

Aldridge Education Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2026-2027

Bringing learning to life. Leaving no one behind.

ALDRIDGE EDUCATION

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Published Locations			
Trust Website	Academy Website	Aldridge Intranet	On-request
	✓	✓	✓

Key Contact Personnel				
Principal	Designated Safeguarding Lead	Lead Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Designated Teacher for (post) looked After Children (LAC)	LA Virtual School Headteacher
Jenna Harty	Jenna Harty	Tom Arrandale	Jenna Harty	Charlotte Hesketh
Lead First Aider	Senior Mental Health lead	Trust Safeguarding Lead	LGC Safeguarding Governor	Chair of Governors (CoG)
Lauren Bromley	Jenna Harty	Karen Foster	Bryony Green	Jo Dodds
Link Safeguarding Trustee	Setting's Local Authority	Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Setting Prevent Lead (SPoC)	LA Prevent Lead
Claire Tao	BwD	Elissa Harper	Tom Arrandale	Leanne Romney
SENDCo	Link to contact details and key safeguarding information:			
Molly Reynolds	Safeguarding			

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2. Introduction and Purpose

2.1 Aldridge Education and Darwen Aldridge Sudell Primary School is committed to ensuring that all learners are safe, supported and able to achieve their full potential. Creating and maintaining a culture where safeguarding is everyone's priority is central to Aldridge Education's values and to the effective delivery of education across its academies.

2.2 Aldridge Education fully recognises its statutory responsibilities for Child Protection and Safeguarding and commits to fulfilling this by:

- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy DSL and Designated Teacher for Looked-After Children (DLAC).
- Ensuring that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners is everyone's responsibility and remains at the heart of all decision-making.
- Maintaining a culture of vigilance in which safeguarding and child protection concerns are identified, reported and acted upon in a timely, proportionate and child-centred manner that reflects statutory guidance and local procedures.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect learners from abuse, neglect, exploitation, radicalisation, discrimination, peer-on-peer abuse and all other forms of harm.
- Maintaining robust systems, processes and governance arrangements that enable effective safeguarding and child protection practice across all trust academies.
- Listening to learners, taking their views seriously, and fostering a culture in which learners and adults feel empowered to speak up, seek help and report concerns without fear of judgement or reprisal, ensuring that learner voice informs safeguarding practice and decision-making.
- Ensuring safeguarding arrangements are equitable and responsive to the needs of all learners, particularly those who may be vulnerable or face additional barriers to protection.
- Working openly, collaboratively and effectively with parents, carers, external agencies and statutory partners to safeguard learners and secure the support they need.
- Promoting attendance, inclusion, positive wellbeing and educational engagement as important protective factors in safeguarding learners.
- Ensuring that all staff, trustees, governors, volunteers and contractors understand their safeguarding responsibilities and receive appropriate training and support.
- Continuously reviewing and improving safeguarding practice to ensure it remains effective, compliant and responsive to emerging risks and local needs.

3. Scope, Definitions, Regulation and Linked Policies

Scope

3.1 Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility and as such this policy applies to all staff (including employees, agency staff, trainee staff, apprentices, central and national team staff and contractual staff), Trustees, Local Governors, volunteers and contractors working in each setting and applies wherever staff or volunteers are working with learners even where this is away from the setting, for example at an activity centre or on an educational visit.

3.2 This policy is published on the setting's website and can also be made available in large print or another accessible format if required.

3.3 The Local Authority (LA), Integrated Care Boards (previously known as clinical commissioning groups) in the LA area and the Chief Officer of Police for a police area in the LA area are recognised as safeguarding partners and they will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs.

Definitions

3.4 **Safeguarding** is the collective responsibility to protect learners' health, wellbeing and rights, ensuring they are safe from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation, and can learn, develop and thrive in a safe environment.

3.5 **Child protection** is a part of safeguarding that focuses on protecting specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm by identifying concerns, making referrals and taking appropriate action to keep them safe.

3.6 **Children** includes everyone under the age of 18.

3.7 **Staff** includes employees, agency staff, trainee staff, apprentices, contractual staff and volunteers.

3.8 **Mobile phones/devices** refers to any personal mobile phone or other smart devices with similar functionality to mobile phones (for example the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks or the ability to record audio and/or video). Details are included in the Mobile Phone policy.

3.9 **Restrictive intervention** means to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body, of a learner - both physical and non-physical actions aimed to restrain them in different ways.

3.10 **Reasonable force** is a term used in legislation which includes physical restrictive interventions. All members of school staff have the legal power to

use reasonable force in limited circumstances. 'Reasonable' means using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time, the application of which will depend on the circumstances of the situation.

Regulation and Linked Policies

3.11 The policy takes account of the below relevant legislation and/or statutory guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Statutory Guidance
- Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance
- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment)
- The Academy Trust Handbook
- The Academy Trusts: Governance Guide
- Parts 3 and 4 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 and Statutory guidance on FGM
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Statutory Guidance on the Prevent Duty
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty
- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (referred to in this policy as the "2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations") and Childcare Act 2006
- The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
- Statutory Guidance related to Alternative Provision
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework

3.12 The following linked Aldridge Education or setting policies, documents or other publications. All policies can be found: Darwen Aldridge Sudell Primary School - Policies & Statutory Information

3.13

- AI Guidance - IT – Aldridge Education Intranet
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- E-safety Policy
- Educational Visits Policy

- Equalities Statement and Objectives
- Exclusions Policy
- First Aid and Medicines Policy
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy (Appendix 1)
- Health and Safety Policy
- Induction and Probation Protocols
- Information Security Policy
- Learner Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy (Appendix 3)
- Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Prevent Policy (Appendix 2)
- Privacy Notices
- Risk Assessment Guidance
- RSE and PSHE Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- SEND Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy

Equality Statement

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

3.15 Aldridge Education gives special consideration to children who:

- have special educational needs or disabilities or certain health conditions
- are educationally disadvantaged
- are young carers
- are looked-after or previously looked after
- 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 – e.g. temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic abuse
- are at risk of so-called honour-based abuse including FGM and/or forced marriage, sexual exploitation, or radicalisation
- appear vulnerable to criminal exploitation
- are asylum seekers

- are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions
- whose parent or carer has expressed an intention to remove them from setting to be home educated.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board

4.1 The Board of Trustees facilitate a whole-trust approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of decision making and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development.

4.2 Key responsibilities include:

- Appoint a safeguarding link Trustee.
- Ensure Aldridge Education complies with safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, including KCSIE.
- Ensure robust safeguarding policies and procedures are in place across all settings within the Aldridge Education.
- Ensure that all people identified in the scope section of this policy receive appropriate and regular safeguarding and child protection training at induction and whilst carrying out their role within Aldridge Education.
- Provide strategic oversight and challenge regarding safeguarding effectiveness.
- Monitor safeguarding performance, risk management, and compliance.
- Seek assurance that safer recruitment arrangements are effective.

The Principal

4.3 The Principal is responsible for the operational leadership of safeguarding within their setting and for ensuring that safeguarding and child protection arrangements are implemented effectively, monitored regularly, and understood by all staff. They should ensure that arrangements in their setting are effective, compliant, and embedded within the settings culture.

4.4 Key responsibilities include:

- Promoting a strong safeguarding culture where the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility and all decisions are made in the best interests of the child.
- Creating an environment where learners feel safe, listened to, and able to report concerns, ensuring they and their families know how to access support.

- Appointing and supporting a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and ensuring sufficient time, training, funding, supervision, and resources are available for the DSL to carry out their role effectively.
- Ensuring statutory safeguarding requirements are met, including annual safeguarding training, biennial (every 2-years) Prevent training, compliance with KCSIE and local safeguarding procedures.
- Ensuring all staff, volunteers, and governors receive appropriate safeguarding training and induction, including regular updates and awareness of safeguarding policies and procedures, accessing CPOMS (the safeguarding reporting system).
- Ensure that those staff who do not work directly with children read Part one of KCSIE.
- Implementing and monitoring safeguarding policies, including child protection, staff behaviour/code of conduct, online safety, attendance, and whistleblowing procedures.
- Ensuring safer recruitment practices are followed, including appropriate training, pre-employment checks and the accuracy of the Single Central Record (SCR).
- Monitoring vulnerable learners, including Children in Need, those subject to child protection plans, looked after children, previously looked after children, and learners with SEND who may face additional safeguarding risks.
- Ensuring robust systems for managing allegations against staff and volunteers are in place and monitored, including reporting concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate.
- Provide, with the DSL, a termly safeguarding report for the Local Governing Committee

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy

4.5 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is a member of the senior leadership team. The name of the DSL is included on page 2 of this Policy and contact details are available throughout the setting and on the setting website Darwen Aldridge Sudell Primary School - Safeguarding

4.6 The DSL (under the Principal) is responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare in this setting and is key to ensuring that proper child protection and safeguarding procedures and policies are in place and adhered to. They act as a dedicated resource available for other staff, volunteers and Local Governors to draw upon as well as providing support and advice to parents and carers.

4.7 The DSL will liaise with the Local Authority and work with other agencies in line with the latest statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children and KCSIE.

4.8 Where the DSL is not available, cover will be provided by the Deputy DSL. There will always be cover for this role and arrangements for this are that at least one will always be contactable. This will be communicated via email or through the weekly diary bulletin.

4.9 The Designated Safeguarding Lead has responsibility for safeguarding and child protection systems and processes (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place).

4.10 Key responsibilities include:

- Providing advice and support to staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and contributing to the assessment of children at the setting.
- Ensuring concerns about children are identified, recorded, and acted upon promptly, with appropriate referrals made to children's social care, the police, Channel or other agencies when required.
- Working effectively with external agencies and contributing to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to support children and families.
- Maintaining accurate, secure, and confidential safeguarding records.
- Ensure that all child protection records are kept confidentially and separately from learner records, in line with the Records Retention Policy, and are passed on to the child's next setting (where applicable) in a confidential and secure manner, ensuring a confirmation receipt is obtained on delivery
- Monitoring vulnerable learners and those known to external agencies to coordinate support and interventions.
- Deliver and coordinate safeguarding training and updates for staff including accessing CPOMS (the safeguarding reporting system).
- Liaise with the Principal to ensure that those staff who do not work directly with children read Part one of KCSIE.
- Ensuring robust systems for managing allegations against staff and volunteers are in place and monitored, including reporting concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate.
- Ensuring effective safeguarding oversight, including regular review of safeguarding practice, system audits and responding to emerging risks such as online safety, exploitation, and child-on-child abuse.
- Ensuring the setting's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy is known by staff and processes and protocols followed and used appropriately

- Ensure the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is published on the setting website.
- Keep written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral, ensuring that reasons for no referral are recorded.
- Ensure that learners with an allocated social worker are identifiable on key MIS systems, including CPOMS.
- Ensure they know and have discussed the local response to sexual violence and sexual harassment with police and local authority children's social care colleagues to inform the contextual safeguarding areas with the Child Protection and safeguarding policy.
- Be aware that children must have an 'appropriate adult' to support and help them in the case of a police investigation or search. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - PACE Code 2023
- Understand the requirements of the Prevent duty and be able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation
- Understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online.
- Understand and contribute to the effective use of filtering and monitoring processes on setting devices and networks to keep learners safe online
- Provide, with the Principal, a termly safeguarding report for the Local Governing Committee
- Conduct CPOMS audits (at least half termly)

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (DLAC)

4.11 The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children plays a key role in promoting the educational achievement, wellbeing and safeguarding of learners who are looked after or previously looked after.

4.12 Working in partnership with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, local authorities, carers and other professionals, the Designated Teacher helps to ensure that learners receive appropriate support, that their individual needs and vulnerabilities are understood, and that any safeguarding concerns are identified and responded to promptly. The DLAC will liaise with the Virtual Head for Looked-After Children to ensure that the funding assigned to the child/young person is put to best use. The Designated Teacher also advocates for the learner's voice, supports effective information sharing, and contributes to planning and decision-making that promotes stability, inclusion and positive outcomes.

4.13 The DLAC has received appropriate training and will make an annual report to the Local Governing Committee and the Trustees in accordance with the latest statutory guidance.

4.14 The arrangements for covering this role should the DLAC be absent or unavailable are the Vice Principal or Assistant Principal will take up this role.

All Staff

4.15 Staff are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should always consider what is in the best interests of the child.

4.16 Key responsibilities include:

- Understanding and following the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures including systems which support the reporting and recording of safeguarding concerns.
- Acknowledging and adhering to the staff code of conduct.
- Be aware of and familiar with the key policies which relate to safeguarding, as listed in sec 2.4 of this policy.
- Recognising signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding or welfare concerns.
- Recognising potential mental health concerns and how in some cases they are an indicator of the child being at risk of harm.
- Maintaining a child-centred approach and act in the best interests of children.
- Reporting concerns immediately (in person or by phone) to the DSL or Deputy DSL(s) where a child is at risk of immediate or significant harm.
- Recording concerns accurately and promptly on CPOMS.
- Following up promptly on any actions assigned by the DSL or Deputy DSL(s)
- Attending/completing mandatory safeguarding and Prevent training, completing all knowledge checks, and keeping safeguarding knowledge up to date by engaging with all follow-up training sessions or information.
- Maintaining professional boundaries with learners and reporting all concerns identified to the Principal, where it is believed that a staff member may have behaved inappropriately towards a learner(s).

Local Governing Committees

4.17 The Local Governing Committee will ensure that effective safeguarding policies, systems and processes are in place to support staff in understanding and fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities. The Governing Body will also

seek assurance that safeguarding arrangements are effective, compliant and embedded within the culture of the setting, that the Designated Safeguarding Lead has the appropriate status, authority, skills and experience to carry out the role, and that all staff receive suitable safeguarding and child protection, including online safety, training at induction and at regular intervals thereafter.

4.18 Key responsibilities include:

- Appointing a safeguarding governor to provide oversight and challenge.
- Hold setting leaders to account for the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensure there is an appropriate DSL in post and gain assurances that the Principal provides them with the additional time, funding, training, resources, supervision and support needed to carry out the role effectively.
- Ensure safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed and implemented.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate safeguarding training.
- Monitor safeguarding data, trends, audits, and outcomes.
- Ensure allegations against staff are managed appropriately and statutory duties are met.
- Consider the report from the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children

Parent/Carers

4.19 Parents and carers have safeguarding responsibilities which involve them legally and practically ensuring their child's safety, wellbeing, and development, including making key decisions about their upbringing and protecting them from harm.

4.20 Key responsibilities include:

- Working in partnership with the setting to promote their child's safety and wellbeing.
- Sharing relevant information that may affect their child's welfare, attendance, health, or safety.
- Supporting and reinforcing safeguarding messages provided by the setting around topics that could put their child at risk of harm.
- Engaging with support services and safeguarding plans where appropriate.
- Reporting concerns about their child's welfare to the setting or relevant agencies.
- Ensuring their child understands how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Learners

4.21 Learners need to be informed and upskilled in different types of abuse and harmful behaviour and how to share concerns with staff. Relationships with learners in the setting ensure that they can identify a trusted adult and feel safe to share their thoughts and experiences. Learners are also responsible in recognising how their behaviour may impact on the wellbeing and safety of others.

4.22 Key responsibilities include:

- Taking reasonable steps to keep themselves and others safe.
- Following expected behaviour expectations and online safety guidance and expectations.
- Report worries, concerns, bullying, abuse, or unsafe situations to a trusted adult.
- Respect the rights, wellbeing, and safety of others.
- Participate in safeguarding education, including online safety, healthy relationships, and personal safety.
- Contribute to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment.

5. Training

DSL and DDSL training

5.1 DSL and DDSLs will receive appropriate training at least every two years and ensure that updates are accessed on an annual basis through the Local Authority or Multi Agency Partnership (MAP).

5.2 Training provides DSLs and DDSLs with a good understanding of their own role, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly children's social care.

5.3 Content of training will ensure that the DSL and DDSL(s) fulfil their responsibilities and covers the content set out in KCSIE.

5.4 As well as the above, the DSL will plan the safeguarding training cycle so that it covers all aspects of child protection and safeguarding according to the setting's contextual needs and in line with the whole-Trust safeguarding approach and training content overview.

5.5 They will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) and undertake enhanced Prevent awareness training.

Staff training

5.6 All staff will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on Prevent, whistleblowing procedures and safeguarding expectations, to ensure they understand the setting's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible harm. The mandatory training for staff will include reference to child protection, behaviour, E-Safety and Attendance policies, as well as the staff code of conduct. Staff are expected to have read these documents. All staff* will:

- receive annual safeguarding refresher training, which includes a KCSiE knowledge quiz
- have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. This will take place at least every two years
- receive additional annual training and upskilling of key contextual safeguarding concerns and key KCSiE areas of focus
- have training on online safety, including an understanding of the expectations, roles and responsibilities for staff around filtering and monitoring and this should be updated annually as required. The content

of the training will be designed centrally and delivered locally by the DSL or an appropriate member of staff.

- undertake training relevant to their roles and responsibilities.

5.7 * Where staff are employed by a contractor (for example catering or cleaning), appropriate safeguarding training for the role is jointly agreed and captured within the contract documentation.

Trustees and Local Governing Committee Members

5.8 All Trustees and Local Governors will receive training about safeguarding and child protection (including online) at induction, which is updated annually, to make sure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, such as providing strategic challenge. It is also so that they can be assured that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the setting to deliver a robust whole-setting approach to safeguarding

6. Reporting Systems, Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Staff Reporting and Recording procedures

6.1 It is the responsibility of all adults in the setting to ensure that any safeguarding concerns they may have are reported to the DSL.

6.2 The setting requires all substantive staff to record all concerns on CPOMS as soon as possible, and by the end of the same day.

When completing a CPOMS entry, staff should: Record factual information only, avoiding assumptions, opinions, or personal interpretations.

Include the date, time and location of the incident.

Clearly identify all individuals involved, including any witnesses.

6.3 Use the learners' exact words where relevant, particularly for safeguarding concerns, placing direct quotes in quotation marks.

Provide a clear and concise account of what happened, what actions were taken, and any immediate outcomes.

Attach any relevant evidence or documents if applicable.

Ensure the incident is linked to the appropriate category/tag within CPOMS.

Alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or relevant member of staff through CPOMS where immediate action or follow-up is required. All records should be completed before the end of the working day whenever possible. Incidents requiring urgent attention must be reported verbally to the DSL, Principal, or appropriate senior leader immediately, in addition to being logged on CPOMS.

6.4 Agency staff, volunteers and visitors who do not have access to the setting's CPOMS system, will report concerns using the QR code on the 'Keeping you Safe' posters that are visible around school and also given to visitors on arrival to school in a leaflet form. The QR code takes you to a Microsoft online form where individuals are able to log their concerns and submit directly to the DSL, or in their absence the DDSL's.

6.5 Any urgent concerns where a child might be at risk of significant or immediate harm must be reported immediately to the DSL (or in their absence the DDSL). This must be done in person or by phone and recorded onto CPOMS as soon as possible by the end of the same day.

6.6 All reports will include complete details of the child, any others involved and of the incident. All names will be written in full, and all people mentioned will be

given their designation (i.e., “Fred, father of John”). As much as possible the language used by the learner will be recorded using their own words and descriptions and not substituted by the adult reporting.

6.7 The report will be considered a formal document as they can be submitted as part of legal proceedings, and so all details must be clear so that, if referenced at a later stage, the person reading it has a clear understanding of who is involved and what occurred.

6.8 Where learners have an allocated social worker, this will be indicated on CPOMS.

6.9 Next steps for the concern will be followed up by the DSL and DDSL.

Reporting Systems for Learners

6.10 Where there is a safeguarding concern, the setting will take the child’s wishes and feelings into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide, recognising the importance of ensuring learners feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations.

6.11 To achieve this, settings will:

- put systems in place for learners to confidently report abuse, harmful, or discriminatory behaviour
- ensure reporting systems are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for learners
- make it clear to learners that their concerns will be taken seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback.

5.11

Learners have several ways to report concerns, worries or seek support within school. Each classroom contains a Worry Box where children can confidentially share any concerns they may have. In addition, a Worry Monster is located in The Penny nurture and wellbeing area, providing another safe and accessible way for children to communicate worries.

6.12 Children can also report concerns through an online reporting form, which is accessible via the school website. This provides an additional method for learners who may feel more comfortable sharing concerns electronically. Darwen Aldridge Sudell Primary School - Digital Worry Box

6.13 The school also has a pupil-led Wellbeing Group, which promotes positive wellbeing across the school. Learners can approach members of the group for support, guidance or help in accessing an adult who can assist them.

6.14 Children are regularly reminded about the different ways they can seek help and report concerns through:

Whole-school assemblies.

Classroom discussions and circle times.

The PSHE curriculum.

Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RHSE) lessons.

Online Safety (E-Safety) lessons.

Wellbeing and safeguarding awareness activities throughout the year.

6.15 Displays around school highlighting sources of support.

6.16 These opportunities ensure that learners understand who they can talk to, how they can report concerns, and where they can access support when needed.

6.17 The school works to create a culture where learners feel listened to, valued and supported. Children are encouraged to speak to any trusted adult and are reassured that their concerns will be taken seriously.

6.18 When a child shares a concern, staff will:

- Listen carefully and respond calmly.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
- Explain, in an age-appropriate way, what will happen next and who may need to be informed in order to help keep them safe.
- Ensure concerns are dealt with sensitively and confidentially.
- Provide appropriate follow-up support and check-ins where required.

6.19 Through strong relationships with staff, regular safeguarding education and multiple reporting routes, pupils are supported to feel confident and safe in raising any concerns they may have.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

6.20 Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.

6.21 The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR does not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe except in circumstances where damage may be done to a person or group of people; 'this includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent…' (see further details in the latest version of KCSIE). Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard, promote the welfare of, and protect the safety of children. Where appropriate the setting will seek advice from their Data Protection Lead or the Aldridge Education Data Protection Officer

6.22 The setting will ensure that all child protection records are kept confidential and only allow disclosure to those who need the information to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The setting will cooperate with police and children's social services to ensure that all relevant information is shared for the purposes of child protection investigations.

6.23 No staff member should promise confidentiality to a learner. If they have reason to believe that a child may be suffering harm, or be at risk of harm, their duty is to forward this information without delay to the DSL. All staff may raise concerns directly with children's social care services, if applicable.

6.24 The setting will ensure that a clear protocol regarding communication using walkie-talkie radios is established and shared with relevant staff so no compromise or detriment to any safeguarding information being shared that can be overheard by staff and learners.

Record Keeping

6.25 All records will be stored in line with the Records Retention Policy.

6.26 All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing and this is likely to include electronic records. Records will be utilised to help and enable the safeguarding team to understand better about child protection issues for individual learners and groups. Any doubt about whether and where to record something should be discussed with the DSL.

6.27 Records will include:

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

6.28 Non-confidential records will be easily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

6.29 Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be retained for a reasonable period of time after they have left the setting, in line with the records retention policy.

6.30 If a learner for whom the setting has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another setting, the DSL will ensure that their child protection file is forwarded promptly and securely, and separately from the main learner file to allow the new setting to have support in place when the child arrives. This information should be shared within:

- 5 days for an in-year transfer, or within

- the first 5 days of the start of a new term.

6.31 In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving setting and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.

6.32 Concerns and referrals will be kept in a separate child protection file for each child.

6.33 All safeguarding, welfare and child protection records are maintained electronically using **CPOMS**. Records are recorded directly onto the individual child's CPOMS profile, ensuring that information is stored in a centralised and chronological format that can be easily accessed by authorised staff when required.

6.34 Safeguarding records are held securely within the CPOMS system. Access is protected through secure staff login credentials and two-factor authentication. Staff are only able to view information that is appropriate to their role and level of responsibility, ensuring that sensitive information is accessed on a strict need-to-know basis.

6.35 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy DSLs and other authorised staff regularly monitor records to ensure that concerns are recorded accurately, actions are followed up appropriately, and safeguarding information remains current.

6.36 The school recognises the importance of maintaining confidentiality in relation to safeguarding records. Information is shared only with those who require it in order to safeguard and support a child. All staff receive safeguarding training and understand their responsibilities regarding the handling of sensitive information.

6.37 Records are completed factually and professionally and are stored securely within CPOMS. Confidential information is not discussed openly and is only shared where there is a legitimate safeguarding or professional need to do so.

6.38 The school shares safeguarding information with external agencies when it is appropriate, necessary and in the best interests of the child. This may include:

- Children's Social Care.
- The Police.
- Health professionals.
- Early Help services.
- The Local Authority.
- Other safeguarding partners.

6.39 Information is shared in accordance with local safeguarding procedures, statutory guidance and data protection requirements. Where appropriate, consent will be sought; however, consent is not required when doing so would place a child at increased risk of harm or where there is a safeguarding concern requiring immediate action.

6.40 When a child transfers to another school, relevant safeguarding records are transferred securely to the receiving setting to ensure continuity of support and protection.

7. Recognising abuse and taking action including referral

7.1 All staff are expected to be able to identify and recognise all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and shall be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education health and care (EHC) plan)
- Is a young carer
- Is bereaved
- Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or home
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol
- Is suffering from mental ill health
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage
- Is a privately fostered child
- Has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending
- Is missing education, or persistently absent, or not in receipt of full-time education
- Has experienced multiple suspensions and is at risk of, or has been permanently excluded

7.2 Early identification of abuse and neglect is vital. Staff will always speak to the DSL first to escalate their concerns. **In exceptional circumstances, such as in an emergency, if the child is at risk of immediate danger or if it's believed there's a genuine concern that the incident has not been appropriately addressed, contact should be made *directly* with children's social care**.

7.3 The DSL or DDSL would call the MASH team on 01254 666400 and triage the concern. This would then be followed up by completing the online MASH referral form, which can be found on the BwD website.

7.4 https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council

7.5 If a child discloses a safeguarding issue:

- listen to and believe them
- allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions
- do not share a personal opinion as to whether or not the abuse has taken place
- stay calm and do not show shock or upset
- tell the child they have done the right thing in telling. Do not tell them they should have done so sooner
- reassure them that their disclosure is taken seriously and that they are not creating a problem for reporting abuse, sexual violence, harassment or harmful behaviour
- explain what will happen next and that this information will have to be passed on. Do not promise to keep it a secret
- record and share the conversation with the DSL or DDSL as soon as possible. It should be written using the child's own words, be factual, and non- judgemental. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. Where applicable, the record should be signed by the person making it and should use full names, not initials. The record and any evidence must be uploaded onto CPOMS or handed to the DSL as soon as possible
- if necessary or appropriate, make a referral to children's social care and/or the police directly and tell the DSL as soon as possible. Aside from these people, do not disclose the information to anyone else unless told to do so by a relevant authority involved in the safeguarding process.

7.6 Bear in mind that some children may:

- Not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected.
- Not recognise their experiences as harmful.
- Feel embarrassed, humiliated or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers.

7.7 None of this should stop anyone from having a 'professional curiosity' and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. Do not investigate suspicions regarding child protection issues.

Specific Safeguarding Concerns

7.8 All staff should have an awareness of the safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviour linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol

abuse, deliberately missing education and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos put children in danger. The setting will take into account the specific needs of children and young people in difficult circumstances and will ensure that their additional needs are taken into account and dealt with according to the local authority arrangements and the latest version of KCSIE.

7.9 For a learner known to present with violent or aggressive behaviour, support would include a thorough risk assessment and an individual behaviour support plan with clearly communicated expectations and de-escalation strategies for staff. The academy will work with any known to external agencies, where required.

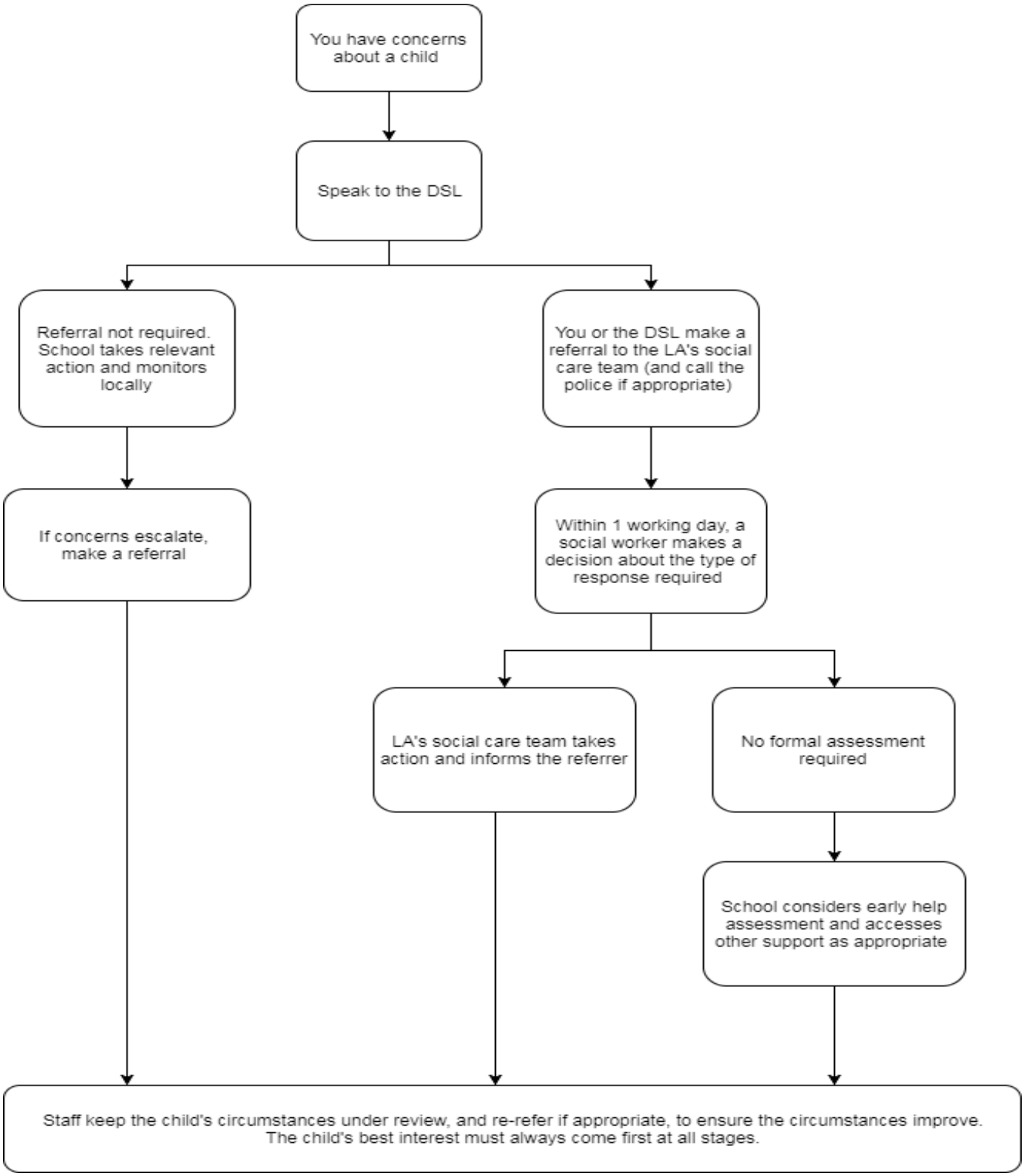
7.10

Concerns about a child who is not in immediate danger

7.11 **Figure 1** illustrates the procedure to be followed by anyone who has concerns about a child's welfare and the child is not in immediate danger.

7.12 They can also contact the charity NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 if they need advice on the appropriate action.

7.13



Action by the DSL – Concerns about Children

7.14 The action to be taken by the DSL will take into account:

- the local inter-agency procedures of the BwD MASH Safeguarding Partnership

- the nature and seriousness of the suspicion or complaint. A complaint involving a serious criminal offence will always be referred to children's social care or the Police. In case of serious harm, the Police will be informed from the outset
- the wishes of the learner who has raised the concern, provided that the learner is of sufficient understanding and maturity and properly informed. However, there may be times when the situation is so serious that decisions may need to be taken, after all appropriate consultation, that override a learner's wishes
- the wishes of the learners' parents/carers provided they have no interest which is in conflict with the learner's best interests and that they are properly informed. It may be necessary, after all appropriate consultation, to override parental wishes in some circumstances. If the DSL is concerned that disclosing information to parents/carers would put a child at risk they will take further advice from the relevant professionals before making a decision to disclose

Referral

7.15 If there is room for doubt as to whether a referral should be made, the DSL will consult with children's social care services on a no names basis without identifying the family. However, as soon as sufficient concern exists that a child may be at risk of significant harm, the DSL will make a referral without delay. If the initial referral is made by telephone, the DSL will confirm the referral in writing to children's social care services **within 24 hours.** If no response or acknowledgment is received within three working days, the DSL will contact children's social care services again. Should the setting require further support in escalating the case then they will contact Aldridge Education's Safeguarding Lead.

Informing Parents/Carers

7.16 Where concerns have been raised, parents/carers will normally be kept informed as appropriate of any action to be taken. However, there may be circumstances when the DSL will need to consult children's social care, the LA designated officer(s) - LADO, the Police and/or the Principal before discussing details with parents/carers.

7.17 The DSL will, along with any relevant agencies (this will be decided on a case-by-case basis) speak with the learners' parents or carers, to discuss what's being put in place to safeguard them, and understand their wishes in terms of what support they may need and how the concern will be progressed

8. Safeguarding Arrangements

8.1 **Child-on-Child abuse (previously peer on peer)**

8.2 All staff should be aware that children are capable of abusing other children, should be able to identify this, be aware of the importance of their role in preventing it and know how to respond where they feel a child may be at risk. They must know to act on any concerns immediately and speak to the DSL without delay.

8.3 Even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, it may still be taking place but is just not being reported. Aldridge Education has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, and it will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up' as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for learners.

8.4 Child on Child abuse can happen in or out of setting, face-to-face or online and can occur simultaneously between the two; that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators, but all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

8.5 Most cases of learners hurting other learners will be dealt with under the setting's behaviour and anti-bullying policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns.

8.6 Further guidance is given about child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment below and in the separate policy entitled Harmful Sexual Behaviour (Appendix 1):

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

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse which includes hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair-pulling or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment which may be stand alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse

- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos and/or live streams (also/previously known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) (see Appendix 1)
- up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause their victim humiliation, distress or alarm. This is a criminal offence thus there is a duty to report to the police
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).
- When considering instances of harmful sexual behaviour between children, the setting will consider their ages and stages of development. Children displaying harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced their own abuse and trauma and will offer them appropriate support.

8.8 Further support can be found in UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) Guidance.

8.9 If a learner makes an allegation of abuse against another learner:

- Tell the DSL and record the allegation, but do not investigate it
- the DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- the DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved – the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any other children affected by child-on-child abuse – with a named person they can talk to if needed, aware there may be physical and mental health implications requiring further support as well as signposting for additional support. This will include considering transport
- the DSL will take the lead role in any actions or interventions required for disciplining the alleged perpetrator(s). The setting will provide support at the same time as taking any disciplinary action
- if the incident is a criminal offence and there are delays in the criminal process, the DSL will work closely with the police (and other agencies as required) while protecting children and/or taking any disciplinary measures against the alleged perpetrator. Where there are questions about the investigation, these will be directed to the police

- disciplinary action can be taken while other investigations are going on, e.g. by the police. The Trust will consider each case on its merits, recognising that investigations by other agencies do not prevent it from reaching its own findings or applying appropriate sanctions, considering whether:
    - taking action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution (the setting will liaise with the police and/or LA children's social care to determine this)
    - there are circumstances that make it unreasonable or irrational to reach a view about what happened while an independent investigation is ongoing
- the DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate.
- Where a victim does not wish information about sexual violence or sexual harassment to be shared, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will carefully balance the victim's wishes with the Trust's safeguarding responsibilities, making decisions on a case-by-case basis and sharing information where there is a lawful and necessary basis to do so. Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk).
- the basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care
- rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains.

8.10 Regarding anonymity, all staff will:

- be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system
- do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved
- consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities
- The government's information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information.

- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or deputy)

8.11 The setting will create a supportive environment and minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by:

- being proactive with action to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, and creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents
- challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour between peers including requesting or sending sexual images
- being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female learners, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys; listening for conversations; being observant about any behavioural changes
- ensuring the curriculum helps to educate learners about appropriate behaviour and consent
- ensuring learners know they can talk to staff confidently and confidentially by using the worry boxes in all classrooms or the worry monster in 'The Penny'. Alternatively, they can put in an online form. All boxes are checked twice per day.
- being alert to reports of sexual violence and/or harassment that may point to environmental or systemic problems that could be addressed by updating policies, processes and the curriculum; or could reflect wider issues in the local area that should be shared with safeguarding partners
- supporting children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape or assault by penetration. Doing everything possible to make sure the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses are not bullied or harassed
- considering intra familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following a report of sexual violence and/or harassment
- ensuring staff are trained to understand that a learner harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
- dealing with any child-on-child abuse in a timely manner

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

8.12 FGM comprises "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs". FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

8.13 Possible indicators that a learner has already been subjected to FGM, and factors that suggest a learner may be at risk, can be found in Part 1 of KCSiE.

8.14 **Any teacher** who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a learner under 18 **must** immediately report this to the Police, personally. This could be that they;

- are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth.

8.15 This is a mandatory, **statutory duty,** and teachers may face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it. (the latest version of KCSIE and Serious Crime Act 2015). They should ensure they discuss their concerns with the DSL. The reporting duty above does not apply in cases where a learner is at risk of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine learners.

8.16 **Any other member of staff** who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **learner under 18** must speak to the DSL who will follow the local authority's safeguarding procedures: Call the police and refer in to MASH using the online referral form.

8.17 **Any member of staff** who suspects a learner is ***at risk*** of FGM or discovers that a learner aged 18 or over appears to have been a victim of FGM, should speak to the DSL

Early Help

8.18 There are two forms of Family Help; **community- based early help** which is offered by universal services such as education, health visitors, early years settings and community groups and **targeted early help,** a more focused approach partnership-based support developed in local areas. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

8.19 All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help and report this to the DSL. If an early help referral is appropriate, the DSL will liaise with other agencies to set up an inter-agency assessment.

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

Children with SEN/Disabilities or Certain Health Conditions

8.21 It is recognised that learners with SEND or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. Children with disabilities are more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, exploitation and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration.
- Learners being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other learners.
- The potential for learners with SEN, disabilities or certain health conditions being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.
- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in settings or the consequences of doing so.

8.22 To this end, settings will ensure there is extra pastoral and communication support for children with SEN, disabilities and certain health conditions. Any abuse involving learners with SEND will require close liaison with the DSL (or deputy) and the SENDCo. This includes:

8.23 Any child with additional medical needs has access to the Family Liaison Officer and is flagged to all members of staff in school.

Children with a Social Worker

8.24 It is recognised that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that they are more at risk than most learners. This may mean that they are more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and poor mental health. Settings take these needs into account when making decisions in the best interests of their safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

8.25 All children with an allocated social worker are flagged on Bromcom and CPOMS, and regular check ins take place with our nurture lead or Family Liaison Officer.

Looked-after and previously looked-after children

8.26 The setting has appointed an appropriately qualified, trained and experienced designated teacher who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children in line with statutory guidance.

8.27 The designated teacher will work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to and work with virtual school headteacher to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including discussing how learner premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans.

Learners who are lesbian, gay, bisexual

8.28 It is recognised that learners who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children. LGBTQ+ children are more likely to experience poor mental health. Any concerns should be reported to the DSL.

8.29 Below is the pastoral support available to learners who identify as being LGBTQ+:-

8.30 Family Liaison Officer/Mental Health Support Lead

Learners who questioning their gender

8.31 The setting will seek to understand the thoughts and feelings of learners who are questioning their gender. Staff will be appropriately professionally curious about the child's experiences. Staff should remain aware of the potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender, including the possibility of complex mental health and psychosocial needs, for example relating to relationships with family, peers or their broader social environment, including discriminatory bullying.

8.32 When parent/carers are making decisions about support for their gender questioning child/ren they will be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice as early as possible, particularly for children who have not reached puberty. The setting will also acknowledge any clinical advice that is provided and consider how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying.

8.33 Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. The setting will therefore aim to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where learners can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

8.34 All Aldridge Education settings have available separate toilets for boys and girls aged over 8, or individual toilets in accordance with KCSIE. The definition of boys and girls relates to their biological sex. Toilets and changing facilities designated for boys and girls are provided on the basis of biological sex. Where a learner is questioning their gender and does not wish to use the facilities designated for their biological sex, the setting will work sensitively with the individual, and where appropriate their parents or carers, to consider what arrangements may best meet their needs while maintaining the provision of single-sex facilities for other learners. Any alternative arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will not compromise the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of the individual concerned or of other learners. The setting will keep clear records of any agreed arrangements, ensure that relevant staff are appropriately informed, and review arrangements regularly to ensure they remain appropriate and effective.

Learners whose parents/carers elect to educate them at home

8.35 In the event that the setting receives a request from parents/carers to educate their child at home, the Principal will appoint a senior member of staff to liaise with the parents/carers to explore their reasons for the decision and to discuss the implications for them and their child/ren. The setting will endeavour to encourage the parents/carers to make the right decision in the best interest of their child through discussions with them and other associated professionals. All parties will be aware of any additional needs of the child such as SEND or the role of any social worker involved. The setting will inform the local authority as soon as the learner is removed from roll.

Reasonable Force

8.36 There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools and colleges to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people. The term **'reasonable force'** covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to avoid violence or injury.

8.37 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means **'using no more force than is needed'.** The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between learners or blocking a learner's path, or active physical contact such as leading a learner by the arm out of the classroom.

8.38 When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children with SEN or disabilities or with medical conditions, the setting, in considering the risks, carefully recognises the additional vulnerability

of these groups (under the Equality Act 2010) in relation to making reasonable adjustments, non-discrimination and their Public Sector Equality Duty.

8.39 Further details can be found in the Setting's Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy.

Restrictive Interventions

8.40 Restrictive interventions cover any action that restricts a learner's movement, liberty, or freedom to act independently. It is anticipated that the ned to use restrictive interventions will be rare. All reasonable steps will be followed to minimise the need to use restrictive interventions, such as through prevention and de-escalation and staff will employ a tailored approach to how they engage with the learner.

8.41 The decision on whether it is reasonable to use a restrictive intervention depends on the individual circumstances of each situation. To make this assessment, staff will consider the following:

- Is the action necessary
- Is it proportionate
- Must always be time-limited
- Is in the best interests of the learner
- Protects the learner's dignity, welfare and rights

8.42 Restrictive interventions should not be used as a punishment. Staff will consider the impact on the learner's overall welfare, balanced against any actions taken.

8.43 Further details can be found in the Setting's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Contextual Safeguarding

8.44 All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors in the wider community outside the setting and/or can occur between children outside the setting.

8.45 All staff, but especially the DSL(and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence. They should consider the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. Assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors/risks/issues are present in a child's life and whether they are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Details of the setting's key contextual issues are shared at Trust level via several sources.

8.46 The school recognises that children and families in the local area may face a range of challenges linked to deprivation and social disadvantage. Contextual safeguarding considerations within our community include poverty, unemployment, domestic abuse, mental health difficulties, substance misuse, neglect, poor attendance, online safety risks, child exploitation, anti-social behaviour and health inequalities. Staff receive regular training to recognise these risks and understand how local factors may impact upon children's safety, wellbeing, development and educational outcomes. The school works closely with families and external agencies to identify concerns early and provide effective support where needed.

8.47 Referrals to children's social care should consider such factors, so it is important that as much information as possible is provided as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse or harm.

E-Safety / Online Safety at home

8.48 It is recognised that technology is a significant component of many safeguarding and wellbeing issues and can provide the platform for harmful and inappropriate online material.

8.49 Aldridge Education and all settings endeavour to do everything possible to address this through a robust E-safety policy and procedures that including filtering and monitoring systems, education provision to learners and the wider community, policy and practice covering mobile phones and by establishing clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate.

8.50 As defined in detail in the E-safety policy, the areas of risk are categorised as:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful;
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction;
- **conduct:** personal online behaviour;
- **commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams.

8.51 Learners will receive age-appropriate safeguarding education, including online safety, both within the setting and at home, and understand how to report concerns. Parents/carers will be supported through the setting website, communications and engagement opportunities to promote online safety, understand reporting procedures, and be aware of any online activities required as part of learning. Staff will receive annual training on safe internet use and online safeguarding risks, including cyberbullying, online radicalisation and other emerging concerns.

8.52 Filtering and monitoring systems are in place and regularly reviewed (at least annually and more frequently where significant change takes place or need identifies it) to reduce the risk when using the setting's network. Many children having unlimited and unrestricted access to the Internet via various mobile phone networks and the risks related to this are managed via the mobile phone policy.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

8.53 Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, learners and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini.

8.54 Aldridge Education recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning, and in helping to protect and safeguard learners. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose learners to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

8.55 The setting will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully learners in line with this policy, Aldridge Education's E-Safety Policy, Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy and AI Guidance.

8.56 Staff must only use AI tools from the Approved AI Tools. Any new tool must go through the Change Request process so all risks (safeguarding, cost, cybersecurity, data, and compliance) can be evaluated before use. Use of AI is also subject to filtering and monitoring requirements, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

8.57 Further advice for appropriateness of filters, including for Prevent duty, can be found in the latest version of KCSiE , Online Safety section - filtering and monitoring and *UKSIC: appropriate filtering and monitoring*.

Mobile Phones and Devices

8.58 Aldridge Education settings each implement a Mobile Phone Policy whereby learners do not have access to their mobile phone throughout the school day including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

8.59 Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to the setting for their own use but will limit such use to non-contact time when learners are not present, as per the setting's Mobile phone policy.

8.60 Staff are not authorised to take pictures or recordings of learners on their personal phones, cameras or any other electronic device. Any pictures or

videos taken of learners needs to be for work purposes and an setting approved device used.

8.61 The UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 will be followed when taking and storing photos and recordings for use in the setting. Details are contained in the Data Protection Policy.

8.62 The setting's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy makes it clear that staff/learners/parents/carers should not use mobile phones or other electronic devices (including meta glasses) to record meetings or conversations without the consent of all parties.

Prevention

8.63 Settings plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to learners by providing children with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

8.64 The setting will therefore:

- work to establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to
- include regular consultation with children, e.g., through safety questionnaires, participation in anti-bullying initiatives, participation in the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award or other effective ways of teaching children about their rights (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- encourage self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying
- promote a caring, safe and positive environment within the setting
- liaise and work together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children
- support families through Early Help initiatives
- provide explicit teaching on safeguarding, equalities and British Values, which is mapped throughout the curriculum
- provide specific teaching on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education as outlined by government requirements - RSHE statutory guidance

Alternative Provision

8.65 Where a setting places a learner with an Alternative Provision (AP) provider, the setting continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that learner and should be satisfied that the provider meets the needs of the learner. (refer to the latest version of KCSIE AP section).

8.66 The setting will follow the Aldridge Education quality assurance process for AP, including obtaining written confirmation from the AP that appropriate safer recruitment checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e., those checks that the setting would otherwise perform in respect of its own and agency staff.

Adults who supervise children on work experience

8.67 In line with the Aldridge Education Work Experience Policy, the setting will ensure that the Work Experience placement provider has policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm and have carried out the necessary DBS and barred list checks for staff members who will be supervising the learner whilst on placement (more than three days in a 30-day period, or overnight).

8.68 Settings are not able to request an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for staff supervising children aged 16 to 17 on work experience.

8.69 If the activity undertaken by the learner on work experience takes place in a 'specified place', such as a school or college, and gives the opportunity for contact with children, this will be considered to be regulated activity. In these cases, and where the child is 16 years of age or over, the work experience provider will be asked to consider whether a DBS enhanced check should be requested for the learner in question. (DBS checks cannot be requested for children/young people under the age of 16).

Children staying with host families (homestay)

8.70 The setting may occasionally make arrangements for learners to have learning experiences where, for short periods, the children may be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to whom they are not related i.e., as part of a foreign exchange visit or sports tour, often described as 'homestay' arrangements (see KCSIE for further details).

Private fostering – LA notification when identified

8.71 Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer. Such arrangements may come to the attention of setting staff through the normal course of their interaction, and promotion of learning activities, with children.

8.72 Staff should notify the DSL if they become aware of private fostering arrangements so that parental responsibility can be confirmed. The DSL will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their

legal duty to inform the LA at least six weeks prior to the arrangement starting (it is a criminal offence not to do so).

8.73 The setting itself has a mandatory duty to inform the local authority of any private fostering arrangements, to allow the local authority to check that the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.

8.74 Privately fostered children are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the LA especially if they have come from another country or could be affected by abuse, neglect, trafficking, CSE or modern-day slavery. A comprehensive guidance on the circumstances in which private fostering may arise can be found at DfE statutory guidance *Children Act 1989 Private fostering*.

Setting Premises

8.75 The setting will take all practicable steps to ensure that setting premises are appropriately secure, by conducting regular risk assessments and maintaining a log of risk assessments, and other health and safety checks. All reportable incidents will be reported promptly and health and safety policy and processes followed.

8.76 Visitors and parents/carers are not allowed into setting buildings without a visitor's badge and will be accompanied by a member of staff whilst inside the building(s). Visitors wishing to enter a setting's building must sign in on arrival and sign out again on departure. Un-badged and unaccompanied visitors inside buildings will be challenged by a member of staff and escorted to the office to complete the signing-in procedures. Those visiting the setting site to collect or drop off children or to watch matches or concerts are restricted to appropriate areas and will be directed as to which locations are available to them.

8.77 Settings will check the identity of all new agency staff on arrival (by requesting photo id) and ensure the person presenting themselves for work is the same person that the agency has provided vetting checks for.

Before and after school activities

8.78 Where permission has been given for the use of setting premises to bodies (such as sports clubs) to provide out-of-school-hours activities, Aldridge Education will ensure that these bodies have appropriate Child Protection and Safeguarding policies and procedures (including appropriate police checks) and that there are arrangements in place to link with the setting on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with these bodies.

Contracted services

8.79 Where the setting contracts its services to outside providers, Aldridge Education will ensure that these providers have appropriate Child Protection and Safeguarding policies and procedures, and that there are arrangements in place to link with the setting on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the provider.

Lettings

8.80 As part of the setting's letting procedures, all reasonable checks will be made to ensure hirers will not be using the setting premises to promote any extremist views. The setting will follow guidance set out in Tackling Extremism and Anti-Radicalisation (Prevent) and Letting policies.

8.81 The setting will follow safeguarding procedures and inform the LADO if there is an allegation of an incident happening while an individual or organisation is using the setting premises to run activities for children.

9. Staff Policies for Safeguarding

Allegations about Staff and Low Level Concerns

9.1 It is recognised that, however unlikely, there is always a possibility that adults working in the setting may harm children, including governors, volunteers, supply teachers, agency staff or contractors.

9.2 Aldridge Education's Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy deal with allegations against staff (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors) and strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false, malicious or unfounded allegations. These procedures follow *Keeping Children Safe in Education* guidance , and should be used where an allegation is made about a person working in the setting that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including members of staff, supply staff, volunteers or contractors, that they have:

- 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, OR
- 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 includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside the setting.

9.3 **These are also known as the harm test.**

9.4 Aldridge Education's Low-Level Concerns Policy covers concerns that may be graded low level if the concern does not meet the harm threshold for immediate referral to the LADO. Low level concerns are where the person has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the 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
- humiliating learners.

9.5 If anybody has concerns about any adult in the setting, then concerns should be recorded on the agreed MIS platform for this purpose and the Principal informed without delay, and in their absence the DSL and HR Partner.

9.6 Where there are concerns about the Principal, this should also be recorded on the agreed MIS platform for recording concerns about staff and referred immediately to the Chair of Governors and the Chief Executive Officer of Aldridge Education.

9.7 Concerns about any member of the national team should be referred immediately to the Chief People Officer of Aldridge Education or, if the concern is about the Chief People Officer, to the Chief Executive Officer. Concerns about the Chief Executive Officer should be raised immediately with the Chair of the Aldridge Education Board. This can be done, if necessary, through the Chief People Officer.

9.8 Concerns can also be raised with the DSL about staff members (other than the Principal), volunteers or contractors.

9.9 All concerned will then follow the procedures set out in the Managing Allegations Against Staff policy.

9.10 If a staff member feels unable to raise their concerns/issues with the Principal then they can report it to the Chief People Officer or directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO); if they feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they must refer to the Whistleblowing Policy and/or contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing advice line directly.

9.11 If staff receive an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using the setting premises for running an activity for children, the matter needs to be reported to the Principal and DSL, as with any safeguarding allegation.

9.12 On receiving an allegation, the Principal and HR have to decide whether the concern is an allegation or low-level concern. 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) (see below).

9.13 When a person reports an allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer at the setting, which appears to meet the harm test criteria, the Principal will immediately contact the LADO before further action is taken. Where there is any doubt as to whether the criteria have been met the LADO must be informed.

9.14 Before contacting the LADO, academies and colleges should conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation.

9.15 The LADO's role is not to investigate the allegation, but to ensure that an appropriate investigation is carried out, whether that is by the police, children's social care, the setting or college, or a combination of these.

9.16 Where an allegation is made about a supply teacher, whilst the setting is not the employer, they should ensure that all allegations are dealt with properly. In no circumstances should an setting or college decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the local authority designated officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome. (Refer to the latest version of KCSiE on guidance relating to the management of supply teachers where an allegation has been made. The accused person will be informed of the allegation as soon as possible after the designated officer has been consulted. Appropriate support and a representative will be provided to keep the accused person informed of the progress of the case as appropriate.

9.17 Detailed guidance is given to staff to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place learners or themselves at risk of harm, or of allegations of harm toward a learner. This guidance is contained in the Staff Code of Conduct, and the Staff Handbook/Induction Handbook if the setting has one.

9.18 The Principal will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL (and it should be explained to staff how they will work together in the process/procedure for confidentially sharing low-level concerns.

9.19 Records must be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. Academies should retain such information in line with Managing Allegations against Staff policy.

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

9.21 If there is any doubt about the low-level concern and whether it meets the threshold or not the setting should contact the LADO.

9.22 If a concerning pattern of behaviour is identified and now meets the criteria for an allegation, then the matter should be referred to the LADO.

9.23 If the records' review identifies that there are wider cultural issues within the setting that enabled the behaviour to occur, this will be followed by a review or revision of policies or processes or deliver extra training to minimise the risk of it happening again.

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

9.25 The setting will work to ensure a culture of openness, trust and transparency so staff feel encouraged and feel confident about what appropriate behaviour is, about confidentially sharing low level concerns, addressing unprofessional behaviour and/or are able 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.

Whistleblowing

9.26 All staff are required to report to the Principal, or the Chief Executive Officer in their absence, any concern or allegations about setting practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put learners at risk of abuse or other serious harm. There will be no retribution or disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report provided that it is done in good faith.

9.27 Concerns regarding the Principal must be made to the Chief Executive Officer; concerns about national team staff to the Chief People Officer and concerns about the Chief Executive Officer to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Any of these persons can take advice from the LADO as required.

9.28 If staff or other stakeholders feel unable to raise any concerns internally or have worries about the way their disclosure is being handled by the setting, contact can be made with the Local Authority, r, or the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line on 0800 028 0285 – 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday or email: help@nspcc.org.uk. More information about whistleblowing can be found within the Whistleblowing Policy.

Safer Recruitment

9.29 To ensure that children are protected whilst at this setting, all staff, contractors and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, supervised and trained.

9.30 Aldridge Education will follow government guidance regarding safer recruitment, ensuring that the checks are made in conjunction with the relevant agencies including the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Home Office. These checks will be made in accordance with the Safer Recruitment Policy. They will be made in accordance with the role applied for.

9.31 All checks made will be recorded on the setting's Single Central Record (also known as the Register) in line with the policy.

10. Monitoring and Review

10.1 The Child protection and Safeguarding policy will be monitored by Aldridge Education and Darwen Aldridge Sudell Primary School leaders to ensure it is followed consistently and remains effective. Any issues or concerns, including breaches of the policy or complaints raised, will be recorded to support this monitoring.

10.2 Any serious child protection incidents at the setting will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the setting and a prompt report to the Chief Executive Officer and the Chair of Trustees. In addition, the DSL will monitor the operation of this policy and its procedures and will make a termly report to the Local Governing Committee and termly reports to the Aldridge Education Board or Sub-Committee.

10.3 Aldridge Education will undertake an annual review of this policy and how their duties under it have been discharged. They will ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses with regard to child protection arrangements at any time are remedied or reported without delay. Prior to any review of the policy, feedback will be sought from the National Team, on the effectiveness of the policy.

10.4 Aldridge Education will undertake regular external safeguarding audits to monitor the policy in practice. The findings will be shared with the Trustees, the Chief Executive Officer, the Aldridge Education Safeguarding Lead/ Head of Inclusion and the academies. Aldridge Education will ensure, through the Chief Executive Officer, that all actions arising from the review are addressed appropriately and in a timely manner.

Appendix 1: Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy

11.1 The Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy forms part of the overall Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the updated Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and related guidance. All other linked legislation and policies in section 2 above.

11.2 Roles and responsibilities will apply as per the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, as they relate to Harmful Sexual Behaviour. All staff will receive training that will allow them to understand and comply with this policy.

Definition of Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

11.3 Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected, to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and is defined as harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). HSB can occur online and/or face to face and can also occur simultaneously between the two.

11.4 Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is;

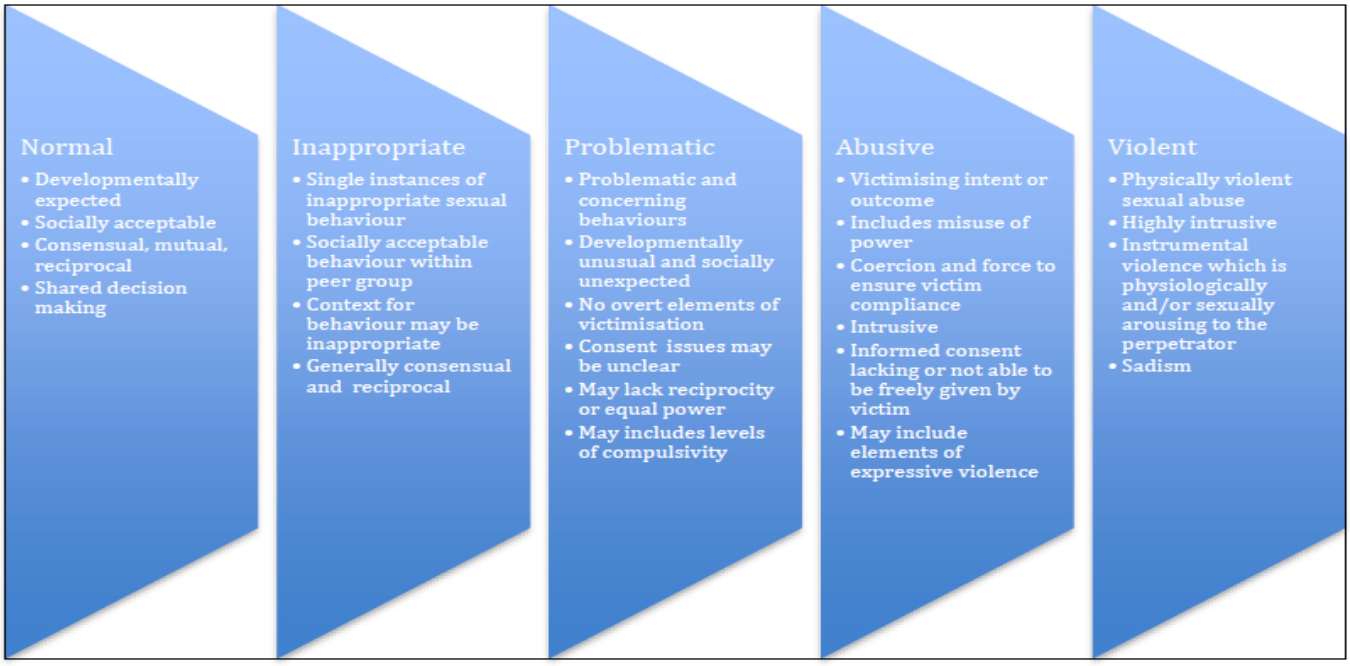
- much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference - however, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child has a disability or is smaller in stature
- if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not

11.5 HSB involves a child engaging in discussions or acts that are inappropriate for their age or stage of development, whether online or offline. It includes sexualised language or role play, viewing pornography, sexual harassment and sexual violence. It also includes 'sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery', whereby a sexually explicit text, image or video is sent or received. It is a criminal offence to take, possess or distribute sexual content of anyone under 18 years of age.

Ways in which Harmful Sexual Behaviour happens

11.6 When defining harmful sexual behaviours and those that are 'normal' and age appropriate, the following continuum is used (Simon Hackett, 2014) and has been used as part of this policy: -

11.7 Sexual behaviours across a continuum



Simon Hackett (2014) "Children and Young People with Harmful Sexual Behaviours"

11.8 When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical abuse, staff can draw on aspects of the continuum to assess where the alleged behaviour falls on a spectrum and to decide how to respond. This could include, for example, whether it:

- is socially acceptable (including within the peer group),
- involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time,
- is problematic and concerning,
- involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g., related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability,
- involves an element of coercion or pre-planning,
- involves a power imbalance between the child/ children allegedly responsible for the behaviour and the child/children allegedly the subject of that power and involves a misuse of power.

11.9 Harmful Sexual Behaviour usually manifests as one, or a combination, of the following:

11.10 **Sexual harassment**: unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which can include sexual comments about another's body, un-wanted physical contact, interfering with clothing, comments about another person's sexual experience, sexual "jokes" or taunting including inuendo, sexual name-calling, sexual gestures.

11.11 **Online sexual harassment:** Sexual harassment creates an atmosphere that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence. Online abuse can take the form of online grooming, sending or receiving of inappropriate images of children, cyber bullying, Revenge Porn and stalking.

11.12 **Youth produced sexual imagery**: Creating or sharing explicit images of a child (anyone under 18 years of age) is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child. A child or young person is breaking the law if they:

- take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend
- share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it's shared between children of the same age
- possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave their permission for it to be created

11.13 **Sexual violence:** rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003. A child under 13 can never consent to sexual activity.

11.14 **Up-skirting**: involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It has been a criminal offence since 2019 and constitutes sexual harassment.

11.15 Harmful Sexual Behaviour is a complex issue and will have varied warning signs. However, staff should be alert to the well-being of learners and be aware of the signs and be mindful of the fact that the way(s) in which children will disclose or present with behaviour(s) as a result of their experiences will differ.

Signs and Indicators

11.16 Warning signs can include:

- Changes in behaviour or demeanour; for example, a child becoming withdrawn
- Signs of depression or anxiety
- Avoidance of particular individuals
- Unexplained injuries
- Disengaging from classes or struggling to carry out setting related tasks to the standard ordinarily expected
- Sudden development of sexualised behaviour or language
- Exclusion or isolation from peers
- Acts of extreme compliance
- Failing to attend school
- Experiencing difficulties with mental health and/or emotional wellbeing

- Becoming withdrawn and/or shy; experiencing headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and/or panic attacks Suffering from nightmares or lack of sleep or sleeping too much
- Alcohol or substance misuse
- Changes in appearance and/or starting to act in a way that is not appropriate for the child or young person's age
- Abusive behaviour towards others

11.17 Any child can be vulnerable to harmful sexual behaviour due to the strength of peer influence during adolescence, and staff should be alert to signs of such abuse amongst all learners and take all concerns raised by third parties seriously – ensuring that they are reported.

11.18 Individual and situational factors can increase a child's vulnerability to abuse by their peers. For example, an inappropriate image of a child could be shared, following which they could become more vulnerable to child-on-child abuse due to how others now perceive them, regardless of any characteristics which may be inherent in them and/or their family.

11.19 Peer group dynamics can also play an important role in determining a child's vulnerability to such abuse, as well as contextual influences, for example:

- Children who are questioning or exploring their sexuality may also be particularly vulnerable to abuse by their peers and others.
- Girls are more susceptible to being victims of harmful sexual behaviour than boys and this difference may be due to societal norms (particularly around power, control and the way in which femininity and masculinity are constructed) rather than biological factors.
- Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) are much more likely to be abused than their peers without SEND, and additional barriers can sometimes exist when recognising abuse in children with SEND. These can include assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as a behaviour, mood and injury relate to a child's presenting need rather than the possibility of them being harmed by others, the potential for children with SEND to be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying and harassment, without outwardly showing any signs, which could be due to communication barriers and difficulties.
- Ethnicity, race, religious beliefs and sexual orientation are other indicators why some children are more likely to experience harmful sexual behaviour than others. Studies have also found that black and ethnic minority children are often under-identified as victims and over-identified as perpetrators.
- Boys and young men in gang-affected neighbourhoods.

- Those with a history of abuse within their families.
- Children who are looked-after.
- Those who have experienced loss through bereavement.

Actions required

11.20 The Principal will ensure that all staff understand and take seriously all forms of HSB (no matter how 'low level' they may appear) and that no form of it is ever dismissed and all incidents reported.

11.21 They will create conditions in which all learners can aspire to, and realise, safe and healthy relationships fostering a whole-setting culture based on the idea that every member of the community is responsible for building and maintaining safe and positive relationships in which violence and abuse are never acceptable.

11.22 The setting maintains up to date records of all sexual related incidents which detail all actions taken and interventions put into place.

11.23 The implications of the setting environment are considered where reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment have been made and the victim(s) and perpetrator(s). Immediate consideration will be given regarding the proximity of the victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s) during lessons and social times.

11.24 If rape or assault by penetration is reported by a student at the setting, and the alleged perpetrator(s) also attend the setting, all parties will be separated from any classes that they share.

11.25 The setting will educate learners about the nature and prevalence of HSB, positive, responsible and safe use of social media, and the facts about consent, via RSE and the wider curriculum

11.26 Learners are taught about what constitutes acceptable behaviour and learn about topics such as healthy and respectful relationships, self-esteem and gender roles

11.27 It is essential that all concerns and allegations of harmful sexual behaviour are handled sensitively, appropriately and promptly in accordance with the CP and Safeguarding policy The way in which they are responded to can have a significant impact on the setting environment.

11.28 Any response should:

- Include a thorough investigation of the concern(s) or allegation(s), and the wider context in which it/they may have occurred (as appropriate) – depending on the nature and seriousness of the alleged incident(s), it may be appropriate for the police and/or children's social care to carry out this investigation

- Treat all learners involved as being at potential risk – while the child or young person allegedly responsible for the abuse may pose a significant risk of harm to others, they may also have considerable unmet needs and be at risk of harm themselves. The setting will ensure that a safeguarding response is in place for both the child who has allegedly experienced the abuse, and the child who has allegedly been responsible for it, and additional sanctioning may be required for the latter
- Take into account that the behaviour may indicate wider safeguarding concerns for any of the learners involved, and consider and address the effect of wider sociocultural contexts – such as their peer group (both within and outside of setting); family; the setting environment; their experience(s) of crime and victimisation in the local community; and the child/children's online presence
- Consider what changes may need to be made to these contexts to address the learners' needs and to mitigate risk
- Ensure that the DSL assesses the suitability of discussing the action steps with the learners' involved and their and their parent or carers (unless it is considered unsafe to do so or an immediate referral needs to be made to children's social care) in order to obtain consent to any referral before it is made
- Manage the learners' expectations about information sharing, and keep them and their parent/carers informed of developments, where appropriate and safe to do so
- Take into account the wishes of any learner who has allegedly been abused, and give them as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed, and how they will be supported

Multi-agency working and safeguarding partnership arrangements

11.29 The setting recognises and is committed to its responsibility to work with other professionals and agencies in line with statutory guidance (Working Together to Safeguard Children). The DSL will discuss the concern(s) or allegation(s) with the agency and agree on a course of action, which may include:

- **Manage internally with help from external specialists where appropriate and possible:** Where the alleged behaviour is abusive or violent, a referral to children's social care will need to be made. Where the behaviour between learners is 'inappropriate' or 'problematic' – as per the harmful behaviours continuum - and support from local agencies is not available, setting may need to handle concerns or allegations internally. In these cases, the setting will engage and seek advice from external specialists.

- Undertake/contribute to an **inter-agency early help assessment**, with targeted early help services provided to address the assessed needs of the child/children and their family. These services may, for example, include family and parenting programmes, responses to emerging thematic concerns in extra familial contexts, a specialist harmful sexual behaviour team, CAMHS and/or youth offending services.
- **Refer the learner to children's social care for a section 17/47 statutory assessment**: Where a learner is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, a referral to children's social care (and, if appropriate, a report to the police) needs to be made immediately to the local authority where learner lives. This needs to be done for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator. Depending on the safeguarding procedures issued by the Local Safeguarding Partnership in that area, there will normally be an initial review and assessment of the referral, in accordance with that area's assessment framework
- **Report alleged criminal behaviour to the police**: Alleged criminal behaviour will ordinarily be reported to the police unless there are circumstances where it may not be appropriate to report such behaviour. All concerns or allegations will be discussed with children's social care and assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Risk Assessments:

11.30 The setting will always carry out a risk assessment for:

- Any learner who is alleged to have behaved in a way that is considered to be abusive or violent
- Any learner who has reportedly been abused or affected by the alleged abusive or violent behaviour by another learner
- Any learner who may be at risk due to the alleged abusive or violent behaviour by another learner as deemed appropriate by the DSL

11.31 Where it is alleged that a learner has behaved in a way that is considered to be inappropriate or problematic (as opposed to abusive or violent), the DSL will use their professional judgment – based on the particular concern(s) and/or allegation(s) raised, and the needs and circumstances of the individual in question – to determine whether (as explained above) it would be appropriate to contact children's social care, and to carry out a risk assessment.

11.32 Where other learners have been identified as witnesses to alleged abuse or violence, consideration should also be given by the DSL to whether there might be any risks to them, and whether a risk assessment would be appropriate in relation to any risks presenting to them.

11.33 Aldridge Education provides a template risk assessment that can be used to assess the risks to the children involved in an incident of harmful sexual behaviour.

Disciplinary Action

11.34 The setting may consider whether disciplinary action is appropriate for any learner involved. If there are police proceedings underway, or there could be, it is critical that the setting works in partnership with the police and/or children's social care. Where there is no involvement from the police and/ or children's social care, the setting will still need to consider what is the most appropriate action to take to ensure positive behaviour management.

11.35 Disciplinary action may sometimes be the most appropriate course of action to:

- Ensure that the learners involved take(s) responsibility for and realise(s) the seriousness of their behaviour;
- Demonstrate to those involved. and others, that HSB can never be tolerated, and
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of other learners at the setting.

11.36 However, these considerations must be balanced against any police or social care investigations, the learner's own potential unmet needs, and any action or intervention planned regarding safeguarding concerns.

11.37 Before deciding on appropriate action, the setting will always consider its duty to safeguard all learners in its care from harm; the underlying reasons for a child's behaviour; any unmet needs, or harm or abuse suffered by the child; the risk that the child may pose to other children; and the severity of the HBS and the causes of it. The setting will, where appropriate, consider the potential benefit of using managed moves or exclusion as a response to an HSB incident.

11.38 Suspension will only be considered as a last resort and only where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the other learners in the setting. Engaging in Fair Access Panel processes to assist with decision-making associated to managed moves and suspensions can also be beneficial. In the event of any managed move, consideration must be given to sharing information with the receiving setting regarding the HSB incident in order to allow best protection of the learners in the new setting.

11.39 Disciplinary interventions alone are rarely able to solve issues of HSB, and the setting will always consider the wider actions that may need to be taken, and any lessons that may need to be learnt going forwards, as set out above.

11.40 **Alternative provision (AP) and Managed Move placements**

11.41 Settings are responsible for the safeguarding of their learners when they are placed in an alternative provision. The setting will ensure that a risk assessment is completed for each learner going to alternative provision or a managed move placement where there have been or are concerns about HSB.

Appendix 2: Prevent Policy

12.1 This Prevent references the revised Prevent Duty guidance 2023. All staff members are informed of how to access this policy, and procedures, and the settings Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy together with advice from their Local Authority Safeguarding Partnership

12.2 All staff members must be kept up to date with any relevant developments about the Prevent Initiative and will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of becoming involved with or supporting terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas.

12.3 **Context**

12.4 To fulfil the Prevent duty, it is essential that staff identify children who may be susceptible to radicalisation and know what to do when they are identified. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of the wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g., drugs, gangs, neglect, sexual exploitation), whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences.

12.5 The setting will also build learners' resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British Values and enabling them to challenge extremist views. Staff at the setting will be trained to be aware of any incidents of the undermining of British Values. The setting does not intend to stop learners talking about or debating controversial issues. On the contrary, it provides a safe space in which learners and staff can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments.

12.6 In the setting, the Single Point of Contact (SPoC) is always the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include the local authority, police or Channel the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of becoming involved with or supporting terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team.

Definitions

12.7 **Extremism** is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to**:**

- Negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or

- Undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
- Intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results outlined in either of the above points

12.8 **Radicalisation** refers to the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence

12.9 Below are some factors that might make individuals more susceptible to being radicalised:-

- Identity Crisis – those exploring issues around their identity may feel removed or out of touch from friends and family, as well as their cultural or religious background, and may also feel that they no longer fit into society
- Personal crisis – may include significant tensions within the family home that makes the individual feel isolated from what is perceived as the 'norm'
- Personal circumstances – individuals may feel that their career and lifestyle aspirations are being undermined by a perceived or real inability to achieve them. This can result in the development of a mindset that choses to opt out of conforming, and instead adopt a more antagonistic and / or aggressive viewpoint
- Criminality – a susceptible individual may become involved in criminal activity, or criminal groups that have links to organised crime relating to terrorist related activities

12.10 Radicalisation can exploit any of these vulnerabilities by providing the individual with a sense of worth, purpose or belonging.

12.11 **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

12.12 The use or threat of terrorism 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.

12.13 **Fundamental British Values** are defined as the following:

- **Democracy:** A culture built upon freedom and equality, where everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- **The rule of law:** The need for rules to make a happy, safe and secure environment to live and work.

- **Individual liberty:** Protection of each person's rights and the rights of others around them.
- **Mutual respect & tolerance of different faiths and beliefs:** Understanding that all people do not share the same beliefs and values. Respecting each other's values, ideas and beliefs of others whilst not imposing their own onto them.

12.14 Settings should enable and encourage learners to:

- develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-confidence,
- distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England,
- accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely,
- acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England,
- further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling them to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures,
- encourage respect for other people,
- encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

12.15 The list below describes the understanding and knowledge expected of learners because of the promotion of fundamental British values.

- an understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process,
- an appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety,
- an understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence,
- an understanding that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law,
- an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour,
- an understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination,

12.16 It is not necessary for schools or individuals to 'promote' teachings, beliefs, or opinions that conflict with their own, but nor is it acceptable for schools to promote discrimination against people or groups based on their belief, opinion or background.

Risk Assessment

12.17 Aldridge Education is aware of an increased risk of online radicalisation, as terrorist organisations seek to radicalise young people through the use of social media and the internet.

12.18 There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology. As with managing other safeguarding risks, settings are alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Children at risk of radicalisation may display a range of different signs and indicators, or they seek to hide their views.

12.19 Setting staff should use their professional judgment in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately.

12.20 Even very young children may be susceptible to radicalisation by others, whether in the family or outside, and display concerning behaviour. The Prevent duty does not require teachers or childcare providers to carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life but, as with any other safeguarding risk, they must take action when they observe behaviour of concern.

12.21 Procedures are in place for protecting children at risk of radicalisation. These procedures are set out in existing safeguarding policies.

12.22 Lettings are vetted and monitored by the Estates Team in conjunction with the Principal

12.23 External speakers are vetted and monitored by setting staff to ensure that they do incite hatred, draw others into extremist-related activities or encourage hate crime or criminal damage

12.24 Prevent risk assessments are written and reviewed annually which determines the potential risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism or terrorist ideology. They cover the areas of; Leadership, Visiting Speakers, Training, Information Sharing, Premises and Facilities, Online Safety, Risk Factors and the Curriculum.

Working in partnership

12.25 The Prevent duty builds on existing local partnership arrangements.

- Local Children Safeguarding Partnerships are responsible for co-ordinating what is done by local agencies for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their local area.

Local authorities are vital to all aspects of Prevent work. This work will also include assessing the thresholds of need for intervention by the Channel panel.

- Working in conjunction with other partners, in particular the police, and also civil society organisations, the setting may be able to receive additional advice and support.
- Effective engagement with families is also important as they are in a key position to spot signs of radicalisation. The setting will assist and advise families who raise concerns and be able to point them to the right support mechanisms.

Indicators of extremist related activity

12.26 **Unusual use of the Internet:** Searches related to sites that promote anti-British Values and production of materials originating from internet sites with extreme content.

12.27 **Disclosures:** Graffiti symbols, writing or artwork promoting extremist messages or images, voicing opinions drawn from terrorist related ideologies and narratives.

12.28 **Support for terrorism:** Members/Co-members accessing terrorist related material online, including through social networking sites, using extremist texts or tattoos, use of extremist or hate terms to exclude others or incite violence; using language such as 'us and them', justifying the use of violence to solve real or perceived grievances, tattoos or literature.

12.29 **Personal Crisis:** Parental/family reports of changes in behaviour, friendships, appearance or actions and requests for assistance, family tensions, sense of isolation, low self-esteem, and uncertainty about their identity, faith or belonging.

12.30 **Concerns from professionals:** Partner healthcare organisations, local authority services and police reports of issues affecting patients in other health care organisations.

12.31 **Personal Circumstances:** migration, local community tensions within set groups, events affecting the student's country of origin, a sense of grievance triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination

Training

12.32 The statutory guidance refers to the importance of Prevent awareness training to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

- Key staff have received special individual training in accordance with their role in the setting.
- New staff will receive Prevent training arranged by the DSL.
- All staff, governors and trustees will undertake update training as appropriate (minimum of bi-annually).
- LGC governors and trustees will receive online Prevent training via the Home Office platform.

IT policies

12.33 The setting will follow the statutory guidance that makes clear the need to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools.

- Ensuring that suitable filtering and monitoring is in place.
- Making internet safety integral to the IT and PSHE curriculum.

Building children's resilience to radicalisation

12.34 The setting will enable young people to explore issues such as terrorism and the wider use of violence in a considered and informed way. Learners' resilience to radicalisation can be built by providing a safe environment for debating controversial issues and helping them to understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making.

12.35 The setting will facilitate the understanding of wider issues within the context of learning about the values on which society is founded and the system of democratic government. These are important for reasons which go far beyond Prevent but they connect to the Prevent agenda.

12.36 The setting promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners and, within this, fundamental British values. This is effective in providing learners with time to explore sensitive or controversial issues and equipping them with the knowledge and skills to understand and manage difficult situations. The subject teaches learners to recognise and manage risk, make safer choices, and recognise when pressure from others threatens their personal safety and wellbeing. The setting teaches the key principals of the British Values and encourages learners to demonstrate those ideologies in their day-to-day life. In accordance with the latest government guidelines regarding the statutory teaching of relationships, the issues of radicalisation and extremism is explored as part of the work done on healthy and non-healthy relationships.

12.37 If there is a concern:

- Follow the setting's normal safeguarding procedures in accordance with the CP and Safeguarding policy and raise the concern with the DSL. In their absence the Deputy DSL and/or Principal will be informed.
- Possible Channel referrals will be discussed by the setting Safeguarding Team if appropriate and in accordance with government guidelines.
- The DSL may contact the local police force or dial 101 (the non-emergency number), who can talk in confidence about the concerns and help gain access to support and advice.
- The Department for Education has dedicated a telephone helpline (020 7340 7264) – open Monday – Friday 11am – 3pm, to raise concerns relating to extremism directly. Concerns can also be raised by email to counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk . Please note that the helpline is not intended for use in emergency situations, such as a child being at immediate risk of harm or a security incident, in which case the Child Protection Policy procedures should be followed.

Appendix 3: Learner Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

13.1 Aldridge Education is committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of learners, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders.

13.2 This policy is intended to:

- Provide guidance to setting staff on the settings' approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across all communities
- Inform learners and parents about the support that they can expect from the setting in respect of supporting mental health and wellbeing
- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing across the whole setting
- Create a culture of wellbeing and inclusion
- Foster a positive atmosphere in setting, where learners feel able to discuss and reflect on their own experiences with mental health openly
- Celebrate all of the ways learners achieve at the setting, both inside and outside the classroom
- Allow learners to participate in forming the approach to mental health by promoting learner voice
- Give learners the opportunity to develop their self-esteem by taking responsibility for themselves and others
- Spread awareness of the varieties of ways mental health issues can manifest
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues
- Provide support to staff working with learners with mental health issues
- Provide support and access to resources to learners experiencing mental ill health alongside their peers, their families and the staff who work with them

Legislation and Guidance

13.3 This policy was written with regard to the legislation, guidance and policies referenced in the main Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, as well as Articles 3 and 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and The latest version of Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges: Government Guidance

13.4 Help may be obtained from the Anna Freud Centre and Young Minds

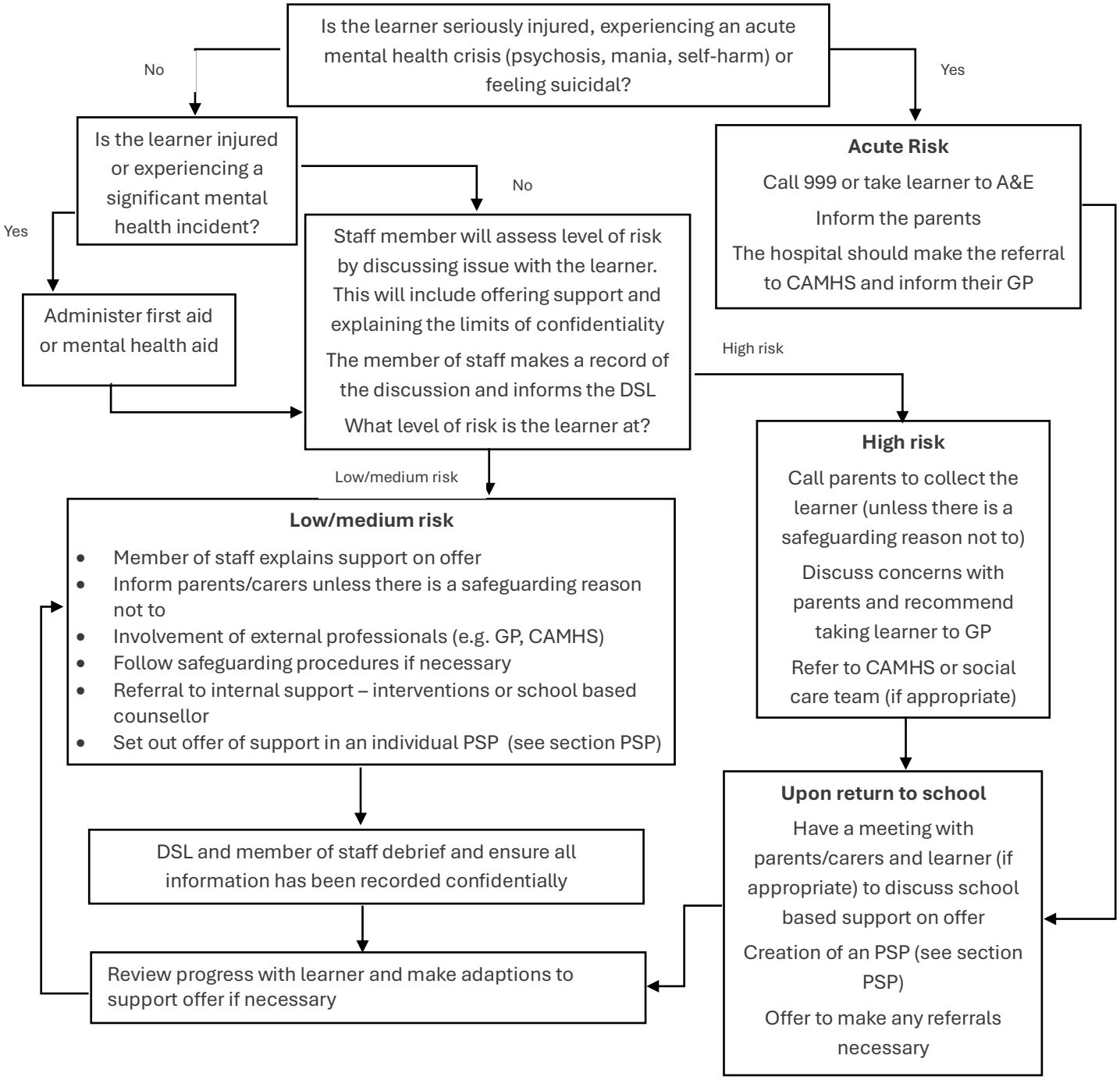
Roles and responsibilities

13.5 All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across the setting and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a learner's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the Mental Health Lead and the DSL if appropriate. All concerns should be logged on CPOMs.

13.6 Certain members of staff have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in setting. These members of staff include:

13.7 Principal, Mental Health Lead, Mental Health trained staff, Designated safeguarding lead (DSL), SENDCo.

Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis



Warning signs

13.8 All staff will be on the lookout for signs that a learner's mental health is deteriorating. Some warning signs include:

- Changes in mood or energy level
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Changes in attitude in lessons or academic attainment
- Changes in level of personal hygiene
- Social isolation
- Poor attendance or punctuality
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Weight loss or gain
- Secretive behaviour
- Covering parts of the body that they wouldn't have previously
- Refusing to participate in P.E. or being secretive when changing clothes
- Physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause
- Physical injuries that appear to be self-inflicted
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

Managing disclosures

13.9 If a learner makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring. Staff will focus on the learner's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

13.10 Staff will always follow the setting's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the designated safeguarding lead who will liaise with the mental health lead to discuss current interventions that could be offered. All disclosures must be recorded on CPOMS.

13.11 Staff should not promise a learner that they will keep a disclosure secret, instead they will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality.

13.12 A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- This would be a breach of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Being the sole person responsible for a learner's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing
- The support put in place for the learner will be dependent on the member of staff being at setting
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the learner in question

13.13 Staff should always report disclosures concerning a learner who may be experiencing poor mental health to the DSL. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

13.14 Before sharing information disclosed by a learner with a third party, the DSL or Mental Health Lead will discuss it with the learner and their parent/carer (where consent for services is required) and explain:

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

13.15 Staff will attempt to receive consent from the learner and their parent/carer to share their information, but the safety of the learner comes first.

13.16 Parents will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

13.17 Process for managing confidentiality around disclosures:

- Learner makes a disclosure
- Member of staff offers support
- Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with DSL who will discuss it with the Mental Health Lead.
- Member of staff will attempt to get the learner's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the learner who the information will be shared with and why
- Member of staff will record the disclosure on CPOMS and share the information with the chosen elected member of staff
- The DSL will inform the parent/carer (if appropriate)
- Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis

Support for all learners

13.18 As part of the setting's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all learners, the setting offers support to all learners by:

- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, tutor time, PSHE and mental health awareness week
- Signposting all learners to sources of online support on the setting website
- Having open discussions about mental health during lessons

- Providing learners with avenues to provide feedback on any elements of the setting that is negatively impacting their mental health
- Monitoring of all learners' mental health through assessments e.g. a strengths and difficulties questionnaire
- Appointing a mental health lead with a strategic oversight of the whole setting approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Offering pastoral support through nurture provision and targeted groups
- Making classrooms a safe space to discuss mental health and wellbeing through interventions such as worry boxes and circle time

13.19 If a learner is identified as having a mental health need, the Mental Health Lead will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to making an assessment and providing tailored support, further to the provision of the baseline support as detailed above. The setting will offer support in cycles of:

- Assessing what the learner's mental health needs are
- Creating a plan to provide support
- Taking the actions set out in the plan
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered

13.20 Where appropriate, a learner will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above. The support offered at the setting includes:

Nurture groups, Reduced timetable, Targeted Groups

13.21 A learner will be offered an Individual Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) where they require a more personalised approach to successfully access school life and achieve positive outcomes. This may be appropriate when a pupil:

Is experiencing significant difficulties with emotional regulation that impact on their learning, relationships or wellbeing.

Requires additional support to engage with and access the curriculum.

Is struggling to meet behavioural expectations despite the implementation of universal classroom strategies.

13.22 PSPs are written in collaboration with the learner (if appropriate), their parent/carer, and any other relevant professionals.

13.23 The learner's PSP will contain the following details

- The mental health issue (and its triggers, signs, symptoms and treatments)
- The learner's needs resulting from the condition

- Specific support for the learner's educational, social and emotional needs
- The level of support needed
- Who will provide the support
- Who in the setting needs to be aware of the child's condition
- What to do in an emergency

Making external referrals

13.24 If a learner's needs cannot be met by the internal offer the setting provides, the setting will make, or encourage parents to make, a referral for external support.

13.25 A learner could be referred to:

- GP or paediatrician
- CAMHS
- Mental health charities (e.g. Samaritans, Mind, Young Minds, Kooth)
- Local counselling services
- FSW

Supporting and collaborating with parents and carers

13.26 Settings will work with parents and carers to support learners' mental health by:

- Asking parents/carers to inform them of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so that the right support can be offered
- Informing parents/carers of mental health concerns about their child
- Engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them and their child
- Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing on the setting website, including the mental health and wellbeing policy
- Liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child
- Providing guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent forums)
- Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in PSHE, and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

13.27 When informing parents about any mental health concerns about their child, settings will endeavour to do this face to face. These meetings can be difficult, so the setting will ensure that parents are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting.

13.28 A record of what was discussed, and action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to the learner's confidential record.

13.29 If appropriate, an individual Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) will be created in collaboration with parents/carers (see section PSP).

Supporting peers

13.30 Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be extremely challenging for learners. Learners may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other.

13.31 Settings will offer support to all learners impacted by mental health directly and indirectly. This will include reviewing the support offered on a case-by-case basis. Support might include:

- Strategies they can use to support their friends
- Things they should avoid doing/saying
- Warning signs to look out for
- Signposting to sources of external support
- Recognising signs and indicators of poor mental health through the PSHE curriculum

Signposting

13.32 Sources of support will be displayed around the setting and linked to on the website, so learners and parents are aware of how they can get help.

13.33 The Mental Health Lead will be available to provide further information to learners and parents/carers if they want to learn more about what support is available.

13.34 The school is committed to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing and ensuring that all pupils know how and where to access support when needed.

Awareness of mental health support is promoted through:

- The PSHE curriculum, including age-appropriate learning about emotions, resilience, wellbeing and healthy relationships.
- Assemblies focused on mental health, emotional wellbeing and seeking help.

- Regular classroom discussions and circle times that encourage children to talk about their feelings and wellbeing.
- Wellbeing awareness events and national campaigns, such as Children's Mental Health Week.
- E-Safety lessons that address online wellbeing and healthy use of technology.
- Visual displays around school highlighting trusted adults, support services and strategies for looking after mental health.
- The pupil-led Wellbeing Group, which promotes positive mental health and helps signpost children to appropriate support.
- The use of Worry Boxes in every classroom and the Worry Monster located in The Penny, providing accessible routes for children to raise concerns.
- The online reporting form available through the school website.
- Opportunities for pupils to access trusted adults, including class teachers, teaching assistants, pastoral staff, Mental Health First Aiders and safeguarding staff.

Children are regularly reminded that it is okay to ask for help and that support is available whenever they need it. The school fosters a culture of openness, trust and inclusion, ensuring pupils feel safe discussing their emotions and confident in seeking support for their mental health and wellbeing.

13.35 Settings will follow the PSHE Association Guidance teaching mental health and emotional wellbeing.

13.36 Learners will be taught to:

- Develop healthy coping strategies
- Challenge misconceptions around mental health
- Understand their own emotional state
- Keep themselves safe
- Make use of signposting

13.37 For more information, see the PSHE curriculum.

Creating a positive atmosphere around mental health

13.38 Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- Discussing mental health with learners in order to break down stigma
- Acknowledging key national mental health awareness events
- Encouraging learners to disclose when they think their mental health is deteriorating

Staff Training, CPD and support

13.39 All staff will be offered training so they:

- Have a good understanding of what learners' mental health needs are
- Know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health
- Know a clear process to follow if they identify a learner in need of help
- Professional Development Activities
- Attend Senior Mental Health Lead training and refresher programmes.
- Engage with local authority wellbeing and mental health networks.
- Review and update the school's whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of mental health provision across the school.

13.40 Settings recognise that supporting a learner experiencing poor mental health can be distressing for staff. To combat this, the following support will be offered:

- Half Termy Supervision
- Treat mental health concerns seriously
- Offer staff supervision sessions
- Support staff experiencing poor mental health themselves
- Create a pleasant and supportive work environment
- Ensure that there is a Wellbeing Champion available to staff
- Advise of the Employment Assistance Programme

14. Appendix 4: Documents used to report, record and refer

14.1 *MASH online Referral Form - Blackburn with Darwen Children's Services*