section on types and signs of abuse in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025' statutory guidance for schools and colleges and staff have annual training about this. They are diligent in spotting these signs to ensure early intervention for vulnerable children. They have all been made aware of more current safeguarding issues, including:

- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

- Cyber bullying and online safety
- Honour based violence
- Peer on peer abuse
- Sexual abuse and sexual harassment
- County lines (using children as part of drug supply routes)
- Recognising where children may be at risk from, or involved with, serious crime
- Preventing radicalisation
- Serious violence

The Headteacher, DSL and nominated governor keep up to date with new safeguarding issues and disseminate to all staff to keep our practice current and relevant. KCSIE 2025 identifies some of the indicators and signs of abuse or neglect.

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

- Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs”.
- FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as ‘female genital cutting’, ‘circumcision’ or ‘initiation’.
- Any teacher who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a pupil under 18 must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.
- The duty above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils.
- Any other member of staff who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a pupil under 18 must speak to the DSL.
- **Any member of staff** who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM must speak to the DSL.

The Prevent duty

The current threat from Terrorism and Extremism in the United Kingdom is real and severe and can involve the exploitation of vulnerable people, including children to involve them in extremist activity.

“Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.” (HM Government Prevent Strategy 2011)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Single Point of Contact have attended WRAP (Workshop to raise awareness of Prevent) training and monitor the school’s compliance with its Prevent duty.

If a member of staff has concerns about extremism, then they must act. If a child is not at immediate risk of harm, where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action. Alternatively, make a referral to the local authority.

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

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

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

Mental Health

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff are alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

The school has an identified mental health lead (Lisa Bainbridge) who attends regular Local Authority Multi Agency update meetings (including CAMHS). The mental health lead updates staff with any new resources that promotes positive mental health via the school intranet and staff shared area. Some resources are also shared with parents/carers.

School staff have access to a range of resources from the Anna Freud Centre for Children, MIND as well as the NSPCC. The school also accesses support from the Darlington Mental Health Team for whole class work, group work or individual support. The PHSE curriculum has a strong element of mental well-being running throughout school as well as assemblies led by the SLT.

If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by speaking to the DSL or deputy.

Child on Child Abuse

Staff are aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child on child abuse) and that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. Staff recognise the indicators and signs of child on child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports. However, we also recognise that just because there are no reports does not mean that it doesn't happen in school. If any staff have concerns, they report it to the DSL.

Child on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

We recognise that when incidents of child on child abuse are reported, they need to be investigated fully. Staff recognise that the age of children can have an impact on perceptions of child on child abuse. As a school, our curriculum is designed to remind children of what might be classed as abuse or bullying, etc. The curriculum is designed to make children aware of what might be considered inappropriate behaviour towards others. This is done through curriculum subjects such as PSHE, RHE and Computing but also in regular assemblies.

Incidents of child on child abuse are reported using CPOMS and are reviewed regularly. For further information on what and how to record, see 'Recording Systems and Record Keeping'.

Creating a supportive environment in school to minimise the risk of child on child abuse

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of child on child abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents. To achieve this we will:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour
- Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensure pupils know they can talk to staff
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:
 - How to recognise the indicators and signs of child on child abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
 - That even if there are no reports of child on child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”
 - That if they have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
 - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
 - A friend may make a report
 - A member of staff may overhear a conversation
 - A child’s behaviour might indicate that something is wrong
 - That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation
 - The important role they have to play in preventing peer-on-peer abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it
 - That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns
- Make records of ‘incidents’ in order to spot patterns of behaviour which may indicate child on child abuse

Serious allegations made against other pupils (child on child abuse) where a safeguarding response is required rather than being dealt with under the behaviour policy

A zero tolerance approach is used at Mowden regarding child on child abuse. It will never be passed off as “banter”, “boys being boys” or “part of growing up”. This is to ensure that we do not create a culture that normalises abuse and an unsafe environment for children and young people. Staff recognise that girls are more likely to be victims and boys perpetrators but this is not exclusive. All abuse will be taken seriously.

Staff promote to children that it is okay to report any incident which has upset or concerned them and that they will be listened to. This will be done through informal discussions, more formal lessons and through specific assemblies.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school’s behaviour policy, but this policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils in the school at risk
- Is violent (e.g. may include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or other physical harm)
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol

- Involves sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including sexting or upskirting – taking a picture under a person's clothes without them knowing)

If a pupil makes a serious allegation of abuse against another pupil:

- You must tell the DSL and record the allegation but do not investigate it
- The DSL will contact the local authority Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved – both the victim(s) and the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made – with a named person they can talk to if needed
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

Supporting victims of abuse:

All staff should reassure victims of abuse that they are being taken seriously and will be supported; ensuring that children/ young people are never made to feel ashamed or that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Where the children are in the same class as one another, consideration is given to whether the children are to remain in the same class together and, if so, where they will be seated in class and supported at non-structured times (such as breaktime).

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur:

- Between 2 children of any age and sex
- Through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children
- Online and face to face (both physically and verbally)

If a victim reports an incident, staff make sure they are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Some groups are potentially more at risk: girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children are at greater risk.

Staff are aware of the importance of:

- Challenging inappropriate behaviours
- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts.

If staff have any concerns about sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out later in this policy.

Harmful sexual behaviours

Harmful sexual behaviours can occur online and offline and can occur simultaneously between the two. Children's sexual behaviours exist on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. We use the harmful sexual behaviour framework produced by the NSPCC and the Brook traffic light tool to assess

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what attention or response children's sexual behaviours require. Is it normal development in relation to sexualised behaviour or problematic and harmful?

Keeping Children Safe Online

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, sexual predation, cyber-bullying: technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm. The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable but can be categorised into four areas of risk: content; contact; conduct; commerce (a.k.a. contract).

We accept that pupils will use the internet and social technology both inside and outside school and will therefore need to learn how to be safe and secure. We teach lessons on digital literacy which is designed to help children understand how to make the right choices and how to stay safe online. These lessons are adapted to take account of new risks such as misinformation and disinformation. This is supplemented through assemblies and taking part in organised national activities such as Internet Safety Week.

However, due to the rapid growth in technology and trends we encourage parents to monitor closely what their children are doing online. Staff receive appropriate updates and training from the Darlington Internet Safety Partnership to support their understanding of current risks and dangers online. To support families there are links on the school website and we also hold information sessions, or send information home via email, for parents who wish to know more about online safety.

Whilst online in school, we aim to limit children's exposure to risks. We have an appropriate filtering and monitoring system in place (Smoothwall) and regularly review this with our IT provider to ensure its effectiveness. This provides the DSL and other senior leaders with reports whenever there has been a potential incident which is used to investigate the severity. Staff are kept up to date about how this system works. Further information on reporting concerns is in the E-Safety Policy.

If an adult suspects that a child is engaged in harmful online activity, this must be mentioned to the DSL.

What should you do if you have a concern?

Whenever a staff member has a concern about a child, the first thing they should do is speak to the DSL or deputy DSLs. The flowchart in Figure 1 provides further detail of the actions involved.

If nobody is available, a call should be made to the Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) on a direct line: 01325 406252. Calls can be made to discuss any safeguarding concerns. All calls will result in a recorded conversation with the outcome, and any actions, of the call agreed. Following this, the member of staff should record details of the conversation using CPOMS.

For any call raising concerns about a child, the CIAT will ask:

- All of the details known to you/your agency about the child
- Their family composition including siblings, and where possible extended family members and anyone important in the child's life
- The nature of the concern and how immediate it is
- Any and what kind of work/support you have provided to the child or family to date
- Whether parents/carers have been informed of your concern.*

**This should only be done where it will not put the child at risk or undermine any investigation.*

For any member of staff contacting the CIAT follow the flowchart in Figure 2.

What should you do if a young person reports abuse?

- React calmly
- Listen
- Don't ask probing questions to find out more information (**TED**: **T**ell me more; **E**xplain what happened; **D**escribe what happened.)
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Inform the child what you will do next
- Contact the DSL or Deputy DSL
- Immediately make a full and written record of what has been said detailing facts not opinion or hearsay and give this report to the DSL
- Do not re-interview the child with a different member of staff

The report should include:

- The child's name and the date and time the allegation was made
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times, specific factors and any other relevant information that has been provided by the child (don't seek information, it is not your role to investigate what has happened)
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries that have been communicated to you by the child (do not look for signs)

If the DSL or Deputy DSL cannot be informed and a child or adult is at risk of serious harm, all staff and volunteers have a duty to report this to the Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) or the police.

Figure 1: Actions where there are concerns about a child

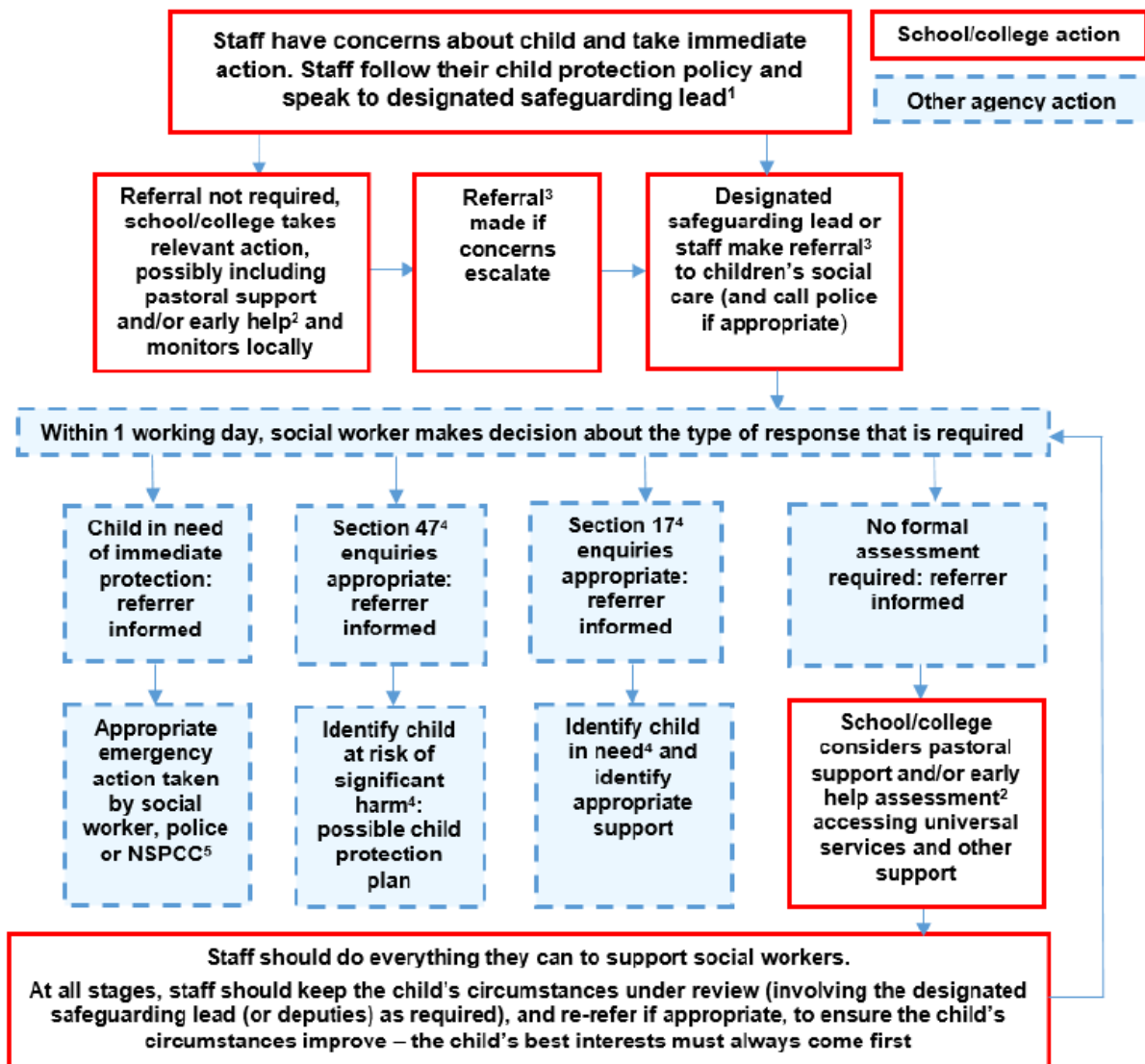
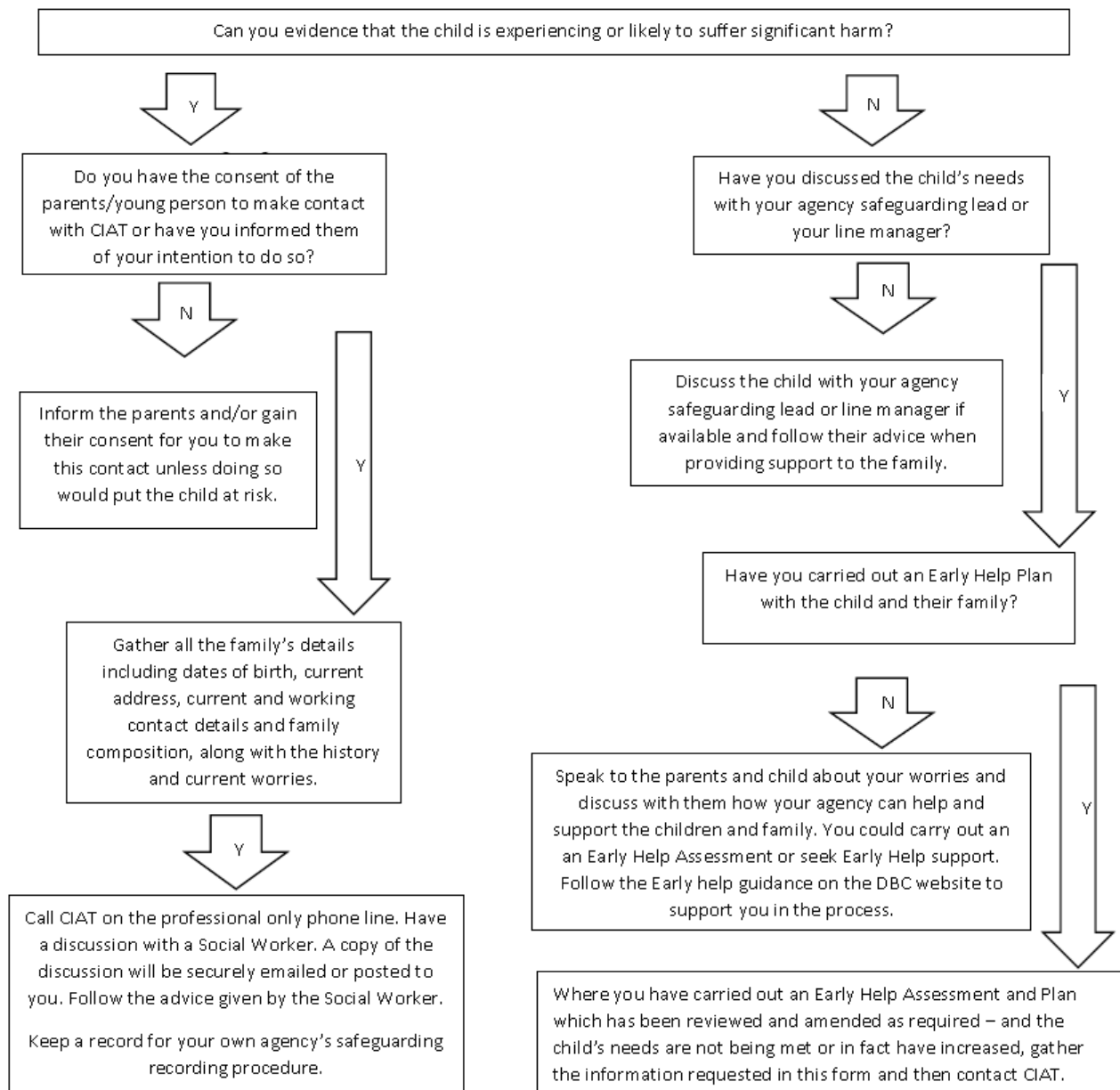


Figure 2

CHILDREN'S INITIAL ADVICE TEAM

Before contacting CIAT, please answer the following questions and follow the advice provided:



Information Sharing & Confidentiality

Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding. The Headteacher or DSL will only disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff if it will help them support the child's needs and ability to progress.

All staff are aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. The Data Protection Act (2018) and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purpose of keeping children safe.

All staff are aware that they cannot promise confidentiality.

Staff Training

All staff and volunteers have accessed safeguarding training appropriate to their role and responsibilities and a record is kept and updated when appropriate. All volunteers, employed staff and governors know who the DSL is and what to do if they have any concerns. All new staff go through an induction process, making them aware of our safeguarding policy and procedures.

Induction

All staff should be aware of systems within Mowden which support safeguarding and these will be explained to them as part of staff induction. This will include:

- the safeguarding (including child protection) policy
- the behaviour policy
- the staff code of conduct
- the procedures regarding children who go missing from education
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies)

Copies of policies and a copy of Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education are provided at induction.

Annual refresher training for all staff

All staff will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated. In addition, all staff will receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually.

The Headteacher, DSL and nominated governor have WRAP training and a programme of awareness training for the signs and indicators of radicalisation and extremism is rolled out for all staff, governors and volunteers. All staff know who the SPoC is and what to do if they have a concern.

Safer Recruitment and Selection of Staff

The school has a written recruitment and selection policy statement and procedures linking explicitly to this policy. The statement is included in all job advertisements, publicity material, recruitment websites, and candidate information packs.

The recruitment process is robust in seeking to establish the commitment of candidates to support the school's measures to safeguard children and to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse, or are otherwise unsuited to work with children. At least one person on any appointment panel has undertaken safer recruitment training; all members of the SLT are trained in safer recruitment.

Allegations against staff

Any allegation made against a member of staff (including supply staff and volunteers) must be referred to the Headteacher. If the allegation concerns the Headteacher, it should be referred to the Chair of Governors, the DSL or a call can be made directly to the local authority designated office (LADO).

Any member of staff with concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the schools safeguarding regime must follow the guidelines in the whistle blowing policy.

The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will work with the Local Authority when managing allegations against staff.

All allegations are taken seriously.

Details of how to make a referral to the dedicated officer are included in the following link:

<https://www.darlington-safeguarding-partnership.co.uk/professionals/managing-allegations/>

Low-level Concerns

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; does not meet the allegations threshold; or is not considered serious enough to refer to the local authority designated officer (LADO). Staff may still contact the LADO for advice about any low-level concerns.

Examples of low-level concerns could include:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- engaging with a child one-to-one in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language

Reports of low-level concern should be made directly to the DSL, either verbally or in writing. The DSL will share these concerns with the Headteacher and may also contact the LADO for advice.

A confidential document of incidents of low-level concern is kept by the DSL and reviewed at least termly or after every reported incident in order to establish any patterns of behaviour. This document is shared annually with the other members of the SLT or sooner if concerns arise.

The DSL - alongside the Headteacher - will make a decision about any actions that may be taken as a result of low-level concerns.

Safe use of cameras within Reception Year setting

All staff must not use mobile phones in the reception classroom area whilst the children are in school, unless it is a school mobile. Class cameras are kept in school: photographs are downloaded to the appointed area and used to inform assessment judgements. Further information about the use of mobile phones and personal devices can be found in our E Safety Policy.

Children missing from education

Children missing from education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. We

ensure that effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities enables children to be safe and receive a suitable education.

Children who are absent from education

Children being absent from school can act as a sign to a range of safeguarding issues. Therefore, our procedures are designed to ensure that a child who is absent from school is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child is absent, we will:

1. After the register is closed (9:30am) a phone call will be made by the administration team to the first contact for the child. If there is no answer, where possible a voice message will be left
2. Additional phone calls made throughout the day
3. Phone calls made to additional contacts stored for the child
 - a. Where a child has siblings who attend another school, phone calls made to the school to establish attendance situation of the sibling
4. Senior leaders informed (This may happen after step 1 if there have been previous concerns about the child and the family.)
5. Text messages sent to mobile phone contacts for the child
6. Letter sent to parents
7. Visits made to the home address of the child (This step may be taken sooner if the SLT deems it necessary.)
8. Referral to the LA after 5 days of absence
9. For child protection cases, refer to Social Worker on day one for advice

Reporting Systems and Record keeping

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing using CPOMS. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.

Non-confidential records will be easily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them. All staff have access to CPOMS and use it to record concerns.

Using CPOMS:

Before recording an incident, the member of staff reporting it should first check to see if there have been any previous incidents of a similar nature involving the child/ren.

When recording an incident (including child on child abuse) on CPOMS, the following should be included:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome

Staff should include the DSL when a record is made on CPOMS for any concerns relating to safeguarding. The DSL will also review the child's records for any previous incidents which might relate to the most recent.

Operation Encompass

The Federation of Mowden Schools is signed up to Operation Encompass which is a police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people exposed to domestic abuse.

When a child or young person has been involved or exposed to a domestic abuse incident the previous evening, the police will report the incident to school before the start of the next school day. The information is given in strict confidence to the DSL or Headteacher to enable support to be given dependant on the needs and wishes of the child.

Indicators of abuse and neglect

All school and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

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

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

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Other Related Policies

Physical Intervention
Bullying including cyberbullying
Prejudicial Incidents
E-Safety
Health and Safety
Whistleblowing

Important Information and Websites

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

NSPCC 24/7 Helpline
Textline Tel: 08088005000/88858

NSPCC Whistleblowing advice line: Tel 08000280285
Email- help@nspcc.org.uk

For all safeguarding concerns

Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT)
01325 406252
Office Hours:
Monday – Thursday: 08:30 – 17:00
Friday: 08:30 – 16:30

Emergency Duty Team (out of hours concerns)
01642 524552

CHANNEL Panel Chair - Jo Benson, Head of Youth Offending Service
Contact Details: 01325 406791

Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Group (DDCEG) Helpline: 020 7340 7264

Durham Constabulary Prevent Team

Billy Crampsie billy.crampsie@durham.pnn.police.uk
Office: 0191 375 2555
Anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321

To report illegal information, pictures or videos found on the internet www.gov.uk/report-terrorism

Allegations against members of staff:

Shirley Saunders (Designated Officer)
(Tel: 01325405319)
Secure email: designatedofficer@darlington.gov.uk or Shirley.saunders@darlington.gov.uk

In the event of there being an issue with the LADO, contact Martin Graham
(Tel: 01325 406703)

Early Help Assessment:

Kelly Ann Reay (Early Help Co-ordinator): Kelly-Ann.Reay@darlington.gov.uk
(Tel: 01325 405635)

Other key contacts:
Safeguarding including Child Protection Policy
2025.09 PP&C

Angela Turnbull (Safeguarding Education Officer): Angela.turnbull@darlington.gov.uk
(Tel: 01325 405848 Mob : 07391396050)

For Early Help and Attendance Referrals:
childrensfrontdoor@darlington.gov.uk

Police non-urgent enquiries 101

Police urgent enquiries 999

Before contacting any of the above make sure you have all the information at hand: details of the young person, including name, DOB, address, and any written concerns.

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to make any referrals based on all the information collected about the child or adult.

It is not the school's responsibility to decide whether abuse has taken place or not, however it will pass on information to the appropriate authority immediately.