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This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022): All school staff to read Part 1, Annex B and Part 5. SLT, the Advisory Board and Directors to also read Annex C.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Safer Recruitment policy
- Complaints Procedures
- Whistleblowing policy
- The Staff Code of Conduct (Staff Handbook)
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education policy
- Low Level Concerns Policy

The Designated Safeguarding Lead at Stoke College is:

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The Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) will ensure that there is always cover for their role, including for any out of hours/out of term activities. Arrangements for cover will be communicated clearly to staff.

The Stoke College Safeguarding Team are supported in their work by the college's Advisory Council and the Board of Directors.

Policy Statement

1.1.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Stoke College is committed to safeguarding, protecting and promoting the welfare of children. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is an integral part of our overall approach to ensuring that all students, regardless of special needs or disability, racial/cultural heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or age, receive an excellent standard of bespoke pastoral care.

Stoke College aims to prepare its students to stay safe in life beyond that of the educational setting, delivering a personal, social, health and relationships curriculum that is representative, realistic and abreast of rapid development and is in keeping with technological advancements which is an integral part of our modern society.

1.1.2 This policy has been prepared in compliance with, and with regard to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)

1.1.3

Stoke College recognises and acts upon its legal duties as set out in the above statutes, regulations and guidance, to protect its students and staff from harm and to work with other agencies in carrying out these duties and responding to safeguarding concerns.

Stoke College's Board of Directors and Advisory Council recognises the requirement to comply with its duties under legislation. Thus, this policy complies with KCSIE (September 2023) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and procedures detailed by the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.

All staff are required to have read and understood this policy, Parts One and Annex B of KCSIE 2023 and the related policies referenced on Page 1 of this policy. Staff will also be required to undergo safeguarding and child protection training, a record of which will be kept by the Stoke College Safeguarding Team. Training records will be reviewed and updated regularly by the Safeguarding Team.

The Board of Directors and Advisory Council will ensure that they have read and understood Parts One and Two of KCSIE, including Annex C.

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Principal, the DSL and the Advisory Council Safeguarding Lead.

1.1.4

This policy is mandatory for all members of staff and volunteers at the college (temporary and permanent). This policy is applicable at all times that staff and volunteers are working with students, including when this involves working away from the school.

1.1.5

This policy is available to all parents, staff and volunteers on the college's website. A paper copy of this policy is also available to parents upon request to the School Office.

1.2 Creating a Culture of Safeguarding

1.2.1

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. All staff and volunteers are expected to recognise Stoke College's holistic approach, ensuring that students' wellbeing and welfare is at the forefront of all practice.

The college seeks to promote and nurture the mental health and wellbeing of all students and members of staff as reflected in procedures and practices outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct and through the college's high standard of pastoral care.

At Stoke College we are committed to safeguarding children and young people and we expect everyone who works at Stoke College to share this commitment. Adults at the College take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them. We will always act in the best interest of the child. Staff are trained to adopt an 'it could happen here' approach.

1.2.2

Stoke College takes a broad approach to safeguarding in order to recognise that protecting the welfare of children includes:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking prompt action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
- Ensuring that Early Help is accessed promptly where concerns are emerging

If a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to suffer significant harm, immediate action will be taken to protect that child and a referral will be made to social services.

If a child is not suffering significant harm, or likely to, but requires additional support in order to thrive, action will be taken to promote the welfare and wellbeing of that child. This may include (as an example): additional pastoral support, intervention in liaison with the SENDCO, liaison with agencies who can offer the child support, support for the parents and peer support.

The school uses MyConcern to ensure that timely and accurate records are kept of all safeguarding concerns. The Safeguarding Team aims to intervene promptly to address risks and to prevent issues from escalating.

Every member of staff has access to MyConcern training via the DSL and the Advisory Council Safeguarding Link. Staff are aware that concerns should be reported using MyConcern.

Records will be comprised of all relevant information, including the views of the child, communication with external agencies and records of communication with parents and guardians.

1.2.3

The college will contribute to inter-agency working, in line with the statutory guidance provided in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to Child Protection Plans.

1.2.4

The School has systems in place to:

- Prevent unsuitable people working with students
- Identify students who are at risk of and/or are likely to suffer significant harm and take appropriate action and promote the welfare of students in need of additional support
- Promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice
- Protect students and staff from online risks, which include online safety education and training, policies and procedures governing the use of IT, filtering and monitoring systems and procedures to manage any incidents that occur
- Filter and monitor online activity via applications which prevent access to blocked internet sites and report attempts to access sites that may give rise to concern. Email messages between staff and students are also scanned for inappropriate language and behaviour
- Deal with issues of confidentiality, information sharing and consent in line with the GDPR regulations
- Ensure that staff do not, through their actions, place students at risk of harm, or themselves at risk from an allegation of harm (by providing guidance on areas such as 1-1 tuition, sports coaching, conveying by car, inappropriate electronic communication).

1.2.5

At Stoke College we encourage students to share their views via student voice opportunities such as Stoke College Student Council, via Form Tutors and with a transparent safeguarding structure, ensuring that students have a clear understanding of who to approach with safeguarding concerns.

1.2.6

Where safeguarding advice is needed, a member of the Safeguarding Team may consult the Suffolk MASH PCL, the LADO (Local Area Designated Officer) or the school's Advisory Council Safeguarding Lead. The Principal will also be notified in the following circumstances:

- The issue involves an allegation against a member of staff or a volunteer
- The issue relates to a concern about the education provided to a student
- The issue involves a referral to external agencies
- The issue could affect the school's reputation

In the event that the issue involves an allegation against the Principal, the Chair of the Advisory Council will be informed by the DSL.

1.2.7

All staff are required to adhere to the ICT Acceptable Use Agreement and specifically to ensure that any images taken of students are appropriate and stored and managed safely.

1.3 Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges. Staff must be alert to the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These may include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further explanation;
- Being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;

- The potential for children with SEN and disabilities to be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

To address these additional challenges, children with SEND may require extra pastoral support. The additional vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND and the school's duty to make reasonable adjustments should be particularly carefully considered in situations where the use of reasonable force may be needed in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEND or medical conditions.

1.4 Boarding

Boarding schools are required to promote and protect students' welfare. The School will comply with the relevant National Minimum Standards and Regulations for boarding schools and is particularly alert to the potential for abuse in this setting.

As a member of the Boarding Schools' Association, the school follows the Commitment to Care Charter meaning that:

- We are committed to the highest duty of care and safeguarding
- Everyone working in the school will raise any concerns immediately
- We will follow all statutory safeguarding guidance and laws and report concerns to the relevant authority and the BSA
- We will support any present students affected by abuse and those who report concerns, and offer support to past students.

1.5 Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

The school will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep safe any children on roll who are looked after by the local authority.

1.6 Private Fostering

Private fostering occurs where a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by someone to whom they are not related in that person's home, for 28 days or more, unless that person has parental responsibility for them or is a local authority or agency foster carer. If a member of staff becomes aware that a student may be in a private fostering arrangement, they should raise this in the first instance with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The School will then notify Suffolk local authority through the Private Fostering team (FCFCT) on 01473 265025 or email FCFCT@suffolk.gov.uk to report or for advice. At Stoke we are aware that this could occur for a boarder who may stay with a host family or guardian for extended periods. We will ensure that we and they have reported the arrangement to the appropriate safeguarding partnership where the child is residing.

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

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

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country.

In some cases privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or be involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

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

Stoke College staff should notify the designated safeguarding lead when they become aware of private fostering arrangements. The designated safeguarding lead will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the LA. The school itself has a duty to inform the local authority of the private fostering arrangements. On admission to the school, we will take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child who is being registered.

2.1 Our Aims

By creating a culture of safeguarding, we aim to:

- create an environment at Stoke College which is safe and secure for all students
- encourage our students to establish positive and fulfilling relationships within their families, with peers and with other adults;
- encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all pupils.

We will ensure that children and young people are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. This is in order to help children stay safe, recognise when they do not feel safe and identify who they might or can talk to. This may include covering relevant issues through personal, social, health and economic education (PHSE) and relationships and sex education (RSE).

We will also ensure there is a comprehensive curriculum response to online safety issues, enabling children and young people and their parents to learn about the risks of new technologies, communication and social media and how to use these responsibly.

2.1.2 The college will ensure there are appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place to safeguard children and young people from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. Risks are, however, considerably greater where devices are beyond the school's control (3G, 4G, 5G, social media platforms etc.), so the education aspect of safeguarding in this area is particularly important. Getting pupils into safe habits when accessing the online world via our systems should enable them to make the right choices when using their own connections. A key part of the online safety support we provide is education about the need for safe practices and habits (through assemblies, PSHE, the curriculum, peer support and form time) and showing students how to apply controls and privacy settings to their own devices and accounts. We also ensure that they understand the need not to share their login details with others and to change their passwords regularly.

We believe that educating parents and guardians empowers them to support their children, or the children and young people in their care, in making positive choices to keep safe. Our Advisory Council Safeguarding Lead delivers information, advice and guidance to parents and guardians in liaison with the Safeguarding Team.

Guidance about online learning can be found in the Guidance for Safer Working Practices (February, 2022).

Staff training will include specific Online Safety training in order to ensure that all staff have an up-to-date understanding of current risks, trends and topics so that they are well-placed to advise and guide Stoke College students.

2.2 In order to fulfil these aims, the Principal will take the necessary steps to ensure that:

2.2.1

All staff (including supply and temporary) and volunteers receive training in safeguarding children and an explanation of the systems within the School which support this as part of their induction. This includes:

- the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures, including whistleblowing procedures, the Staff Handbook and the Code of Conduct
- Part 1, Annex B and Part 5 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (September 2023)
- The *Whistleblowing Policy*
- The Stoke College behaviour policy
- The safeguarding response to children who go missing in education
- The identity and role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads and how to contact them
- Online safety

2.2.2

All staff, volunteers and the Principal are trained in child protection, (including Prevent Awareness, online safety training, the local early help process and how to manage a report of child on child sexual violence or sexual harassment) regularly, in line with advice from the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership, and receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually. The Designated Safeguarding Leads receive the required updated child protection and Prevent Training, at least annually (as set out in Annex B of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* 2023).

The key training elements are: Induction Training – this is mandatory and should include;

- the child protection policy;
- the behaviour policy;
- the staff behaviour policy / code of conduct);
- the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; and
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies). (see KCSIE 2023)

DSLs attend training every two years; and in addition to formal training, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed at regular intervals, at least annually.

All other staff – will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

Safer Recruitment training is available to all relevant staff and governors who are involved in the recruitment process and is updated every 3 years.

2.2.3

The college adheres to the Safer Recruitment Policy and safer recruitment procedures. Procedures are in accordance with the Independent School Standards Regulations and include ensuring that at least one member of any recruitment panel involved in all stages of the recruitment process has undertaken the appropriate training in Safer Recruitment and carrying out all required checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and young people. Appropriate supervision arrangements are put in place if staff start work before their DBS disclosure has been obtained and, in all cases, a Barred List Check and Prohibition Order check (if applicable) will have been undertaken. Relevant staff are also asked to confirm that they do not meet the criteria for disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 and the 2018 Regulations.

2.2.4

The college carries out the mandated checks on all people who serve on the College's Board of Directors and Advisory Council. The required checks on the proprietors are carried out by the DfE.

2.2.5

Where the college ceases to use the services of any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his or her services because it is considered that the person may be unsuitable to work with children, a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in accordance with the procedural guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-barring-referrals-to-the-dbs> (contact: PO Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA. Tel: 01325 953795, email dbsdispatch@dbs.gsi.gov.uk). In cases involving teaching staff, the school will also decide whether to refer the matter to Teaching Regulation Authority (TRA) to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

2.2.6

All School staff are alert to signs of abuse and neglect and all staff know to whom they should report concerns or suspicions of abuse or neglect.

2.2.7

All Stoke College staff keep themselves updated on safeguarding issues and child protection procedures by accessing advice, guidance and training as appropriate to their role.

2.3

This Policy is compatible with, and meets all applicable requirements of, the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership. The College ensures that it has positive communication with the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership to ensure compliance with local protocol and access to relevant support. The Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership can be contacted through the Local Social Services Department, Children's Services. Their contact details are:

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 0300 123 2044
- Customer First: 0800 800 4005
- Suffolk Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): 0345 606 1499
- Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board: 01473 265359

3. Responding to Safeguarding and Child Protection Concerns

3.1

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. Stoke College staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide children with help, to prevent concerns from escalating. College staff have a responsibility to identify children who may be in need of extra help or are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. All staff have a responsibility to take appropriate action, working with other services as needed.

3.2

Any concern, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads immediately. Staff should not assume that a colleague or another

professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision. All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded via MyConcern. If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Fears about sharing information **must not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote and protect the safety of children. The College's use of MyConcern ensures that information can be shared promptly and effectively.

3.3

If staff have concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger or risk of harm – see para 3.5 below), they will need to decide what action to take. All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from **early help**), that is, support as soon as an issue emerges. Such issues should be discussed in the first instance with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. The Early Help process may also involve sharing information with other professionals and contributing to an early help assessment.

3.4

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

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is misusing drugs or alcohol
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child
- has returned home to their family from care
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is a privately fostered child

3.5

If a child is in **immediate danger or at risk of harm**, this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will make a referral to children's social care and/or the police immediately. It is not the role of the College to investigate suspected or alleged abuse; this is the role of the Police and Social Services. Staff are also trained that anyone can make a referral if they believe that a child is in immediate danger or at immediate risk of harm.

3.6 What is Child Abuse?

Abuse is 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 institution 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 another child or children. 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. If a member of staff has concerns about a pupil, they should report their concerns to the Safeguarding Team via My Concern.

The categories in this document are drawn from *Keeping Children Safe in Education* September 2023:

3.6.1

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.

3.6.2

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

3.6.3

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 looking at or 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 online 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.

3.6.4

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, shelter and clothing (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); ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

3.6.5

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) - CSE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person’s immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).

The above CCE indicators can also be indicators of CSE, as can:

- children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE (KCSiE 2023):

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

3.6.6

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) - CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines, see page 85 for more information), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

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

As outlined in KCSiE 2023:

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

3.6.7

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

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children’s homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed

internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector organisations (TSOs) who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office.

3.6.8

Serious violence - All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

3.6.9

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage) - So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

Honour-based Violence - Actions:

If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV, or who has suffered from HBV, they should speak to the DSL or deputy. As appropriate, they will activate local safeguarding procedures using national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care. Where **FGM** has taken place, since 31 October 2015, there has been a **mandatory reporting duty** placed on teachers that requires a different approach.

FGM

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

*Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon **teachers** along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM has been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information](#).*

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

The Forced Marriage Unit has published statutory guidance and Multi-agency guidelines, pages 75-80, which focus on the role of schools and colleges. College staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmufco.gov.uk.

In addition, since February 2023, it has also been a crime to carry out conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or other forms of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

3.6.10

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'. Where staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalized, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have.

We use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet. Staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.

Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

We are committed to ensuring that our pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching the Stoke College's core values alongside the fundamental British Values supports quality teaching and learning, whilst making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society. Recognising Extremism Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
 - making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
 - evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
 - advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
 - out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.)
 - secretive behaviour
 - online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
 - intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
 - graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
 - attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
 - verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
-
- advocating violence towards others

Preventing radicalisation - Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of the colleges' safeguarding approach.

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

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

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

KCSIE (2023) states there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home). However, it is possible to protect vulnerable people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being radicalised. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in-need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

The school's DSL (and DDSLs) are aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

3.6.11

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional.

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

3.6.12

Sexting and the sharing of nude and semi-nude images is a child protection issue. Even if explicit material is sent or elicited without malicious intent, the consequences are serious and put those involved at risk of serious harm. Having or sending explicit material on digital devices is also a criminal offence for those under 18. Pupils are taught about sexting and the sharing of nude and semi-nude images as part of their online safety education. The college takes incidences of sexting and the sharing of nude and semi-nude images extremely seriously and deals with them in accordance with child protection procedures, including reporting to the police.

3.6.13

Upskirting The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim. It is a criminal offence and incident of 'Upskirting' must be reported to the DSL (or a DDSL) who, following investigation, may report the incident to the police.

3.6.14

All staff should have an awareness of **other safeguarding issues**, some of which are listed below, with further information included in KCSiE 2023. Staff should be aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truancy and sexting put children in danger.

School staff can access government guidance as required on the issues listed below via GOV.UK and the [safeguarding topics page on the SSP website](#). Further information is also included in Annex B.

3.6.15 Who are the Abusers? Abusers can be parents or carers, siblings or members of the extended family, neighbours, teachers, strangers or other pupils; in short, an abuser could be anyone.

3.6.16 Child on Child Abuse

All staff should recognise that children can abuse other children (often referred to as 'peer-on-peer abuse'). This is most likely to include, but is not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or may be part of a wider pattern of abuse
- Upskirting (as detailed in paragraph 3.6.13)
- Sexting
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
- 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

All child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Child on child abuse should be recognised as such and never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'part of growing up', 'boys will be boys' or 'just having a laugh'. The college seeks to minimise the risk of such abuse by ensuring that it is clear to all members of the Stoke College community that it will not be tolerated, and by educating students as part of the PSHE and RSE programme about healthy and respectful relationships, the wider societal factors (such as sexist stereotypes and language) and how to recognise, report and respond to peer abuse.

Any allegation of such abuse will be promptly and thoroughly investigated, recorded and treated according to its gravity. The threshold for dealing with an issue of student behaviour or bullying under the safeguarding procedure is subject to local guidance, as in any other cases, when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. In such cases, the College's response will include referral to children's social care and/or the police. Victims, perpetrators and any other child affected will be supported within the pastoral care structure, taking account of their views and feelings. All children involved will be treated as 'at risk'.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment:

As outlined in KCSiE (September 2023), it is essential that all victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward and that they will be supported and kept safe. Abuse that occurs online or outside of the school should not be downplayed and should be treated equally seriously. 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 or their experience minimised.

The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed will be taken into consideration by the Stoke College Safeguarding Team. Victims will be given as much control as is reasonably possible regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered. This will be balanced with the school's duty and responsibilities to protect other children.

The Safeguarding Team will ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of their role in responding to any suspected or disclosed incidences of sexual violence and sexual harassment, including the need to be vigilant in

reacting to overheard conversations or reports by third parties. All staff will be asked to adopt an 'it could happen here' approach.

Should a disclosure of sexual violence or sexual harassment be made, consideration will be given to carefully manage the proximity of the alleged perpetrator to the victim (whilst acting in the best interests of all children involved). This should include all times of the school day, including school transport, social times and shared classes. Where an allegation of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault has been made, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from all classes shared with the victim.

The college will consider every report on a case-by-case basis, guided by KCSiE, Part 5 (2023).

Following a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment the Safeguarding Team will ensure that appropriate support remains in place for the victim. Support will also be put into place for the alleged perpetrator (see KCSiE, Part 5, paragraph 463).

Students at Stoke College are able to report concerns via the following methods:

- Speaking directly to their Form Tutor or any other member of staff to whom they feel comfortable making a disclosure (all staff are trained in the steps to follow if a child makes a disclosure).
- Using the email address: worried@stokecollege.co.uk
- Speaking directly to a member of the Safeguarding Team

In the event that a child makes a disclosure of child on child abuse and/or sexual harassment and sexual violence, the Safeguarding Team will adhere to the following procedures:

1. Two members of the Safeguarding Team will speak to the child to gather information. One will keep notes. The Safeguarding Team will not investigate but will follow all steps outlined in KCSiE, Part 5.
2. Where the report includes an online element, 'searching, screening and confiscation' advice for schools (KCSiE, Part 5 and UKCIS) will be followed. Staff will not view or forward illegal images of a child.
3. A member of the Safeguarding Team will contact the Suffolk MASH PCL and the school's Advisory Council Safeguarding link to seek advice as to the next steps necessary for the specific case.
4. The Principal will be informed (the Principal will notify the Chair of the Advisory Council).
5. The Safeguarding Team will create a Risk and Needs Assessment (KCSiE, Part 5).
6. The LADO/the police and any other relevant authorities will be involved promptly and will be assisted fully by the Safeguarding Team
7. The Safeguarding Team will ensure that the details of the case are recorded accurately using My Concern (to include details of case reference numbers, the names of those from other agencies who become involved in the case, any related documents and to ensure that the chronology of the case is accurate).
8. Parents/guardians will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity (unless the Suffolk MASH PCL, the LADO, social services or the police specifically instruct the Safeguarding Team that parents should not be advised).
9. A Support Plan will be created by the Safeguarding Team and the Pastoral Team. The student and their parents will be directed to any relevant agencies who may be able to provide further support outside of the educational setting. Early Help will always be the aim of any Support Plan.

3.6.17 Contextual Safeguarding

Children and young people attending schools and colleges cannot be seen as islands, they are part of a much wider network of peers, neighbourhoods and other influences. It is important that when we consider some of the issues affecting our children and young people that we understand these influences. We also need to consider not only the physical, real world, influences, but the wider groupings found within social media and the important messages that they impart.

Therefore it is important that we understand that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the college and can occur between children outside the college. All staff should consider the context within which such incidents and/or behaviour occur. It is important to provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

At Stoke College we assess the risks and issues in the wider community when we consider the well-being and safety of our pupils. We work together as a safeguarding team and engage the support and advice from outside agencies.

3.6.18 Signs of Abuse

All School staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse, neglect and radicalisation so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in-need of help or protection.

The following may help staff to be aware of possible signs of abuse. There are further sources of information such as KCSIE 2023, *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused* and the NSPCC website as well as the link to the SSP website in 3.6.7 above. Such lists, however, are not exhaustive - if staff members are unsure they should always seek advice and report concerns even when signs or indicators are not present. Staff should also be alert to behaviours or circumstances that put children in danger, such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, self-harm, truanting, cyber bullying and sexting.

(There may be other indicators of abuse specific to female genital mutilation and to radicalisation of young people.)

3.6.19 Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries/ burns
- Untreated injuries
- Bruises/ abrasion around the face
- Bi-lateral injuries e.g. two bruised eyes
- Bite marks
- Bruising abrasions to lips, cheeks, outer ear

3.6.20 Emotional Abuse

- Excessive overreaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Excessive rocking, thumb sucking, hair twisting
- Extreme compliance/aggression
- Drug, alcohol and substance misuse
- Significant peer relationship difficulties

3.6.21 Sexual Abuse

- Sexual awareness inappropriate to child's age, including provocative sexual behaviour
- Self-harm
- Pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Sudden changes in behaviour or school performance
- Fear of undressing for gym
- Depression/withdrawal
- Drug, alcohol, substance abuse

3.6.22 Neglect

- Constant hunger, tiredness and/or poor personal hygiene

- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Social isolation
- Poor self-esteem and/or relationship with peers
- Excessive rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking

3.6.23 Missing Children

A child going missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Staff should treat prolonged or repeated absence, with no satisfactory explanation, as a potential safeguarding issue and take-action accordingly. Stoke College is committed to identifying quickly children missing from education.

A child or young person is missing from education if they are of compulsory school age and they do not have a school place and no alternative education arrangements have been made for them.

Children missing from education are at much greater risk of:

- physical harm
 - becoming involved in crime
 - demonstrating anti-social behaviour
 - abusing drugs and alcohol
 - sexual exploitation
-
- being illegally employed
 - forced marriages

It is, therefore, vital that the local authority, schools and other agencies work closely together to help safeguard children.

Children go missing from education for a variety of reasons, which include:

- failing to start appropriate provision and hence never entering the system
- moving out of the independent sector
- ceasing to attend, due to exclusion or parental withdrawal
- failing to complete a transition between providers or phases
- are part of a transient or mobile population

Staff must, therefore, treat prolonged or repeated absence, or particular patterns of absence, with no satisfactory explanation, as a potential safeguarding issue and take-action accordingly. Procedures are detailed in the School's *Children Missing Education Policy*. Suffolk has a Children Missing in Education department: CME@suffolk.gov.uk (0345 606 6067) to whom a referral must be made.

Staff are encouraged to identify and report emerging patterns of absence at the earliest opportunity so that, where appropriate, early help can be explored.

4. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

4.1

The School has appointed a Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies (DDSLs) to contact in their absence. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is a member of the School's Senior Leadership Team, with the necessary status and authority to take responsibility for child protection matters. This responsibility cannot be delegated. The School will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is given the time/cover, funding, training, resources and support to fulfil their role.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, and their contact details, are listed at the head of this policy. The DSL will ensure there is always cover for the role (including out of hours/out of term activities).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for safeguarding and child protection at Stoke College.

The key role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is to:

- manage referrals from College staff or any others from outside the College;
- work with external agencies and professionals on matter of safety and safeguarding;
- undertake training;
- raise awareness of safeguarding and child protection amongst the staff and parents; and ensure that child protection information is transferred to the pupil's new school
- be aware of pupils who have a social worker
- help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues with teachers and the College leadership staff.

The DSL and DDSLs will:

4.1.1 Be responsible for ensuring that all cases of suspected or actual child protection concerns are investigated and managed;

4.1.2 Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the local Social Services Department and/or the police as appropriate and in accordance with SSP procedures, and work with other agencies in line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*;

4.1.3 Receive *Prevent* awareness training; provide advice and support, and make appropriate referrals through the *Channel* programme;

4.1.4 Ensure that they are aware of the latest national and local guidance and requirements and will keep the Principal, staff and volunteers informed as appropriate

4.1.5 Receive appropriate training in child protection matters and interagency working, to include both national and local bodies, at least every two years, and in addition to formal training, update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually, in order to keep up with developments relevant to the role;

4.1.6 Ensure that the Principal, staff and volunteers have access to and understand their role as appropriate in the child protection procedures, including but not limited to part-time staff, supply staff, peripatetic staff, newly appointed staff, newly qualified staff, before/after school care staff, volunteers, catering staff, gap year staff, cleaning staff, caterers and caretakers; ensure that staff receive child protection training regularly. *Prevent* training will be part of this.

4.1.7 Act as a source of advice and support within the School and co-ordinate action regarding referrals in relation to both children and allegations against staff

4.1.8 Ensure all visiting speakers are risk-assessed according to the Promotion of British Values and Prevention of Radicalisation policy.

4.1.9 Take responsibility for the education of the students in online safety

4.1.10 Ensure that all staff have the opportunity for regular reviews of their own practices through staff training sessions and one-on-one meetings with the DSL/DDSLs.

4.1.11 Ensure staff receive training in the use of MyConcern to ensure efficient and effective reporting of safeguarding concerns.

5. Responding to Disclosures of Abuse

5.1 Children are more likely to be abused by someone they know and trust than by a stranger. Staff members are advised to maintain an attitude of “it could happen here” where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the best interests of the child.

5.2 Staff and volunteers should make themselves available to listen and demonstrate to the pupil that what they are saying is being taken seriously and without criticism. No person making a disclosure should feel that they are creating a problem by making a disclosure. Staff and volunteers should respond in a supportive, calm manner, avoiding asking detailed questions. The role of the staff or volunteer is to listen, record and report; not to investigate. Staff and volunteers should take care to ensure their behaviour and actions do not place students or themselves at risk of harm. Staff should recognise that a child may not be ready to disclose (see KCSIE 2023, Part 1).

5.3 If a student reports abuse from another pupil or pupils, staff should follow the procedures in this section. All children involved whether perpetrator or victim will be treated as being ‘at risk’. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with local agencies in relation to handling any such cases which arise. A bullying incident will be regarded as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. See the *Anti-Bullying Policy*.

5.4 Immediate Response

If a disclosure is made, the member of staff or volunteer **should**:

5.4.1 allow the pace of the conversation to be dictated by the student

5.4.2 ask open questions which encourage the student to talk such as “can you tell me what happened?” and use the **TED** (tell me, explain, describe) method

5.4.3 accept what the student says and do not ask for further detail

5.4.4 acknowledge how hard it was for them to tell you and by tone of voice and facial expression show you are taking their concerns seriously

5.4.5 note carefully any clearly visible external signs of possible injury or neglect (but note paragraph 5.5.4 below)

5.4.6 reassure the student that they have done the right thing, explain whom you will have to tell (the Designated Safeguarding Lead) and why. The school’s statutory duty is to report allegations: students should be aware that information **must** be passed on but reassure it will only be to the designated person/s in the first instance.

5.5 The member of staff or volunteer **should not**:

5.5.1 burden the student with guilt, such as “why didn’t you tell me before?”

5.5.2 interrogate or pressurise the student to provide more information;

5.5.3 ask any potentially leading questions such as those that start with the words, how, what, when, where and why, as this may impact on any potential case brought to court (use the ‘TED’ questioning technique);

5.5.4 undress the child or examine clothed parts of the child’s body in an attempt to determine the nature of any such injuries/ neglect

5.5.5 criticise the perpetrator, this may be someone they love

5.5.6 promise confidentiality (see paragraph 5.6 and 5.7)

5.5.7 make promises that they cannot keep such as “I’ll stay with you all the time” or “it will be alright now”.

5.5.8 put words in the child’s mouth i.e. finish their sentences

5.5.9 jump to conclusions or speculate what might have happened or make accusations

5.5.10 show an overly emotional reaction such as expressing disgust, shock or disbelief

5.5.11 attempt to investigate the allegations.

5.6 If a student confides in a member of staff or volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, staff/volunteers **must not** make promises about confidentiality. Staff must tell the student sensitively that they must tell the named Designated Safeguarding Lead, so that the child can be helped to stay safe and feel better. (Staff should use only the TED question starters: tell me, explain, describe.)

5.7 In every case, the staff/volunteer should consider whether the student is able to provide consent for the information to be shared and if so, seek to obtain that consent. If the pupil does not consent, the staff/volunteer should explain that they need to share the information with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and reassure them that the information will *only be disclosed* to other people who *need to know*. The member of staff/volunteer should refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for further information and guidance.

5.8 The College recognises that a child who is abused may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth. We recognise that the School may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm. The school has age appropriate systems in place for children to express their views and give feedback so their feelings or wishes will be taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. However, the child's wishes, or feelings cannot override the duty to refer suspected abuse to the children's social care/LADO or police.

5.9 The College will provide continuing support to a pupil who has disclosed abuse through promoting a caring and safe environment and encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness through the curriculum and through relationships. In doing so, the College will act in accordance with guidance from the relevant authorities to ensure that, for example, legal proceedings are not compromised.

5.10 All allegations involving staff or volunteers will be discussed immediately with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) before any investigation takes place. These discussions can take place with Customer First, who can advise, as can the LADO team at Suffolk County Council. In borderline cases, these discussions can be held informally without naming the individual child.

In any case of immediate risk or serious harm to children, the police shall be informed at the outset.

5.11 Recording Information

Staff/volunteers should:

5.11.1 make brief notes at the time or immediately afterwards, which record the date, time, place and context of the disclosure or concern, and what has actually been said (wherever possible using the child's exact words, even if they seem childish, rude or inappropriate), not assumption or interpretation. Notes must be signed and dated;

5.11.2 clearly distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion;

5.11.3 record observed injuries and bruises on a body map;

5.11.4 note the non-verbal behaviour and the key words in the language used by the pupil (do not translate into "proper terms");

5.11.5 use MyConcern (online safeguarding reporting and monitoring system) to inform the relevant staff about a safeguarding concern. If they cannot access the system, they should complete a Safeguarding Concern Form (hard copies in the Staff Rooms on the Safeguarding Noticeboard), attach the original notes and pass them to the DSL or a DDSL as a matter of urgency.

5.11.6 appreciate that their records may be used in criminal proceedings or disciplinary investigations.

5.12 Reporting Concerns

5.12.1 Any concerns about pupils must be discussed with the DSL (or a DDSL) as soon as possible and, at the latest, by the end of the school day.

5.12.2 Where the disclosure identifies a safeguarding issue, the Designated Safeguarding Lead/s will report to the local Social Services department within 24 hours and will inform the Principal. In most serious cases, and if there is suspicion that a crime has been committed, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the police.

5.12.3 The college's procedures differentiate between safeguarding children who have suffered significant harm and those who are in-need of support from one or more agencies. In cases where a child is not suffering or at risk of suffering serious harm but rather in need of additional support, an inter-agency assessment will be undertaken to determine the most appropriate action. The DSL will discuss with the MASH team whether an early help assessment is needed.

5.12.4 Whilst the DSL will usually decide whether to make a referral, **in exceptional circumstances, such as in an emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action has not been taken, anyone can refer their concerns to children's social care directly** (see section 9 below). If a member of staff makes a referral independently, they must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible thereafter.

5.12.5 **If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral should be made immediately. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the staff member with concerns should press for reconsideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.**

6. Allegations against Staff

At Stoke College, we recognise the possibility that adults working in the school may harm children, including the Advisory Council, volunteers, supply teachers and agency staff.

6.1 Schools must follow the procedures for handling allegations made against staff and/or volunteers set out in Part 4 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (September 2023). The aim is to deal with any allegation quickly and in a fair and consistent way which provides effective protection for the child and at the same time provides appropriate support for the person who is the subject of the allegation.

6.2 Where a safeguarding-related allegation or cause for concern is made against any member of staff or volunteer (including the Designated Safeguarding Lead), the matter should be reported immediately to the Principal (unless the allegation relates to the Principal). The Principal should **not speak** to the member of staff who is the subject of the allegation at this point. In the absence of the Principal, the allegation should be reported to the Chair of the Advisory Council. **In all cases, immediate contact should be made with the LADO** to discuss the allegation.

6.3 Where a safeguarding related allegation or cause for concern is made against the Principal, the matter should be reported immediately to the Chair of the Advisory Council, without informing the Principal.

6.4 **In all cases, immediate contact should be made with the LADO** to discuss the allegation. A decision as to how to proceed and eventually whether or not to suspend a member of staff or volunteer will be taken by the Principal following consultation with the LADO (and, in most serious cases, the police). In borderline cases, discussions with the LADO can be held informally and without naming the school or individual. Discussions should be recorded in writing and any communication with both the individual and the parents of the child/children agreed. Suspension is not an automatic response and the decision will be taken according to the circumstances of each particular case, giving due weight to the views of the LADO, guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (September 2023) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018).

6.5 In considering the available options, including redeployment of the member of staff or volunteer, the LADO and the Principal will ensure that their primary concerns are the safety and wellbeing of the pupils, together with the need for a full and fair investigation which will be led by the LADO or the police.

6.6 Where we cease to use the services of any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student), or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his or her services because it is considered that the person may be unsuitable to work with children, a referral will be made to DBS. In cases involving teaching staff, the school will also decide whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

6.7 Where required to do so, we will provide information requested by the DBS or TRA in respect of a member of staff or volunteer in accordance with our legal duty.

6.8 Communications with the college community about safeguarding related allegations shall only be made following consultation with the LADO and any investigating authorities. There are restrictions on the reporting or publishing of allegations against teachers (which apply to a point where the accused person is charged with an offence, or the DfE/TRA publish information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case). Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity. The Advisory Council and the college's solicitor will advise on the statutory reporting restrictions on publications of details of allegations.

6.9 If there has been a substantial allegation against a member of staff, the college will work with the LADO to determine whether there are improvements to be made to the college's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

Local Designated Officer (LADO):

LADO@suffolk.gov.uk 0300 123 2044

6.10 Low Level Concerns Stoke College follows the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership's Low Level Concerns procedure (please see the Stoke College Low Level Concerns Policy) to ensure that staff have a full understanding of the procedure for raising a Low Level Concern to the Principal. Low level concerns regarding the Principal will be referred to the Chair of the Advisory Board. Staff are encouraged to report Low Level Concerns promptly.

7. Referring Concerns to Social Services

7.1

The decision to make a referral which could activate a child protection investigation, and the issue of gaining parental consent, are serious matters and require careful judgement. These decisions must only be taken by the Principal or by the DSL, who will liaise with the Principal as appropriate, following **consultation with Social Services**. In cases of serious harm, or if a crime may have been committed, the police will be informed from the outset. However, anyone can refer their concerns to Children's Social Care directly (see section 8 below).

7.2

Advice to determine the nature of any discussions to have with parents should be sought from Social Services in advance of making a referral.

7.3

Parental consent is not a requirement for referrals to statutory agencies. Subject to 7.1 above and the advice of the Local Education Authority, schools should, however, aim to gain consent of individuals or their parents, depending upon age and the circumstances, to share information about them with Social Services and other agencies. Schools should be mindful of situations where to do so would place a child at increased risk of harm. Schools may share information without consent: if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a school will gain consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.

7.4

In the case of concerns about a pupil being at risk of radicalisation, college staff should follow the safeguarding guidelines by reporting to the DSL. This may lead to a referral through the *Channel* programme.

7.5

Where the disclosure relates to actual abuse or the suspicion of abuse, the DSL will report the disclosure to Social Services within 24 hours.

7.6

In the event of the college making a referral to Social Services, they should agree with the recipient of the referral what exactly the child and parents will be told, by whom and when. The DSL should ask to be kept informed of the timing of the strategy discussion between Social Services and the police, which will decide whether and how to investigate. The DSL should be prepared to contribute to the strategy discussion.

7.7

The local authority 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 know the outcome. The referrer should follow up if this information is not forthcoming. A record of each contact with Social Services, including the name of the officer with whom the member of college staff has spoken, and the date and time of the call, should be kept. If, after a referral, a child's situation does not appear to be improving, the referrer should consider following local escalation procedures via the SSP Escalation Policy.

8. Duty to Report Concerns about the Management of Safeguarding

8.1

The college recognises that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. Staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the College's safeguarding regime and feel confident that such concerns will be taken seriously by the Senior Leadership Team. The duty to report concerns about the management of safeguarding, and the *Whistleblowing Policy*, is included in the Staff Handbook. It will also be reflected in staff training.

8.2

Where staff or volunteers reasonably believe that safeguarding concerns exist, or where they have concerns regarding the management of safeguarding issues, it is their duty to raise concerns.

8.3

The member of staff or volunteer should bring their concerns to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or in a case where the concerns relate to the actions or inaction of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to the Principal.

8.4

However, where someone reasonably believes these reporting routes to be inappropriate or has reported concerns and no action has been taken, they should **refer their concerns to children's social care directly** or use the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline (0800 028 0285).

9. Monitoring and Review

9.1

This policy will be monitored and updated by the DSL in liaison with the Safeguarding Team, the Advisory Council Safeguarding Lead and the Principal.

9.2

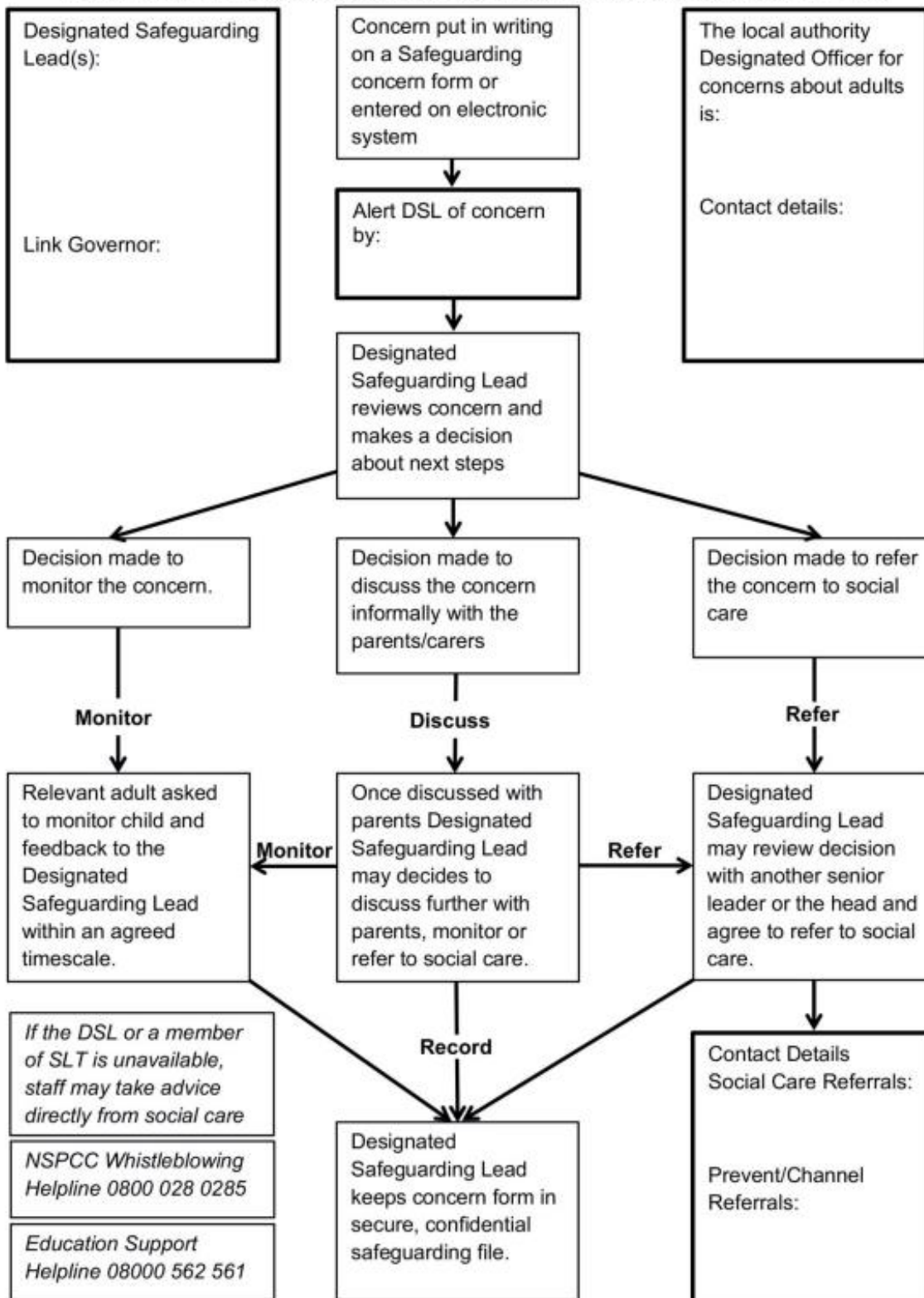
The DSL and Safeguarding Team will amend the policy to reflect any significant changes that occur before the next review (due in July 2024).

9.3

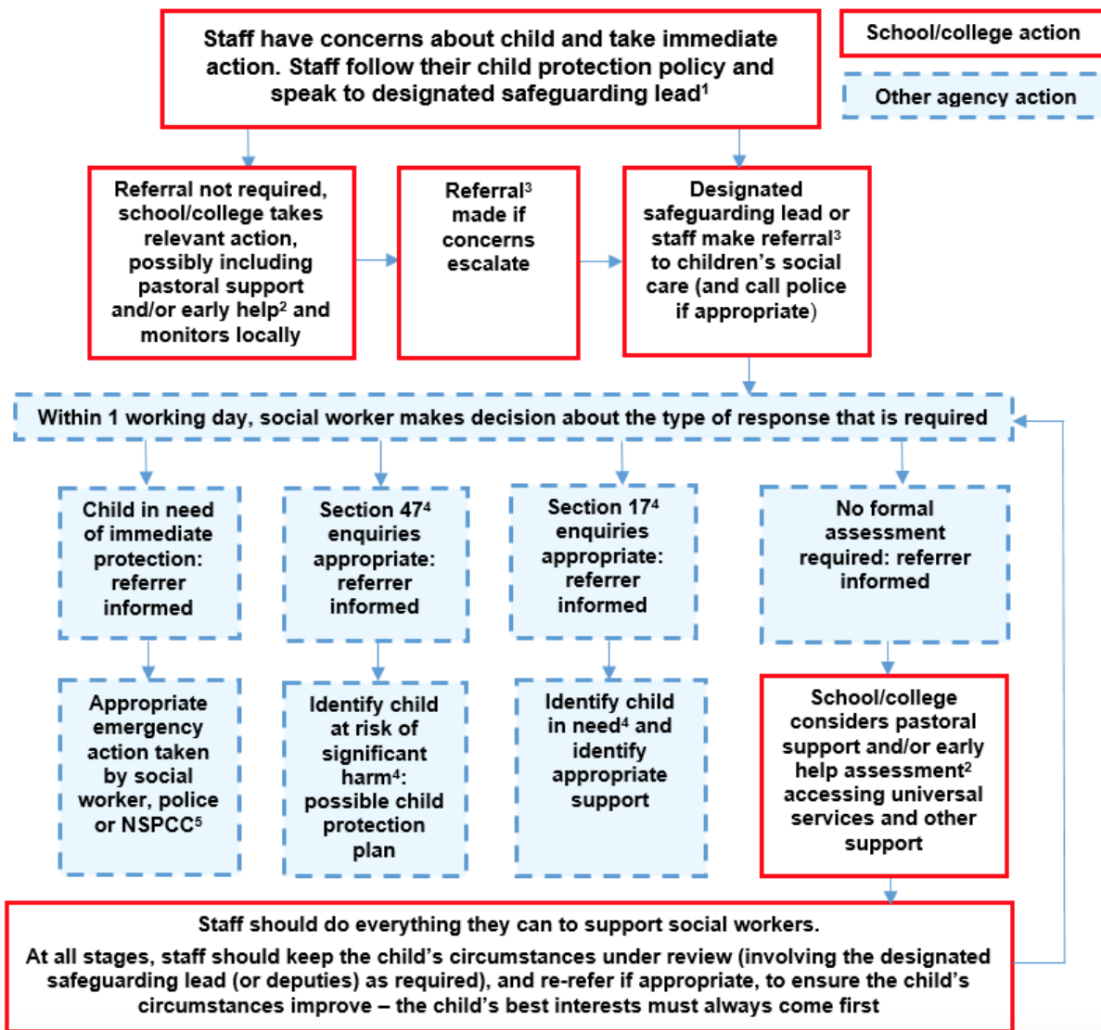
All existing staff completed Safeguarding training in February 2023. New staff will be given to access to this training at the point of induction.

Safeguarding Flowchart:

FLOW CHART FOR RAISING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD



Actions where there are concerns about a child



UKCIS Guidance (overview) on the sharing of nude and semi-nude images:

What do we mean by sharing nudes and semi-nudes?

In the latest advice for schools and colleges (UKCIS, 2020), this is defined as the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams online by young people under the age of 18. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline. Alternative terms used by children and young people may include 'dick pics' or 'pics'.

The motivations for taking and sharing nude and semi-nude images, videos and live streams are not always sexually or criminally motivated.

This advice does not apply to adults sharing nudes or semi-nudes of under 18-year olds. This is a form of child sexual abuse and must be referred to the police as a matter of urgency.

What to do if an incident comes to your attention

Report it to your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or equivalent immediately. Your setting's child protection policy should outline codes of practice to be followed.

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

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

Do not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it.

Do not ask the child/children or young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the DSL (or equivalent).

Do not share information about the incident with other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.

Do not say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.

Do explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL (or equivalent).