

Child Protection Policy

Updated: September 2023

Review: September 2024 (or in response to changes in legislation/ DSCB operating procedures)

Proposed by the Head Teacher: Mrs. R. Jordan

Approved by Governing Body: Mrs. R. Dagleish (Chair of Governors)

Linked documents: [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(September 2023\)](#); [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#); [What to do if you are Worried a Child is Being Abused - Advice for Practitioners](#); [COVID-19: safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#) (other documents are referenced and hyperlinked throughout)

Our vision is for all children to be safe, happy and learning. We deliver this vision through clear aims that are underpinned by our school commitments.

Every child is safe, happy and learning because every adult is caring, happy in their work and skilled.

We value:

working **T**ogether
happiness
achieve without **l**imits
fairness and equality
kindness
safety and **s**ecurity



Our aim is for every child to:

- feel safe and secure at all times, and to know that the adults in school will help them if they are worried, frightened or feel unsafe;
- be an independent, resilient learner who sees mistakes as an opportunity to learn, is not afraid to try and seeks help when they need it;
- be an excellent communicator: able to listen and understand, speak with clarity and with a broad vocabulary;
- be a reader: finding pleasure in books and reading and with the skills to read fluently and accurately and to understand a range of texts;
- be a writer: writing fluently and with detail for a specific purpose and an understanding of the audience, using and applying a range of skills;
- be a mathematician: solving problems in a range of contexts by applying fluent knowledge and recall of number facts;
- develop the knowledge, skills and understanding of scientists, artists, designers, geographers, historians, linguists, musicians and performers;
- value being physically active and healthy;
- have the skills required to thrive in a technological age;
- be self-aware, emotionally intelligent and accepting of others, showing kindness and respect and an understanding of differences;
- acquire the skills and desire to contribute positively to the wider community.

Our commitment is to provide every child with:

- a school that is well led and managed by a strong team of leaders and governors;
- school staff who will keep them safe and who know what to do to protect them from harm;
- a sense of justice and knowledge of right and wrong;
- high-quality teaching from skilled professionals;
- teachers and support staff who have opportunities to grow and develop, extending their own expertise through training and development;
- access to specialist services to support additional needs;
- buildings and grounds that are safe, welcoming, clean and tidy;
- a learning environment that promotes and supports active learning;
- challenges that stretch and encourage higher-order thinking, team work and creativity;
- exciting and stimulating resources that encourage the acquisition and deepening of knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum;
- enrichment opportunities, including after-school clubs, exciting trips and visitors to broaden their experience of the wider world;
- a voice – where their views and opinions matter and are listened to;
- opportunities for their parents and carers to spend time in school and be involved in school activities;
- the chance to try new things and have a go, developing the resilience that will prove valuable throughout life;
- ambitions and aspirations;
- a 'can do' attitude, and the 'powers' for lifelong learning and success.

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Rationale

Children and young people have a fundamental right to be protected from harm. They have a right to expect schools to provide a safe and secure environment. It is a guiding principle of the law and child protection procedures that the protection and welfare of a child must always be the first priority. Failure to provide an effective response can have serious consequences for the child.

Safeguarding is defined as –

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

Thorns Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people both within the school environment and outside. This includes children's mental well-being, as well as physical health. Because of our day-to-day contact with children and young people, education staff are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in children's behaviour or their failure to develop. We need, therefore 'to be alert to the possibility of abuse occurring, be aware of the procedures to be followed if you have suspicions and have the confidence to follow those procedures.' This policy applies to **all staff, governors and volunteers** working in the school.

Thorns Primary School recognises its legal duty under s.175/157 Education Act 2002 to work with other agencies in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and protecting them from "significant harm". The protection of our pupils from suffering or likely to suffer significant harm is the responsibility of all staff within our school, superseding any other considerations. The following documents, circulars and guidance for good practice govern child protection work at Thorns Primary School:

- Dudley Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) - Safeguarding Children Procedures (<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk>);
- Dealing with a disclosure school guidance (*See Appendix 1*)
- Children Act 1989;
- Children Act 2004;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Childcare Act 2006 (as amended 2018)
- Working together to safeguard children (DfE) July 2018;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE) September 2023;
- Statutory framework for the Early year's foundation stage 2023
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings (May 2019)
- What do you do if you are worried a child is being abused March 2015; (*See Appendix 2*)
- The Prevent Duty June 2015 (under section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015)
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (DfE – updated 2018)
- Children Missing Education (September 2016)
- Child Sexual Exploitation (February 2017);
- COVID-19: safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers
- Child sexual Exploitation Feb 2017
- Teaching Online Safety in School (DfE) 2019
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment September 2021
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Child on Child abuse policy
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022

Aims

Thorns Primary School is committed to the safeguarding of all pupils in the school. Our aim is to ensure that all pupils are safe in school and that measures are put in place to support any child who is at risk of harm. Overall, the policy provides information for all adults working with children to carry out their duty of care responsibly. Thorns Primary School will provide information and regular training for all staff and other adults to carry out this duty of care responsibly.

Some children have increased risk of abuse and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising and 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 that they may face. We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities
- LGBTQ Pupils as the fact they may be LGBTQ is not itself an inherent risk factor or harm; however, staff will be aware that LGBTQ+ can be targeted by other individuals.
- Have any Mental health concerns themselves or within family.
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- 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, sexual or criminal exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are Children in Care or previously Children in Care

Prevention

- The six main elements of the policy are:
- ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children;
- raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe;
- implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse;
- supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her child protection plan;
- establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop;
- ensuring there are links with other safeguarding policies and practice, for example, physical intervention, anti-bullying, behaviour policy, attendance, medical conditions, first aid, intimate care, emergency evacuation, educational visits, sexual exploitation, Child on Child abuse, disability, homophobic abuse, racism, domestic abuse, female genital mutilation, radicalisation, extremism and online safety and ensuring that the identity of the DSL and deputies are included within school systems to support safeguarding and are explained to all staff as part of their induction.

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help prevention. The school will therefore:

- establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, 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;
- include in the Curriculum including PSE, RHSE and ICT curriculum, activities and opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm.

Procedures

Thorns Primary School will ensure that **all staff, visitors and volunteers follow** the procedures set out by the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE) to:

- ensure we have a designated safeguarding lead for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role. The formal training will be updated every 2 years. The DSL will be updated on a regular basis (at least annually) to keep up with current safeguarding developments and priorities.

THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD FOR THORNS PRIMARY SCHOOL IS:

SARAH WESTWOOD

THE DEPUTY LEADERS ARE:

REBECCA JORDAN, KAREN CARTWRIGHT, SAM HINKLEY

Child Protection issues can be very difficult to spot. If in doubt, it is always best to inform the relevant person, and allow them to make the decision about what further action is necessary. **The DSL and their deputies are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture and will be the most appropriate individuals to advise on any safeguarding concerns. If the DSL is unavailable, the Deputy Leaders will be the next point of contact: If in doubt, ask**

If you have any concerns during school holidays or when the school is closed, you can call Children's services referral and advice service on 0300 555 0050 during office hours (9am – 5 pm), contact the emergency Duty Team on 0300 555 8574 (out of hours)

- We will:
- ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for child protection and online safety including filtering and monitoring.

THE DESIGNATED GOVERNOR FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND ONLINE SAFETY INCLUDING FILTERING AND MONITORING IS: JANE MORGAN

- ensure **all staff** (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and governing body members knows the name of the designated safeguarding lead responsible for child protection and their role;
- ensure **all staff** undertake safeguarding training, including online safety training (which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations and responsibilities relating to filtering and monitoring), during their induction – this will be regularly updated.
- ensure **all staff** are aware that a pupil may not feel ready to or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and /or may not recognise their experiences as harmful.
- ensure **all staff** and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead responsible for child protection;
- ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection. Parents should be made aware of the policies and procedures;
- ensure that parents are aware that this policy is available on request, and make the policy available on the school website;
- develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at child protection meetings;
- develop links with other agencies that support the child, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Childrens services, School nursing, Education support and Education Psychology Service;
- Keep record of concerns, electronically using CPOMS (noting date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to Social Services and other relevant agencies immediately;
- ensure all paper records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations; electronic records can only be accessed by registered users.
- ensure that if a child who has a child protection plan leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and Social Care is informed;
- ensure that **all staff** are aware of what to do if there are concerns around a child. **Appendix 2 refers to What to do if you are concerned.** A copy of the interagency referral form that must be completed when making a referral can be accessed from the DSCB website.

Role and Responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding lead is a senior member of staff from the leadership team and has responsibility and management oversight and accountability for child protection, along with the Head Teacher. Deputy DSLs are trained to the same standards as the DSL and the role is explicit within their job description. DSL training is undertaken every 2 years and has been updated to allow the DSL to recognise the additional risks that children with SEN and disabilities (SEND) & LGBTQ+ Children may face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident that they have the capability to support SEND pupils to stay safe online.

When the school has concerns about a child, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what steps should be taken and should advise the Head Teacher.

Child protection information will be dealt with in a confidential manner.

Staff will be informed of relevant details only when the Designated Safeguarding Lead feels their having knowledge of a situation will improve their ability to deal with an individual child and/or family. Staff should only involve those who need to be involved when a child tells them that he/she is being abused or neglected.

A record will be made of what information has been shared with whom, and when.

Child protection records will be stored securely in a central place separate from academic records. Individual files will be kept for each child: the school will not keep family files. Files will be kept for at least the period during which the child is attending the school, and beyond that in line with current data legislation and guidance.

Access to these records by staff other than by the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be restricted.

Parents will be aware of information held on their children and kept up to date regarding any concerns or developments by the appropriate members of staff. General communications with parents will be in line with our home school policies and give due regard to which adults have parental responsibility. In keeping with best practice, the school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. ***The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.***

Do not disclose to a parent any information held on a child if this would put the child at risk of significant harm.

If a pupil moves from our school, the DSL will consider whether it is appropriate to share any information with the new school in advance of the pupil leaving. Child protection records may be forwarded on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the new school, with due regard to their confidential nature and in line with current government guidance on the transfer of such records. Direct contact between the two schools may be necessary, especially on transfer from primary to secondary schools or in instances where advance information would allow the new school to continue supporting the victim of abuse and have the appropriate support in place for the pupil's arrival. We will record where and to whom the records have been passed and the date.

If sending by post pupil records will be sent by "Special/Recorded Delivery" with an acknowledgement receipt to be returned by the accepting DSL.

Electronic transfers are automatically recorded on CPOMS and can only be transferred by a DSL.

If a pupil is permanently excluded and moves to a Pupil Referral Unit, child protection records will be forwarded on to the relevant organisation.

When a Designated Safeguarding Leader resigns their post or no longer has child protection responsibility, there will be a full face-to-face handover/exchange of information with the new post holder.

Staff support

We recognise the stressful and traumatic nature of child protection work. We will support staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and seek further support as appropriate.

Should staff not be satisfied by the action taken by the DSL, they should report directly to MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) to use the Local Authority's escalation and resolution process.

Roles and Responsibility of Governors and Governing Bodies

It is the responsibility of governing bodies to ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. They must have regards to this guidance to ensure that the policies, procedures and training in their schools are effective and comply with the law at all times.

The statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education places statutory requirements on all governing bodies. Governing bodies must make sure that their school has policies and procedures in place and take into account any guidance issued by the Secretary of State, any LA guidance and locally agreed inter- agency procedures.

Safer Recruitment and Employment Practices

Thorns Primary School has created a culture of safe recruitment, and has adopted the Local Authority policy on recruitment procedures. Thorns Primary School will follow the 'Safer Recruitment' processes for all appointments, which will include the following:

- declaration of our statement of commitment and the intent to undertake a DBS check in the advertisement

Our Statement of Commitment

"Thorns Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All posts are subject to Enhanced DBS Clearance, TRA Teacher Services, Qualification and ID Checks."

- ensuring that at least one member of the interview panel has attended DSCB Safer Recruitment Training;
- ensuring that references are gained before interview;
- Complete online checks prior to interview;
- ensuring that a safeguarding question is included in the interview;
- ensuring that any gaps in employment are explored at interview;
- undertake a DBS check* at the relevant level to the position of staff and governors in line with the new DBS government workforce guide and Disqualification under the Child Care Act for staff who work in a child care capacity, whether paid, volunteer or in work placements (a change in the law means that Disqualification by Association now only applies in domestic settings, not schools). Relationships and associations that staff have in school and outside (including online), may have an implication for the safeguarding of children in the school. Where this is the case, the member of staff is required to speak to the school.
- All governors now require an Enhanced DBS check and new appointments are TRA checked for Section 128 prohibition from governance
- Prohibition of teaching checks must be completed for everyone engaged in 'teaching work', whether a qualified teacher or not: and must be appropriately recorded on the Single Central Register. A teaching role is defined as planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils, delivering lessons to pupils, assessing and reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils, however, these activities are not classed as teaching work for the purposes of Keeping Children Safe in Education regulations if the person carrying out the activity does so (other than for the purposes of induction) subject to the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher or other person nominated by the head teacher to provide such direction and supervision
- Where the school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the school will ensure that there is appropriate safeguarding provision in place to meet the needs of the pupil and will ensure that written confirmation is obtained regarding safeguarding checks carried out on those working at the establishment.

(*An enhanced DBS check with barred list information will be appropriate for all staff as the majority of staff will be engaging in 'regulated activity'. A supervised volunteer who regularly teaches or looks after children is not deemed to be in 'regulated activity'. In case of staff or volunteers who provide personal care, this includes helping a child with eating and drinking and for reasons of illness, or in connection with toileting, washing, bathing and dressing for reasons of age, illness or disability)

If the school has reason to believe that an individual is barred, it commits an offence if it allows the individual to carry out any form of regulated activity. There are penalties of up to five years in prison if a barred individual is convicted of attempting to engage in such work.

All new appointments will have their identity verified from a current photographic ID and proof of address to obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information. The school will always ask for written information about previous employment history and check that the information is complete.

The school does not have the power to request DBS checks for visitors (for example children's relatives visiting a sports day) on these occasions the Head Teacher will use their professional judgment on how best to supervise these occasions.

Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006

Changes to Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006, as amended by the Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulation 2018 have been made, following a consultation into Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006. The new legislation came into force on 31st of August 2018.

In the recent past, staff providing child care could, in certain circumstances, be prohibited from working with children because of the convictions made by someone who lives in their household. This is no longer the case.

Disqualification by Association now only applies in domestic premises, not to schools. However, staff working in child care may still be disqualified because of offences committed by themselves. Relevant people include anyone working with children of reception age or younger and children between five and eight years old in and out of the school setting (like breakfast clubs or afterschool care).

All staff at Thorns are made aware that their 'relationships and associations' (including online) may have a safeguarding implication.

Use of the school premises for non-school activities

Where the governing board hires or rents out school facilities or the school premises to organisations or individuals, e.g. for providers to run community or extracurricular activities, it will ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place to keep pupils safe. The school will refer to the DfE's [guidance](#) on keeping children safe in out-of-school settings in these circumstances.

Where the governing board provides the activities under the direct supervision or management of school staff, child protection arrangements will apply. Where activities are provided separately by another body, this may not be the case; therefore, the governing board will seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place, including inspecting these as needed. The governing board will also ensure that there are arrangements in place to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate. The governing board will ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement, i.e. a lease or hire agreement, as a condition of use and occupation of the premises, and specify that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

Extracurricular activities and clubs

External bodies that host extracurricular activities and clubs at the school, e.g. charities or companies, will work in collaboration with the school to effectively safeguard pupils and adhere to local safeguarding arrangements. If Thorns Primary school receive any allegations made against staff from these external bodies including low level concerns our own safeguarding procedures will be followed including any referral to the LADO.

Allegations of Abuse Made Against Other Children (Child on Child abuse) including child on child sexual violence and harassment

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

We recognise that some pupils will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's Behaviour Policy.

Occasionally, allegations may be made against pupils by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, online abuse, verbal abuse, threats or intimidation, blackmail or extortion, sexual abuse, sexting, indecent exposure and sexual exploitation. It is likely that, to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

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

Staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via Child on Child abuse.

This is most likely to include, but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- gender-based violence
- upskirting (now a criminal offence) – taking photos up a skirt etc.;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation-type violence and rituals (including serious violence towards children being pulled into criminal networks and gangs)

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up”. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with Child on Child abuse. This could include girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation-type violence.

We recognise that child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment can happen in or outside of school, as well as online and as such we adopt an “it could happen here” approach. All reports or disclosures will be taken seriously and victims are supported throughout. As a school we will also refer to the separate DfE Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment guidance (September 2021).

We also recognise the importance of the post incident response, recognising that for the victims of sexual assault there can be a number of physical and mental health implications which may require additional support. This may also require the school to support the alleged perpetrator with further information about harmful sexual behaviour and provide signposting to sources of support.

Minimising the risk of safeguarding concerns towards pupils from other pupils

On occasion, some pupils may present a safeguarding risk to other pupils. These pupils will need an individual risk management plan to ensure that other pupils are kept safe and they themselves are not laid open to malicious allegations. There is a need to balance the tension between privacy and safeguarding.

When dealing with such incidents, they will usually, in the first instance, be investigated by the class teacher. If there is a safeguarding concern it will then be passed to the DSL/ senior leadership team; Head teacher and, in extreme cases, the Governing Body. At the Head Teacher's discretion, the police may be informed, in certain circumstances and parents informed (of both the pupil being complained about and the alleged victim) at the earliest opportunity.

The DSL should contact social services to discuss the case. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a social services referral where appropriate. The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in both pupils' files.

It may be appropriate to exclude the pupil being complained about for a period of time according to the school's behaviour policy and procedures.

Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation should take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures.

In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan.

The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.

We recognise that every case will be unique and that they may need to be dealt with in a variety of ways.

To minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse the school has an ethos of promoting friendship and cooperation. Through assembly time, PSHE and other curriculum areas the children are taught tolerance, empathy and understanding. Each class has a 'feelings box', which is regularly monitored and the school employs a Pastoral Lead to support both victims and perpetrators. The Pastoral Lead is available to pupils and parents to discuss concerns and provide support on a daily basis.

Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers

This is **not** the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Thorns Primary school will follow the "Managing Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers" (DSCB Procedures) and will have regard for the DfE 'Harm Test' guidance in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a teacher or other member of staff, including supply staff and volunteers, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

This is to take account of situations where a person's behaviour outside of school may suggest 'transferable risk'. For example, where a member of staff or volunteer is involved in an incident outside of school which did not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children.

The **Head Teacher** will deal with allegations made against school staff.

Where the concerns/allegations relate to the Head Teacher, they should be referred to the COG.

All staff have access to the counselling service within Dudley Council.

If any concerns or allegations are made against members of staff, in the first instance these should be discussed with the Designated Officer for Managing Allegations (DO) or Duty Independent Reviewing Officer. It is useful at this stage to also provide full names of the member of staff and child involved in the allegation, their dates of birth, addresses and details of any previous concerns, as this will avoid delay. All allegations against people who work with children will be passed on to the Designated Officer (Managing Allegations) in accordance with the Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and the DSCB Safeguarding Children Procedures. A Managing Allegations Referral form will need to be completed.

In the event of the allegation being made against the Head Teacher, the **Chair of Governors** is to be notified.

If an allegation is made against any governor, including the Chair of Governors, the Head Teacher will

contact the LA appointed Designated Officer.

- if any allegation is made a quick resolution should be a clear priority. If the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the school will endeavour to instigate appropriate action within three working days;
- in response to an allegation all other options should be considered before suspending a member of staff;
- allegations that are found to be malicious should be removed from the personnel records;
- pupils that are found to have made malicious allegations are likely to have breached school behaviour policies; the school will therefore consider the appropriate sanction;
- reporting restrictions only apply to teachers in schools;
- we as the employer have a duty of care to all staff; support for the individual is the key to fulfilling this duty;
- when an allegation is made it is extremely important that every effort is made to maintain confidentiality;
- after any allegations of abuse have been made, the outcome will be categorised as either; substantiated, malicious, false, unsubstantiated or unfounded;
- were an allegation has been substantiated and the individual is dismissed or resigns, the school may consider referring the matter to the TRA for consideration for a prohibition order.

In addition to this, Thorns Primary School have routine systems for continually monitoring the performance of staff ensuring compliance with both child protection procedures and the code of good practice. All staff within Thorns Primary will adhere to the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Educational Settings (Oct 2015). This covers a wide range of issues around staff conduct.

Low Level Concerns about Staff Behaviour

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) .

Low-level Concerns may be graded Low-level if the concern does not meet the criteria for an allegation; and the person has acted in a way that is inconsistent with our staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.

Example behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door;
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.
- Any 'nagging doubt' you may have regarding the individuals conduct in or outside of setting.

If the concern has been raised via a third party, the head teacher will collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person* who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
- to the individual involved and any witnesses.

Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Staff should be encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards. Low-level concerns should be recorded in writing, including:

- name* of individual sharing their concerns
- details of the concern
- context in which the concern arose
- action taken (* if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible)

Records will be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. Records

will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

If staff have concerns about a fellow colleague, they should follow the **Whistle Blowing** Procedures. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other channels are open to them such as the NSPCC Whistle Blowing helpline: **0800 028 0285**.

Referral to Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS)

Any employee who is dismissed or resigns due to a child protection case will be referred to the DBS, who will consider the future risk and harm the individual possesses to vulnerable groups including children.

The Single Central Record must be in place and include all the areas covered in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023). Further advice is sought from HR.

Information Sharing, Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Confidentiality is an issue, which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of Child Protection. Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

Advice should be sought from the Social Care Team, who should approach the alleged abuser (or parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Information will be stored in a secure place with restricted access to designated people and be maintained in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

If a child who is subject to a child protection plan leaves, their information will be forwarded to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the new school, in line with the government guidance on the transfer of such records.

Any relevant information about a child should be recorded on CPOMS, which can then be used to print reports and timelines which can be shared with agencies as required. The Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR place duties on us to process personal information fairly and lawfully, keeping this information safe and secure. See p. 23 of KCSIE

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-protection-toolkit-for-schools>

Multi-agency working

The Thorns Primary School forms one of the multiple agencies involved in keeping children safe.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

As part of Dudley safeguarding People Partnership. Resources and links to relevant documents can be found at: <https://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/safeguarding/child/>

Involving Parents/Carers

In general, we will discuss any child protection concerns with parents/carers before approaching other agencies, and will seek their consent to making a referral to another agency. Appropriate staff will approach parents/carers after consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. However, there may be occasions when the school will contact another agency before informing parents/carers because it considers that contacting them may increase the risk of significant harm to the child.

Parents/carers will be informed about our Child Protection Policy through the school website.

Early Help

- If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare they should act on them immediately and speak to the DSL. The DSL will take the lead role when early help is appropriate. The LA should make a decision, within one working day of a referral being made, about the type of response that is required and should let the referrer/school know the outcome. Signs that early help may be required include:
- The child showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- The child is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- The child is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect
- The child is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- The child is a privately fostered child
- The child has a disability, specific additional needs or certain health conditions
- Children who have a mental health need
- Children who are at risk of 'honour'-based abuse
- Children who have a parent in prison (or are affected by parental offending)
- Children who are persistently absent from education

The local authority guidance and thresholds can be found at:

<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/care-health/children-and-family-care/early-help-for-children-and-families>

The Curriculum

Child Protection and wider child safety issues will be addressed as part of a broad and balanced curriculum as appropriate, especially in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Citizenship and Sex and Relationships Education and Online Safety.

Children are taught how to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

Looked After Children

The designated teacher for looked after children at Thorns is: **Sam Hinkley**. He is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of children who are looked after and/or who have left care through adoption, special guardianship, child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales. The designated teacher has the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. The designated teacher will work closely with the Virtual School Head and all other agencies, to ensure that prompt action is taken in respect of any concerns and that pupil premium funding is best used to support the progress of the looked after child. In the case of care leavers, the LA retains an ongoing responsibility which includes keeping in touch with them, preparing assessments of their needs and appointing a personal advisor to develop a pathway plan. Where applicable, the DSL will liaise with their LA personal advisor as necessary.

Children Who Need a Social Worker

Children who need a social worker may be a greater risk of harm. This may be particularly true during prolonged periods away from school (such as local or national lockdown, partial school closure and school holidays). Extra care and attention should be paid to these children and School should make arrangements to keep in contact with the family and the child.

Other areas of our work

All our policies which address issues of power and potential harm, for example bullying, equal opportunities, Physical handling, positive behaviour, will be linked to ensure a whole school approach. At Thorns, we support staff in the use of appropriate physical contact in order to keep pupils safe using

reasonable force. The use of reasonable force means using no more force than is needed and that the use of force may involve passive physical contact or active physical contact.

Our Child Protection policy cannot be separated from the general ethos of the school, which should ensure that pupils are treated with respect and dignity, taught to treat each other with respect, feel safe, have a voice, and are listened to.

Training and Development

The Thorns Primary School will ensure that:

- all staff are kept up to date with Child Protection issues by formal training taking place regularly annually; online courses, external training and in-house training provided throughout the year following our safeguarding training plan.
- clear reminders of all procedures will be given out to all staff in the Inset session at the start of every academic year, with frequent reminders at appropriate meetings/training events;
- the designated Safeguarding Lead/s will take part in regular formal training sessions Advanced level training at least every two years;
- all policies and procedures will follow DFE guidance on Child Protection issues;
- governors will be kept informed about procedures through the Child Protection Link Governor;
- good monitoring takes place of pupils identified as at risk;
- the pastoral team works closely with outside agencies to share information and co-ordinate support for the pupil.

In line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2023), the Head Teacher and all other staff, governors and volunteers who work with children will undertake training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for Child Protection effectively. This will be kept up to date by refresher training at regular intervals for all staff. A Training Record is kept for all adults working in contact with children.

Definitions and Indicators of Abuse

There are four overarching types of child abuse. They are defined in the UK Government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education; statutory guidance for schools and colleges, September 2023 as follows:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Neglect

There are other categories of abuse that will generally involve one or more of the above e.g. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

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 persistent 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 or exploration and learning, or

preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone

Sexual Abuse

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

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

Significant Harm

"Significant Harm is any Physical, Sexual or Emotional Abuse, Neglect, accident or injury that is sufficiently serious to adversely affect progress and enjoyment of life. Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development."

Signs of Abuse

Recognising child abuse is not easy. It is every staff member's responsibility to be alert to whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk of harm from someone. The following information should help to recognise the signs of possible abuse.

The physical signs of abuse may include:

- unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body;
- multiple bruises - in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh;
- cigarette burns;
- human bite marks;
- broken bones;
- scalds, with upward splash marks;
- multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation;
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts;
- flinching when approached or touched;
- reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather;
- depression;

- withdrawn behaviour;
- running away from home.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking;
- being unable to play;
- fear of making mistakes;
- sudden speech disorders;
- self-harm;
- fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour.

Domestic Abuse

In April 2021, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent and introduced a statutory definition for the first time. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the types of abuse within the following guidance:

- NSPCCC:UK Domestic abuse signs, symptoms, effects
- Refuge: What is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children
- SafeLives: Young people and domestic abuse

Psychological, Physical, Sexual, Financial and Emotional

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

Section 70(1) Domestic Abuse Act 2021 inserted section 75A into Part 5 of the Serious Crime Act 2015
5Non-fatal strangulation and non-factual suffocation

Serious Violence

Through training, all staff will be made aware of the indicators which may signal a pupil is at risk from, or is involved with, serious violent crime. These indicators include, but are not limited to :

- Increased absence from school.
- A change in friendships.
- Relationships with older individuals or groups.
- A significant decline in academic performance.
- Signs of self – harm.
- A significant change in wellbeing.

Online Safety including filtering and monitoring

The government has published a new guidance document 'Teaching online safety in school (DfE, June 2019). It outlines to schools the importance of helping children and young people not only to use the internet safely, but also to give them opportunities to learn how to behave online.

The school ensures that pupils are taught to stay safe online as part of our broad and balance curriculum. The school makes use of a number of resources and tools to support online safety such as:

- Education for a Connected World framework from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)

- Guidance from PSHE Association
- Be Internet Legends by Parent Zone and Google
- Half-termly lessons devoted to safety when online.
- Parental workshops to teach safe practices in the home.

Pupils are not allowed to have access to their own electronic devices during the school day. If a child needs a mobile phone to arrange transportation when leaving school, they can bring their mobile phone to school and hand it in for safe keeping to the Class Teacher.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should take lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and policies that are in place – include in job description.

Schools should have implemented the “**Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges.**”

All Staff including one governor will annually receive Cyber security training in the first academic term.

All Staff should have an understanding of the filtering and monitoring systems used within school and the risks BYO devices can bring for students and adults.

Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm

Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans) may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs.

Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child’s experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

Local authorities should inform the school if a child has a social worker, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child’s safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

Where children need a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

(Findings from the Children in Need review, ‘Improving the educational outcomes of Children in Need of help and protection’ contains further information; the conclusion of the review, ‘Help, protection, education’ sets out action Government is taking to support this)

Specific Safeguarding Issues

Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues.

For example NSPCC offers information for schools and colleges on its own website www.nspcc.org.uk.

Schools can also access DSCB guidance on the issues listed below via the website

<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/>

<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/child/work-with-children-young-people/education-information/>

Safeguarding Dudley Procedures

<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/child/work-with-children-young-people/safeguarding-children-procedures/>

Early Help Strategy - Dudley

<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/child/work-with-children-young-people/dudley-early-help-strategy/>

Referrals – How to make (Thresholds Framework)

<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/child/work-with-children-young-people/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub/>

Local Guidance

- ['Right Time Right Service' – poster](#)
- [Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people In Education Settings \(Oct 2015\)](#)
- [E-Safety and the use of images](#)
- [Guidance in respect of a serious or critical safeguarding incident affecting a school incident](#)

National Guidance

- [Ofsted – Inspecting safeguarding in early years , education and skills settings \(August 2016\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges\) September 2023 - This guidance replaces Keeping Children Safe in Education July 2022. Information Sharing Protocol](#)
- [What to do if you are worried about a child](#)
- [The Prevent Duty 2015](#)
- [Home Office Guidance on Mandatory Reporting of FGM – Procedural Information](#)
- COVID-19: safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing>
- <https://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/whentocallthepolice>

Templates/Forms for use in Dudley

The DSCB Multi Agency Referral Form is available via the [Report It](#) page.

Allegations against adults/staff

<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/child/work-with-children-young-people/management-of-allegations/>

The DSCB Multi Agency Referral Form is available via the [Report It](#) page

- [The Role of the LADO](#)
- [Allegations against a Professional - Flow Chart](#)
- [Allegations against Staff in personal lives](#)
- [DSCB Allegations Procedures](#)

Child sexual exploitation

<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/child/work-with-children-young-people/child-sexual-exploitation-cse/>

<http://www.seeme-hearme.org.uk/>

[Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre](#)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

www.afruca.org www.feminist.org

Forced Marriage

www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage

Legislation

www.dfes.gov.uk

Mental Health

www.youngminds.org.uk www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Neglect Strategy

<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/child/work-with-children-young-people/neglect-strategy/>

Stay Safe

www.staysafe.org

Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

www.baspcan.org.uk

Teenage Pregnancy

www.teenagepregnancy.org

Use of images/ e-safety

<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/child/work-with-children-young-people/e-safety-and-use-of-images/>

To have been carried out; and discuss any such cases with the safeguarding lead and children's social care. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

“Children and young people who are sexually exploited are the victims of child sexual abuse, and their needs require careful assessment. They are likely to be in need of welfare services and - in many cases - protection under the Children Act 1989. This group may include children who are sexually abused through the misuse of technology, coerced into sexual activity by criminal gangs or the victims of trafficking”.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) 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. A child may also be sexually exploited for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. 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 within an increasingly widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity. Child criminal exploitation includes drug networks or gangs grooming and exploiting children to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban areas, rural areas, seaside and market towns. The key to identifying potential involvement in **county lines** is 'missing episodes', where the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs. In such cases, the school may consider a referral to the National Referral Mechanism. 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. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology including cyberbullying, 'sexting' 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.

KCSIE definition of Child Sexual Exploitation and Criminal Sexual Exploitation

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online. **DfE Child sexual exploitation – Definition and guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation – February 2017**

Consensual and non – consensual sharing of indecent images and videos

The school will ensure staff are aware to treat consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and / or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual images) as a safeguarding concern.

Electronic forms of communication have developed rapidly in recent years and the vast majority of children have access to a computer and or mobile phone. Children are frequently exposed to internet abuse including sexual abuse and bullying by phone is on the increase. Any child thought to be the victim of such abuse should therefore be regarded as in need of protection.

In cases of 'sexting' we follow guidance given to schools and colleges by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) published in 2017: 'Sexting in schools and colleges, responding to incidents, and safeguarding young people'.

Contextual Safeguarding

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) will consider the context within which safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Contextual Safeguarding helps focus on the fact that young people experience harm beyond their families and recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems, beyond focusing on families in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts. This allows any assessment to consider all of the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are:

- Not on a school roll.
- Not being educated other than at school.
- Identified as having been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (4 weeks).

Children go missing from education for a number of reasons including:

- They don't start school at the appropriate time and so they do not enter the educational system.
- They are removed by their parents.
- Behaviour and/or attendance difficulties.
- They cease to attend, due to exclusion, illness or bullying.
- They fail to find a suitable school place after moving to a new area.
- The family move home regularly.
- Problems at home.

Where children have poor attendance or are regularly missing then the school works in close liaison with the Local Authority CME officer and admissions team.

Further information can be found in 'Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities – September 2016'

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (with involvement of the 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 step-parents; it does not include great aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins) Given the 'hidden' nature of much private fostering, local authorities have a duty to raise awareness and needs to notify the local Children's Care department. Each party involved in a private fostering arrangement has a legal duty to inform the local authority 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to start. Not to do so is a criminal offence. It is important to note that 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, the school will be clear on who has parental responsibility.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Thorns Primary School is committed to working with children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities who often face additional safeguarding challenges. This can include:

- 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 disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwards showing any signs;
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Mental Health

Staff should be aware that 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. Children who are exhibiting symptoms of mental health problems should be referred to the DSL and SENCO, and advice sought from appropriate external agencies. Staff should all be aware of behavioural and other signs that could indicate potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing>

Prevent Strategy (Radicalisation and Extremism)

Thorns Primary School is actively involved in the Prevent strategy. The school has a part to play in fostering shared values and promoting cohesion. Extremist ideology runs counter to the school and British values. Therefore our community aims to successfully promote respect and tolerance for others, the rights of all to live and study free from persecution of any kind, freedom of speech, democracy, the rule of law and equality of opportunity and treatment. Extremism promotes fear and division and actively seeks to cause destructive relationships between different communities. Our school strategy for preventing extremism has five key objectives:

1. To promote and reinforce school and British values; to create space for free and open debate; listen and support the learner voice and enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self- confidence.
2. To promote social cohesion by supporting inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and to engage all students in playing a full and active role in wider engagement in society.
3. To ensure pupil safety and that the school is free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.
4. To provide support for pupils who may be at risk and offer appropriate sources of advice and guidance.

5. To ensure that pupils and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing terrorism and radicalisation.

Our school, like all others, is required to identify a Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC) who will be the lead within the organisation for safeguarding in relation to protecting individuals from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism: this will normally be the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The SPOC for Thorns Primary School is Rebecca Jordan. The responsibilities of the SPOC are described on page 23.

Indicators of Vulnerability to Radicalisation

1. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.
2. Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy as:
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. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.
3. Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:
The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:
 - Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;
 - Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;
 - Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts;
 - Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.
4. There is no such thing as a “typical extremist”: those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.
5. Pupils may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that school staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.
6. Indicators of vulnerability include:
 - Identity Crisis – the pupil is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society;
 - Personal Crisis – the pupil may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
 - Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the pupil’s country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy;
 - Unmet Aspirations – the pupil may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life;
 - Experiences of Criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement / reintegration;
 - Special Educational Need – pupils may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.
7. However, this list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the

above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism.

8. More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters;
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element;
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature;
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage;
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues;
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations; and
- Significant changes to appearance and / or behaviour;
- Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and / or personal crisis.

Preventing Violent Extremism - Roles and Responsibilities of the Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

The SPOC is responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff of the school are aware of who is the SPOC in relation to protecting pupils from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- Maintaining and applying a good understanding of the relevant guidance in relation to preventing pupils from becoming involved in terrorism, and protecting them from radicalisation by those who support terrorism or forms of extremism which lead to terrorism;
- Raising awareness about the role and responsibilities of the school in relation to protecting pupils from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- Monitoring the effect in practice of the school's RE curriculum and assembly policy to ensure that they are used to promote community cohesion and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs;
- Raising awareness within the school about the safeguarding processes relating to protecting pupils from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- Acting as the first point of contact within the school for case discussions relating to pupils who may be at risk of radicalisation or involved in terrorism;
- Collating relevant information from/ in relation to referrals of vulnerable pupils into the Channel** process;
- attending Channel** meetings as necessary and carrying out any actions as agreed;
- Reporting progress on actions to the Channel** Co-ordinator; and
- Sharing any relevant additional information in a timely manner.
- Safeguard individuals who might be vulnerable to being radicalised, so that they are not at risk of being drawn into terrorist- related activity; and
- Provide early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risks they face and reduce vulnerability.

**Channel is a multi-agency approach to provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorist related activity. It is led by the West Midlands Police Counter-Terrorism Unit, and it aims to establish an effective multi-agency referral and intervention process to identify vulnerable individuals

Implementation, Review and Monitoring

Implementation will take place by ensuring this policy is discussed at the full governing body meeting and ensuring all staff are made aware of its existence.

This Policy will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis and whenever significant changes to legislation, guidance or changes to local procedures require it.

The cover page of this policy states the dates of review ratification by the Governing Body.

Supporting Documents

DSCB Safeguarding Children Procedures <http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/>

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2020) Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)

Keeping Children Safe in Education: Information for all Schools and College Staff (2023) Safer

Working Practice Guidance (October 2015)

Useful Numbers (Relevant contact details are displayed on the board in Staff Room and around school)

Emergency Duty Team 0300 555 8574

Local Authority Designated Officer: 01384 813061

Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit Halesowen Police Station 101 Extension 79026071 or 79026072

Local Authority Prevent Officer 01384 814736

APPENDIX 1

Dealing with a Disclosure of Abuse

When a child tells me about abuse s/he has suffered, what must I remember?

- Stay calm.
- Do not communicate shock, anger or embarrassment.
- Reassure the child. Tell her/him you are pleased that s/he is speaking to you.
- Never enter into a pact of secrecy with the child. Assure her/him that you will try to help but let the child know that you will have to tell other people in order to do this. State who this will be and why.
- Tell her/him that you believe them. Children very rarely lie about abuse; but s/he may have tried to tell others and not been heard or believed.
- Tell the child that it is not her/his fault.
- Encourage the child to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information.
- Listen and remember.
- Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you.
- Praise the child for telling you. Communicate that s/he has a right to be safe and protected.
- Do not tell the child that what s/he experienced is dirty, naughty or bad.
- It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender.
- Be aware that the child may retract what s/he has told you. It is essential to record all you have heard.
- At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know.
- As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations. (*See Appendix 3 Reporting form – printed on yellow for a general concern, red for urgent /serious concern*)

NB It is not education staff's role to seek disclosures. Their role is to observe that something may be wrong, ask about it, listen, be available and try to make time to talk.

Immediately afterwards

You must not deal with this yourself. Clear indications or disclosure of abuse must be reported to children's social care without delay, by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All information should be recorded on CPOMS in a timely manner or complete the reporting form (*Appendix 3*) available in the staff room if you are unable to access CPOMS.

Make DSL aware of the situation **do not** It may be urgent and require an immediate response.

Children making a disclosure may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Listening to and supporting a child/young person who has been abused can be traumatic for the adults involved. Support for you will be available from your Designated Safeguarding Lead. APPENDIX 2

APPENDIX 2

What to do if you are concerned:

Concerns outside the immediate environment (e.g. a parent or carer)

- Report your concerns to the, *Designated Safeguarding Lead* who should contact Children's services Team or the Police as soon as possible.
- If the *Designated Safeguarding Lead* is not available, then the Head Teacher or the person currently responsible for the school should be informed. (This is to ensure there is no delay in seeking advice or making a referral).
- Childrens services and the *Designated Safeguarding Lead* will decide how to involve the parents/carers. Parents should not be informed if to do so would increase risk to the child'.
- Maintain confidentiality on a **need to know** basis only.

Information for social care or the police about suspected abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The reasons for your concern
- Full name and date of birth of the child
- Names and dates of birth of the child's family/household members
- Other agencies/professionals involved with the family
- The child's first language and any special needs
- The child's developmental needs, family and environmental factors and parenting capacity
- Any work you may have already undertaken with the child and family

Responding to allegations or suspicions (about someone working with children or young people)

It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Thorns Primary School in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.

Thorns Primary School will ensure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

All allegations or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and treated in accordance with these procedures. They will be applied when there is an allegation or concern that any person, who works with children, in connection with their employment, voluntary or personal activity, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they are likely to pose a risk of harm to children

These behaviours will be considered within the context of the four categories of abuse (i.e. physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect). This includes concerns relating to inappropriate relationships between members of staff and children or young people, for example:

- Having a sexual relationship with a child under 18 if in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if consensual (s16-19 *Sexual Offences Act 2003*);

- 'Grooming', i.e. meeting a child under 16 with intent to commit a relevant offence (s15 *Sexual Offences Act 2003*);
- Other 'grooming' behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature (e.g. inappropriate text/email messages or images, gifts, socialising etc);
- Possession of sexual images of children/pseudo-photographs of children.

The definition of working with children includes paid and unpaid staff, volunteers and carers (including foster and adoptive carers). It includes everyone who works at Thorns Primary School including administrative and other support staff.

Action if there are concerns

Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the Head Teacher will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Designated, *Safeguarding Lead*, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Head Teacher/Chair of Governors who will decide on whether disciplinary action should be taken and the next steps to take.

Concerns about suspected abuse and Low-level concerns

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer must be reported to the Head Teacher, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The Head Teacher will refer the allegation to the Social Care Team who may involve the Police. All allegations against people who work with children must be passed onto the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer for Managing Allegations).
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Social Care Team.
- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the concern must be shared with the Head Teacher. If the Head Teacher is the subject of the concern/ allegation, the concern must be shared with the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors will liaise with the Designated Officer for Managing Allegations and HR.

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

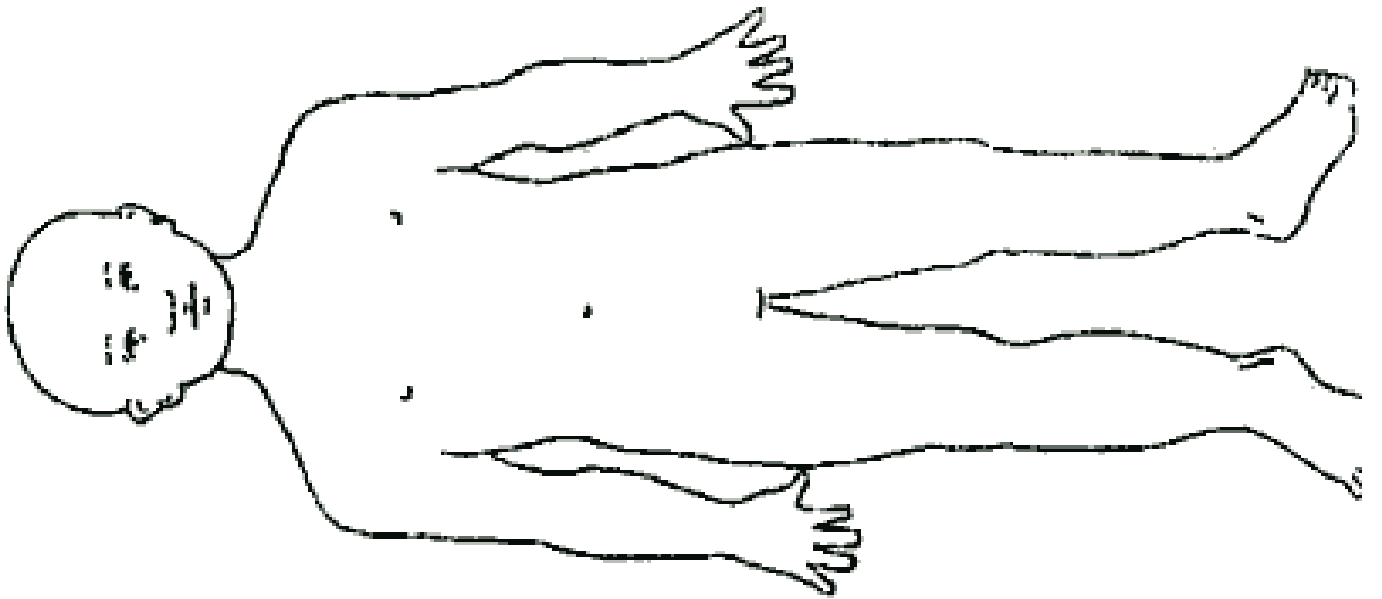
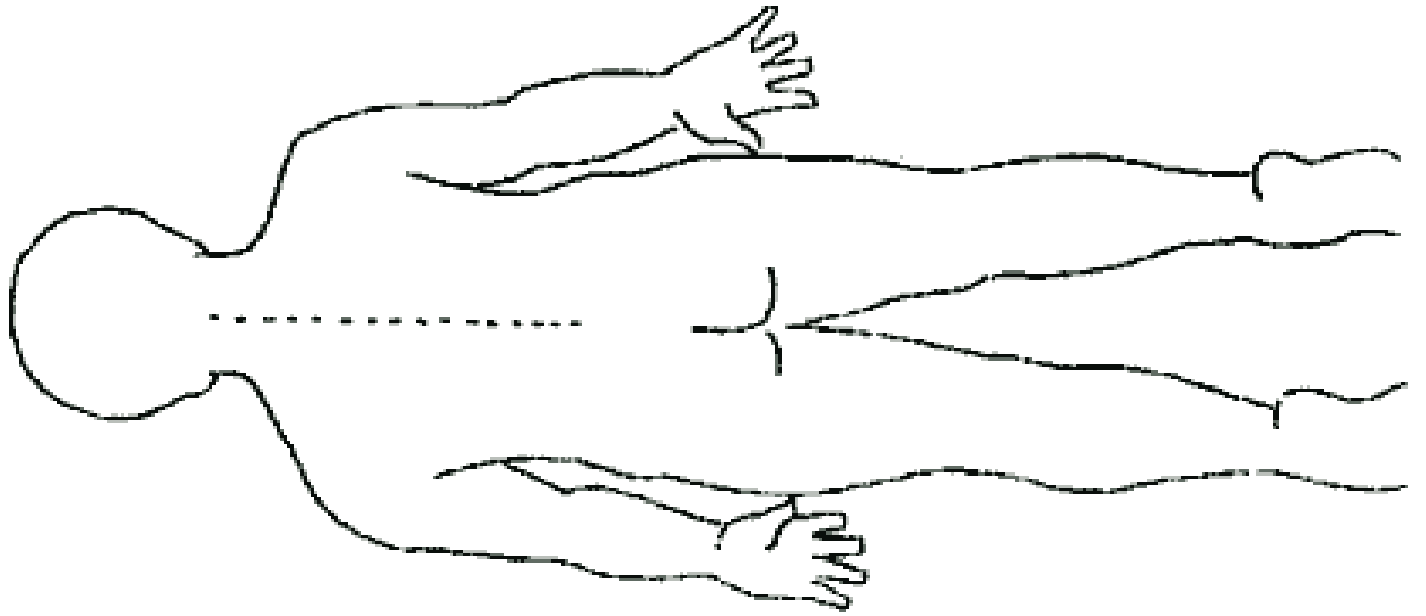
- The Head Teacher will liaise with the Chair of Governors and make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social care inquiries. Advice can also be sought from the Human Resources Section and the DO (Designated Officer for Managing Allegations).
- Irrespective of the findings of the Social Care Team or Police inquiries the Head Teacher/Chair of Governors will assess all individual cases to decide whether an individual can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Chair of Governors and Head Teacher must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

APPENDIX 3

Form for recording and reporting concerns about a child (double sided with body map)

- to be used in the unlikely event of not being able to access CPOMS

<u>Form for recording and reporting concerns about a child</u>		
Full name of child:	Class:	Year:
Date of birth (if known):		
Your name:	Position:	
Date and time of incident/disclosure/concern:		
Please provide details of the incident/disclosure/concern, including times, dates, description of injuries (body map included yes/no), and, if applicable, exact words spoken by the child (please continue on the other side if needed):		
Signed:		Time and date of reporting:
Name of staff member reported to:		Further action taken by staff member:
Signed:		Date:
Any other information helpful for referral (to be completed and discussed with pastoral team/ designated safeguarding lead). Include academic progress, attendance, behaviour, presentation, peer relationships and parental knowledge:		



PROCESS FOR RECORDING AND REPORTING A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD

Name Of DSL And Deputy DSLs:
Sarah Westwood, Rebecca Jordan,
Karen Cartwright, Sam Hinkley.

Complete CPOMS entry or a school concern form (DSL MUST receive a concern via CPOMS or writing in the unlikely event CPOMS cannot be accessed)

Local Authority DO/Risk: (For concerns about an Adult/Person in Position of Trust)

Safeguarding Governor & Online safety Governor: Jane Morgan

Contact Details: Yvonne Nelson Brown Tel: 01384 – 813110

Deliver/Report all concerns to: DSL

DSL reviews concern, identifies level of need and makes a decision about the Next Steps

Decision To <u>MONITOR</u> The Concern	Decision To <u>DISCUSS</u> The Concern With Parent/S Carer	Decision to <u>REFER</u> the concern to Early Help Level 2/3 or Children's Services (CSC) Level 4
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MONITOR

DISCUSS

REFER



School worker asked to monitor pupil and feedback to the DSL within an agreed timescale

MONITOR



After discussion DSL decides to either, discuss further with parent/carer, monitor via school worker, make an Early Help Assessment, attends allocation meeting or make a referral into CSC Level 4

REFER

DSL refers into CSC



AT ALL TIMES RECORD



Remember:
ANYONE CAN MAKE A REFERRAL IN ADDITION, REPORT DIRECTLY INTO EARLY HELP or CSC.

DSL retains Concern Form/incident details in secure, confidential Safeguarding File

Contact details for: Children's Social Care referrals:

MASH: 0300 555 0050

Out of Hours Duty Team:

0300 555 8574

PREVENT/Channel referrals:

Mark Wilson: 01384 816 883,
07966 503370

Police Prevent Officer:

Haroon Akhlaq: 07393 142188

Actions where there are concerns about a child

