



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Named staff/personnel with specific responsibility for Child Protection

Designated Safeguarding Lead and Policy Leader	Mrs Z Dewhurst (Deputy Headteacher)
Deputy DSLs	Miss J Whalley (Primary Lead DSL) Mrs H Power (lead for PREVENT) Mrs J Parkinson Mrs B Mashiter (lead for Emotional, Mental Health & Wellbeing) Mr Lee Small (lead for Online Safety & Filtering) Mrs R Ralphson (Lead for EBSA) Mr J Dwyer
Safeguarding Governor	Mrs Bernadette Matterson
Approved by the Governing Body	September 2026
Date to Review	September 2027

Context and Rationale

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1 Training & Updates (staff and pupils)

1a Training for Designated Staff in School

Name of Staff Member / Governor	Date when last attended CP Training	Provided by Whom (e.g., LCC, Governor Services)
B Mashiter	14/07/2026	LCC
Z Dewhurst	10/03/2026	LCC
J Dwyer	26/02/2026	LCC
J Whalley	21/01/2026	LCC
R Ralphson	21/11/2025	LCC
L Small	19/10/2025	LCC
J Parkinson	13/05/2025	LCC
H Power	16/01/2025	LCC

Designated Staff- Additional Training & Updates

Name of Staff Member	Date	Content	Provider
2026-2027			
2025-2026			
Z Dewhurst & J Whalley	19/05/2026	Positive Handling Training	Dynamis Training
Z Dewhurst	18/09/2025	County Lines & Exploitation linked to organised crime Dangers of Vaping – regional data and actions based on increased use of ‘spice’ in vapes. Guidance for schools	Lancashire Constabulary
2024-2025			
Z Dewhurst	12/06/2025	Impact of domestic abuse and avenues of support	Pennine Lancashire/ HARV

H Power	25/02/2025	High-Quality Safeguarding Record Keeping & Information Sharing	CPOMS
H Power	29/01/2025	Extremism, Media Literature and Prevent Best Practices	Eventbrite
Z Dewhurst	04/09/2024	Operation Encompass – Key Adult Briefing	Virtual College

1b Whole School Child Protection Training & Updates

Who attended (e.g., all teaching and welfare / support staff, Governors, volunteers)	Date	Training Delivered by
2026-2027		
All staff - Allergy Training (Benedict's Law)	September 2026	Hays Online Training
All staff - Restrictive Intervention Refresher	September 2026	ZD
All staff - Online Safeguarding Training for all Staff. Including update of key policies (including KCSIE Part 1 Sept 2026). KCSIE Part 1 for volunteers, kitchen staff, cleaning staff and Invigilators. All Governors – specific training Induction and information to new staff	September 2026	Hays Online Training
2025-2026		
All staff – Children In Our Care refresher	May 2026	ZD
All staff – Progressive Masculinity – tackling Misogyny	January 2026	JD/ZD

All staff – Update on Restrictive Intervention including Physical Restraint Form tutors – Restrictive Intervention follow up – 7 minute briefing	January 2026 February 2026	ZD JP/ Year Leaders
All staff – Non Fatal Strangulation	November 2025	ZD – Lancashire Training Resources
Safe use of AI refresher – teaching staff	September 2025	LS (DSL Online Safety)
Online Safeguarding Training for all Staff. Including update of key policies (including KCSIE Part 1 Sept 2025). KCSIE Part 1 for volunteers, kitchen staff, cleaning staff and Invigilators. All Governors – specific training Induction and information to new staff.	September 2025	Hays Online Training

1c Pupil Safeguarding Updates & Guidance – Whole school Pupil Updates through assemblies and CASCADES (also provides additional training for all Form Tutors who attend assemblies).

Assembly	Who attended	Date	Delivered by
2026-2027			
Online Safety including mobile phone use (Black out app)	Year 7 – Year 11 (and form tutors)	October 2026	LS (DSL)
Keeping safe Around Bonfire Night	Year 7- Year 11 (and form tutors)	September 2026	Lancashire Police
2025-2026			
Water Safety	Year 7-Year 10 (and form tutors)	July 2026	Lancashire Fire & Rescue
Anti-Social Behaviour	Year 7 – Year 11 (and form tutors)	May 2026	BHM (DSL)
Positive Talk	Year 7 – Year 10 (and form tutors)	January 2026	JD/JP (DSL)
Navigating the online world	Year 7 – Year 11 (and form tutors)	December 2025	LS (DSL)

Anti Bullying	Year 7 – Year 11 (and form tutors)	October 2025	JP (DSL)
Keeping safe around Bonfire Night	Year 7 – Year 11 (and form tutors)	September 2025	Lancashire Police

1d Safer Recruitment & Training in line with KCSIE, at least one person on any recruitment and selection panel must have undertaken Safer Recruitment training (LCC recommends this is updated every 5 years).

Name of Staff Member / Governor	Date when attended	Provided by Whom (e.g., LCC, Governor Services, online training)
A Horrocks	February 2024	Hays Online Training
S Cowking	March 2023	Hays Online Training
L Small	January 2023	Hays Online Training
M O'Donoghue	February 2023	Hays Online Training
P Edge	January 2023	Hays Online Training
Z Dewhurst	January 2023	Hays Online Training
J Taylor	January 2023	Hays Online Training

DBS check information

All information on the checks carried out on those who are employed solely for the purpose of periodic exams-related activity, such as external invigilators/facilitators, will be recorded in the centre's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files.

Existing staff

Although there is no statutory requirement to update DBS checks for existing staff, if there are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children, all relevant checks will be carried out as if the individual was a new member of staff. This action will also be taken if an individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is.

Anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult will be referred to the DBS:

- Where the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e., that no action or inaction occurred but the present risk that it could was significant)
- Where the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence

- If there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009
- If the individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

‘Break in service’

To comply with ‘break in service’ regulations, all external invigilators/facilitators will be required to register with the DBS Update Service on an annual basis and provide consent for the designated senior member of staff in charge of safeguarding arrangements to carry out an online check to view the status of their existing enhanced DBS certificate. This will not apply to any invigilators who meet the ‘frequency test’ at Ribblesdale School.

By registering with the Update Service, these staff will be permitted to attend on any day during an exam series (providing they can supply an updated Disclosure Certificate and ID) without the need for additional checks or any additional attendance at Ribblesdale Centre.

1e Policy Reviews

Review Date	Changes made	By whom
September 2026	Updated to include most recent staff training and pupil assemblies. Updated as a result of changes in KCSIE Sept 2026	ZD
September 2025	Updated to include most recent staff training and pupil assemblies. Updated as a result of changes in KCSIE Sept 2025	ZD
January 2025	Updated to include most recent DSL/ staff training and pupil assemblies	ZD

2 Terminology & Framework

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online. Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

DSL refers to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

Effective safeguarding systems are those where:

- The child's needs are paramount, and the needs and wishes of a child, should be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates
- All professionals who come into contact with children and families are alert to their needs and any risks of harm that individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to those children
- All professionals share appropriate information in a timely way and can discuss concerns about an individual child with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and recognise their responsibilities in sharing information with the local authority children's social care where they feel that appropriate action has not been taken by the DSL or their concerns have not been taken seriously
- All professionals contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific and outcomes
- Child protection is the responsibility of *all* adults and especially those working with children. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of the Lancashire Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP). The school will work in accordance with locally agreed safeguarding arrangements and procedures.

3 Purpose of the Child Protection Policy, School Commitment & Inter Agency Working

An effective whole school child protection policy is one which provides clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with child protection issues. An effective policy also makes explicit the school's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. This ensures that child protection concerns and referrals may be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which prioritise the needs of the child. Ribblesdale School fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school.

There are three main elements to our Child Protection Policy

(a) Prevention:

Creating a positive school atmosphere, teaching and pastoral support to pupils where children have opportunities to have a voice and that their wishes and feelings are listened to and considered.

(b) Protection:

By following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained to recognise possible signs and symptoms of abuse and are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns.

(c) Support:

To pupils and school staff and to children who may have been abused.

This policy applies to all adults, including volunteers, working in or on behalf of the school.

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, peer support and clear lines of communication with trusted adults helps all children, and especially those at risk of or suffering abuse.

Our **school commitment** is to:

- (a) Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to. That they have opportunities to talk, and their wishes and feelings are listened to and taken into account. The school's form tutor system places teaching staff in a key role in terms of daily contact and care. In addition, Pastoral Co-ordinators (non-teachers linked to specific year groups at KS3/KS4) and Pastoral Intervention Managers (KS3/KS4), offer freely available advice and support.
- (b) Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty. Messages are clearly shared during transition, and are reinforced regularly through assemblies, CASCADE sessions in form tutor time, the form time Personal Development and PHSE curriculum.
- (c) Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE that equip children with the skills they need to stay safe and will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills.
- (e) Ensure that every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies.

The school contributes to **inter-agency working** as part of its statutory duty. The school will work with CSC, the police, health services and other services to protect the welfare of its pupils, through the early help process and by contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support. *Early Help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse.* Staff members will ensure that fear of sharing information does not stand in the way of their responsibility to promote the welfare and safety of pupils. If staff members are in doubt about sharing information, they will speak to the DSL or deputy DSL.

4 Key Responsibilities

The Governing Body should ensure that:

- There is a clear accountability for the commissioning and / or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- There is a lead to take leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements (e.g., nominated governor) and that the school has a child protection policy and procedures in place which are provided to and read by all staff – including temporary staff and volunteers on induction
- Policy is in accordance with government guidance and refer to locally agreed inter-agency procedures
- All staff, including those who do not work directly with children, will read and understand Part One of Keeping children Safe in Education (2026) in full. The Governing /Body will ensure systems are in place to evidence this and that safeguarding remains everybody's responsibility.
- This is explicit in the DSL's job description and there is always 'cover for the role' i.e., a backup DSL
- The DSL has the appropriate authority and the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings – and/or to support other staff to do so – and to contribute to the assessment of children
- A designated teacher is appointed to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has a Staff Code of Conduct provided to all staff – including temporary staff and volunteers, on induction
- The school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure that it adheres to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required; and ensures volunteers are appropriately supervised
- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers that comply with guidance from the local authority and locally agreed inter-agency procedures. The Chair of Governors is responsible for liaising with the LA and/or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Headteacher. There are procedures in place to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have been had they not resigned
- It considers how children may be taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This may include covering relevant issues through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), and/or through Relationship & Sex Education (RSE)
- There are procedures in place to handle allegations against other children where services or activities are provided on the school premises by another body. There is an annual review of policies and procedures/safeguarding arrangements
- Understand the local criteria for action and the local protocol for assessment, and ensure these are reflected in the school's policies and procedures
- Ensure that staff members have due regard to relevant data protection principles which allow them to share personal information

The Headteacher should ensure that:

- the policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are fully implemented and followed by all staff
- she will be the case manager and liaises with the LA designated officer (LADO) in the event of allegations of abuse being made against a member of staff or volunteer
- she receives appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated
- she will ensure that sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the staff to discharge their responsibilities, will help to create an environment where all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children and will address any concerns sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with the agreed whistle blowing policies
- provides staff, upon induction, with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, staff Code of Conduct, part one of the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) Guidance, Behavioural Policy, Online Safety Training, and the identity of the DSL and any Deputies
- Actively ensure that the school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure that it adheres to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required; and ensures volunteers are appropriately supervised
- Ensure all staff have read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and receive appropriate safeguarding updates throughout the academic year.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- has the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff
- is appropriately trained, with regular updates
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged on, but kept separate from, the pupil's general file
- refers cases of suspected abuse to children's social care or police as appropriate
- ensures that when a pupil leaves the school, their child protection file is passed to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences
- coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies
- ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are reviewed and updated annually and liaises with the nominated governor
- makes the child protection policy available publicly, on the school's website.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):

Is trained to the same level as the DSL and, in the absence of the DSL, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, the Deputy will assume all of the functions above.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

5 Staff Code of Conduct

a) Good practice guidelines

- treating all pupils with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding the school's child protection policy, staff behaviour policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse
- referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL, or, if necessary, directly to police or children's social care.

b) Whistleblowing if you have concerns about a colleague

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The school's whistleblowing code enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place. All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the Headteacher. Complaints about the Headteacher should be reported to the Chair of Governors. Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action. Safeguarding concerns about staff also applies to supply teachers.

c) Abuse of position of trust

All staff at Ribblesdale School are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

Staff understand that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is an offence for a person over

the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence.

d) Allegations against staff

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, our set procedures must be followed. The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in the school's Allegations of Abuse against Staff policy and procedures. Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at the school, or historical allegations will be reported to the police.

e) Staff/pupil online relationships

The school provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with pupils. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation. Staff should only communicate (using technology), via school related sites and the school e-mail.

f) Staff training

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern. Ribblesdale School ensures that new staff and governors receive a briefing during their induction, which includes the school's child protection policy and staff behaviour policy, reporting and recording arrangements, and details for the DSL. All staff, including the DSL, Headteacher (unless the Headteacher is the DSL) and Governors will receive training that is regularly updated – in accordance with statutory guidelines where relevant. Annually, all staff will receive full safeguarding and child protection training or refreshers. Throughout the year there are updates via Teams and in staff meetings/ briefings.

Other documents and policies that complete an individual member of staff's training, and which they must have read and assimilated, include:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) [Part one]. Confirmation that Part One has been read and understood annually by all staff.
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour For Learning Policy.

g) Safer recruitment

Our school complies with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2026) by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history. At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training. All relevant staff are made aware of the disqualification and disqualification by association legislation and their obligations to disclose relevant

information to the school. The school obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the school have been appropriately checked. Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained.

The school maintains a single central record of recruitment and checks are undertaken.

Exam Invigilation

DBS check information

All information on the checks carried out on those who are employed solely for the purpose of periodic exams-related activity, such as external invigilators/facilitators, will be recorded in the centre's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files.

Existing staff

Although there is no statutory requirement to update DBS checks for existing staff, external invigilators/facilitators will undertake a 'rolling DBS check'. If there are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children, all relevant checks will be carried out as if the individual was a new member of staff. This action will also be taken if an individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is.

'Break in service'

To comply with 'break in service' regulations, all external invigilators/facilitators will be required to register with the DBS Update Service on an annual basis and provide consent for the designated senior member of staff in charge of safeguarding arrangements to carry out an online check to view the status of their existing enhanced DBS certificate. This will not apply to any invigilators who meet the 'frequency test' at Ribblesdale School – e.g. working 3 or more times in a 30-day period, or attending the centre at least every 3 months for training, updates, etc.

By registering with the Update Service, these staff will be permitted to attend on any day during an exam series (providing they can supply an updated Disclosure Certificate and ID) without the need for additional checks or any additional attendance at Ribblesdale School.

h) Volunteers, Contractors & Site Security

Volunteers, including Governors will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school, their contact with pupils and the supervision provided to them. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised. The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS with barred list checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the school day. Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe the school's

safeguarding and health and safety regulations. The Headteacher will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

i) Extended school and off-site arrangements

All extended and off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site on behalf of our school, we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures. When our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work-related activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

j) Work Experience

If a pupil attends a work experience placement, the school will make arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise pupils on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)*.

6 Child Protection Procedures

a) Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur. To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- disabled or have special educational needs
- young carers
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs or other Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)
- asylum seekers or living away from home
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- living in temporary accommodation or transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- at risk of sexual exploitation
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage
- at risk of being drawn into extremism.

b) Recognising abuse

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of

behaviour constitute abuse, neglect or exploitation. Abuse, neglect and exploitation are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone. Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

Domestic Abuse – pupils may not have experienced abuse themselves, but domestic abuse can impact on children when they have witnessed it.

c) Four categories of abuse:

Physical abuse

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

Emotional abuse

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

Sexual abuse

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

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

Indicators of abuse

- Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- unexplained and/or persistent absence, arrive late or leave the school for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their schoolwork
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact

- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'.

d) Taking action

Any child, in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary, call 999
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, definitely by the end of the day
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare:

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK or if they can help in any way. Staff should always use CPOMS to record these early concerns. If the pupil does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below (pupil disclosures). Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff has concerns, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL.

If a pupil discloses to you:

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, **the staff member will, at the appropriate time, let the pupil know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the DSL.** The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. During their conversations with the pupil staff will:

- allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and not overreact
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'
- not be afraid of silences
- **under no circumstances** ask investigative or leading questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings, or what does the pupil's mother think about it
- at an appropriate time tell the pupil that in order to help them, the member of staff

- must pass the information on and explain to whom and why
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong
- tell the pupil what will happen next
- report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves
- report any concerns on CPOMS and refer to the DSLs as soon as possible.
- seek support if they feel distressed.

e) Notifying parents

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

At Ribblesdale School, our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil. Therefore, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

Parents must ensure that the school has at least TWO emergency contacts for their child

f) Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and out of respect for staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

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

However, following a number of cases where senior leaders in school had failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)*, emphasises that **any** member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share. Record of concern forms and other written information are stored in a double locked facility. Child protection information is stored separately from the pupil's school file. The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share sensitive information within the school or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information *without* consent and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Headteacher or DSL. The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that

information may help to protect a child.

g) Early Help (see Appendix 4 for external Early Help Services)

The early indications of children requiring specific support are served by a number of school-based provision and referrals and access to external early help services. *Early help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse.* Staff should be alert to any child who has experienced multiple suspensions or is at risk of being permanently excluded, has a parent or carer in custody (or is affected by parental offending), is frequently missing/ goes missing from education, home or care.

School-based provision:

- Pastoral Support – including 1:1 Pastoral Mentoring
- The Bridge
- Anger Management
- Early Help Framework
- EBSA

h) Referral to Children's Social Care

The DSL will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child. Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

i) Reporting directly to Child Protection Agencies

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub if:

- the situation is an emergency and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, their Deputy, the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

The school actively encourages pupils to share any concerns they may have and provides a range of accessible mechanisms through which they can raise concerns or make disclosures. All disclosures are taken seriously and responded to promptly, in line with statutory safeguarding guidance. As part of this process, the voice of the pupil is central and will be listened to, taken seriously, and accurately recorded. The school recognises that pupils may

make allegations in good faith which are unsubstantiated following investigation. However, deliberately false or malicious allegations will be treated as a serious matter and managed in accordance with the school behaviour policy where appropriate.

7 Child-on-Child Abuse including Sexualised Abuse

As part of RSHE being mandatory from September 2020 in the school's curriculum, all aspects of positive relationships, including sexual relationships, are covered. Staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via Child-on-Child abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender-based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with Child-on-Child abuse. All staff are aware of the heightened vulnerability of pupils with SEND, who evidence suggests are more likely to be abused than their peers and the heightened vulnerability of LGBTQ+ pupils who are also more likely to be targeted by their peers.

All staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviour between peers and will not tolerate abuse as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. The school recognises Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) as a safeguarding issue. Through assemblies, curriculum provision, personal development and wider safeguarding practice the school actively challenges misogyny, harmful stereotypes, sexual harassment, sexual violence and abusive attitudes towards women and girls. All incidents will be taken seriously and responded to in line with safeguarding procedures.

Pupils are made aware and regularly reminded of mechanisms for sharing any concerns.

Child-on-Child abuse can manifest in many different ways, including:

- Bullying (please see anti-bullying policy)
- Abuse in intimate relationship between peers
- Physical abuse (or behaviour that encourages this)
- Sexual violence (or behaviour that encourages this)
- Sexual harassment
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- Sharing of nude or semi-nude images and or videos
- Up skirting
- Initiation hazing type violence and rituals

At Ribblesdale School we manage allegations of Child-on-Child abuse in accordance with the implementation of the Behaviour Policy and the Anti-bullying Policy. Where potentially, a crime has been committed the school will report directly to the police. Where a parent or carer has already reported an incident to the police, the school will contribute according to the requirements and expectations laid down by them.

Up skirting is now a criminal offence, and the school would report this directly to the police. It typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the pupils humiliation, distress or alarm.

8 Online Safety & Filtering

Online Safety Accreditation awarded March 2023

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, all pupils will be made aware of online risks and taught how to stay safe online. Through training, all staff members will be made aware of the following:

- Pupil attitudes and behaviours which may indicate they are at risk of potential harm online
- The procedure to follow when they have a concern regarding a pupil's online activity
- The school will ensure that suitable filtering systems are in place to prevent children accessing terrorist and extremist material
- The use of mobile phones by staff and pupils is closely monitored by the school in line with the school's Code of Conduct policy
- The school will ensure that the use of filtering and monitoring systems does not cause 'over blocking' which may lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what pupils can be taught regarding online teaching.
- The risks associated with misinformation, disinformation (fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- The risks associated with generative artificial intelligence (AI), deepfake technology, AI-generated imagery, nudification applications and technology-facilitated abuse.
- The need for vigilance around safe, ethical and responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) by staff and pupils. Concerns relating to AI-generated sexual content, manipulated imagery, deepfakes or any form of technology-facilitated abuse will be treated as safeguarding concerns and responded to appropriately.
- Filtering and monitoring arrangements will be reviewed at least annually and whenever there is a significant change to the school's technological provision. Governors will receive assurance that systems remain effective, proportionate and for purpose.

The lead for Online Safety and Filtering is Mr L Small. Please refer to the Online Safety Policy for more information.

9 Sharing Nude and Semi-Nude Images

Formerly referred to as 'sexting' and defined as 'the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams online by young people under the age of 18. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. We follow guidance given to schools and schools by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS 2020), see appendix 5.

The school will ensure that all staff are aware to treat the sharing of indecent images as a safeguarding concern. Any concerns should be raised with a DSL, and they will attempt to understand what the image contains without viewing it and the context surrounding its creation and distribution. Where it is necessary to view the imagery e.g. if it is the only way to make a decision about whether to inform other agencies (because it involves abusive elements to its creation, where an adult is involved or where there is intent to harm the pupil,

as opposed to there is no adult involvement, no apparent intent to harm or reckless misuse), the DSL should:

Never copy print share or store

Discuss with the Headteacher and get delegated authority

Make sure another member of staff is present and make sure it is viewed by a member of staff of the same sex as the child in the image

Record clearly how and why the decision was made to view the image

The school's Online Safety Policy outlines how the school manages pupil's use of their own devices.

10 Children with Sexually Harmful Behaviour

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's **anti-bullying procedures** where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures.

Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and alleged perpetrator. Staff who become concerned about a pupil's sexual behaviour, including any known online sexual behaviour, should speak to the DSL as soon as possible.

Children are signposted to age-appropriate help and guidance, for example 'Shore Space'.

11 Sexual Exploitation of Children

Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking advantage of the vulnerability of an individual or groups of children or young people, and victims can be boys or girls. It may involve an exchange for something the victim wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol, and sometimes accommodation. Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often doesn't recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse. All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL.

Indicators of Child Sexual Exploitation may include:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school or home

- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections
- Evidence of/suspicions of physical or sexual assault
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers)
- Frequenting areas known for sex work
- Concerning use of internet or other social media
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

12 County Lines Exploitation

County Lines is the police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or 'deal lines'. It involves Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) where it may involve an exchange for something the victim wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. For example, where gangs use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money. Gangs establish a base in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing.' County Lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons; and the response to tackle it involves the police, the National Crime Agency, a wide range of Government departments, local government agencies and VCS (voluntary and community sector) organisations.

As part of contextual safeguarding, it is essential to be able to spot the early indicators of where a child may be vulnerable to such exploitation (as listed above in indicators of Child Sexual Exploitation of Children).

13 Honour-Based Abuse, Female Genital Mutilation & Forced Marriage

'Honour-Based' Abuse encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of HBA are abuse. FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.

Risk factors for FGM include:

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

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed

by female pupil about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period. A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

Forced marriage is defined as a marriage that is entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties, and where violence threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into the marriage. Forced marriage is a crime in the UK and a form of Honour Based Abuse.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

- difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
- spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems
- frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
- prolonged or repeated absences from school or school, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g., withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations
- confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs.

14 Radicalisation, Extremism & The Prevent Duty

Extremism is defined as 'the process of a person legitimising support for the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred and intolerance that's aims to:

- 1) Negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others
- 2) Undermine, overturn or replace the Uks system of liberal parliamentary democracy or
- 3) Intentionally create a permissive environment for other to achieve 1 o 2

Some children are at risk of being susceptible to an extremist ideology: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form and schools should also remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into white supremacy extremism. School staff receive training to help to identify signs of extremism; PREVENT. Opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the school follows the DfE advice Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMCS (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools (2016).

The 'Prevent Duty'

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty.'

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

Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have. We use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet.

Recognising Extremism

As part of contextual safeguarding, it is essential to be able to spot the early indicators of radicalisation or extremism and these may include:

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

Please also see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-prevent-duty-safeguarding-learners-vulnerable-to-radicalisation/managing-risk-of-radicalisation-in-your-education-setting>

The lead person for PREVENT is Mrs H Power.

15 Children Missing from Education

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about child sexual exploitation. We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) the school has:

- Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly

- Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions)
- Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage
- Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:
 - leave school to be home educated
 - move away from the school's location
 - remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
 - are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or
 - are permanently excluded.

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

In line with Working Together To Improve Attendance 2024, attendance, absence and suspensions are closely monitored at Ribblesdale School. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DSL will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority and Children's Social Care (where appropriate), particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day. Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

Ribblesdale School actively discourages parents/carers from choosing Elective Home Education (EHE), as an alternative to school provision. However, we acknowledge that it is the legal right of parents/carers to decide what they believe is the most suitable form of education for their child. In cases where parents/carers opt for EHE, we will remain vigilant with regard to the reasons for EHE and share information with relevant parties as necessary.

The school will:

- Notify the Local Authority in line with safeguarding requirements.
- Signpost parents/carers to sources of support and guidance to ensure they have access to accurate information.

Please note:

If parents/carers later choose to reapply for a school place following a period of EHE, it may, in some circumstances, be in the best interests of the pupil to join their previous year group. Decisions regarding this will be made on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the school and Governing Board, taking into account the individual needs of each child. Governors would not ordinarily approve the admittance of pupils to non-chronological year groups but reserve the right to consider this for pupils returning from EHE who may otherwise struggle to access the curriculum.

The lead DSL for Children Missing from Education is Mrs R Ralphson

16 Looked After Children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's Virtual Head for children in care.

The lead DSLs for Looked After Children are Mrs H Power/ Mrs R Ralphson.

17 Private fostering arrangements

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and stepparents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins. Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence. Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. Schools have a mandatory duty to report to the local authority where they are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. Although schools have a duty to inform the local authority, there is no duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the school. However, it should be clear to the school who has parental responsibility. School staff should notify the Designated Safeguarding lead when they become aware of private fostering arrangements. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the LA.

18 Children Staying with Host Families

The school may make arrangements for pupils to stay with a host family during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour. Some overseas pupils may reside with host families during school terms, and we will work with the local authority to check that such arrangements are safe and suitable. In such circumstances the school follows the guidance in Annex E of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)* to ensure that hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

19 Homelessness

The DSL and deputy(s) will be aware of the contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so that concerns over homelessness can be raised as early as possible. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include the following:

- Household debt
- Rent arrears
- Domestic abuse
- Anti-social behaviour
- Any mention of a family moving home because “they have to”

Referrals to the Local Housing Authority do not replace referrals to CSCS where a child is being harmed or at risk of harm. For 16- and 17-year-olds, homelessness may not be family-based and referrals to CSCS will be made as necessary where concerns are raised.

20 Serious Violence

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

21 Operation Encompass

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

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

Following the report of an incident of domestic abuse, by 9:10am on the next school day, the school’s Key Adult (DSL) will be informed that the child or young person has been involved in a domestic incident. This knowledge, given to schools through Operation Encompass, allows the provision of immediate early intervention through silent or overt support dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child.

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

For more information, please visit <https://www.operationencompass.org>

Ribblesdale School has a commitment to Operation Compass and informing all stakeholders of the initiative. The lead person for Operation Encompass is Mrs Z Dewhurst.

22 Learning at Home

Where children are being asked to learn online at home the Remote Learning Policy should be used in conjunction with addendum to the Child Protection Policy, ensuring that all aspects of safeguarding are covered.

23 Emotional, Mental Health & Wellbeing

There is a clear link between mental health and safeguarding. School staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Designated Safeguarding Lead for Emotional, Mental Health & Wellbeing is Mrs B Mashiter. Please refer to the Emotional, Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy for more information.

24 Domestic Abuse

In the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, children are now recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right. A child is regarded as a victim of domestic abuse in the following circumstances:

- Where a child sees or hears the abuse
- Experiences the effects of domestic abuse
- Is related to the person being abused or the perpetrator

The school will recognise the serious, long-lasting impact of domestic abuse on children as victims in their own right. All staff will be aware of the signs of domestic abuse and how to follow the appropriate safeguarding procedures.

25 ACEs – Adverse Childhood Experience

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood. ACEs can include violence, abuse, and growing up in a family where there is Domestic Abuse, mental health or substance use problems. Toxic stress from ACEs can change brain development and affect how the body responds to stress. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood.

Training is provided for all staff so that they understand how ACEs can impact on a child's development.

26 Context of Safeguarding Incidents

As a school we understand that safeguarding incidents can occur outside of school, and they are related to outside factors. All staff and DSLs consider the context of safeguarding incidents and assess whether there are wider environmental factors that are a threat to a pupil's welfare or safety. We provide as much information and context to CSC and external agencies as possible.

Pupils with SEND

When managing safeguarding in relation to pupils with SEND, staff are made aware of the following,

- Pupils with SEND or disabilities are nearly 4 times more likely to be victims of abuse.
- It should never be assumed that indicators of abuse are in relation to their disability. It should always be explored.
- Pupils with SEND can be disproportionately impacted on by issues such as bullying without outwardly showing the signs
- Communication barriers can exist

The above factors should always be taken into consideration when making referral relating to a SEND pupil. The DSL will liaise with the SENDCO and parents to ensure that the child's needs are fully met.

Children who are Gender Questioning

The school recognises that children who are questioning their gender may experience additional vulnerability and may face increased risks relating to bullying, self-esteem, mental health difficulties, online abuse or exploitation. All decisions relating to support and safeguarding will be considered on a case-by-case basis, with the welfare of the child remaining paramount. The school will work appropriately with parents, carers and external agencies where required and in accordance with current statutory guidance.

27 Law & Guidance

The policy has due regard for all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to:

- Education Act 2002 (section 175)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice 2022
- The Prevent Duty
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Equality act 2010
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Working Together To Improve Attendance 2024

In addition to relevant non – statutory guidance from the DfE

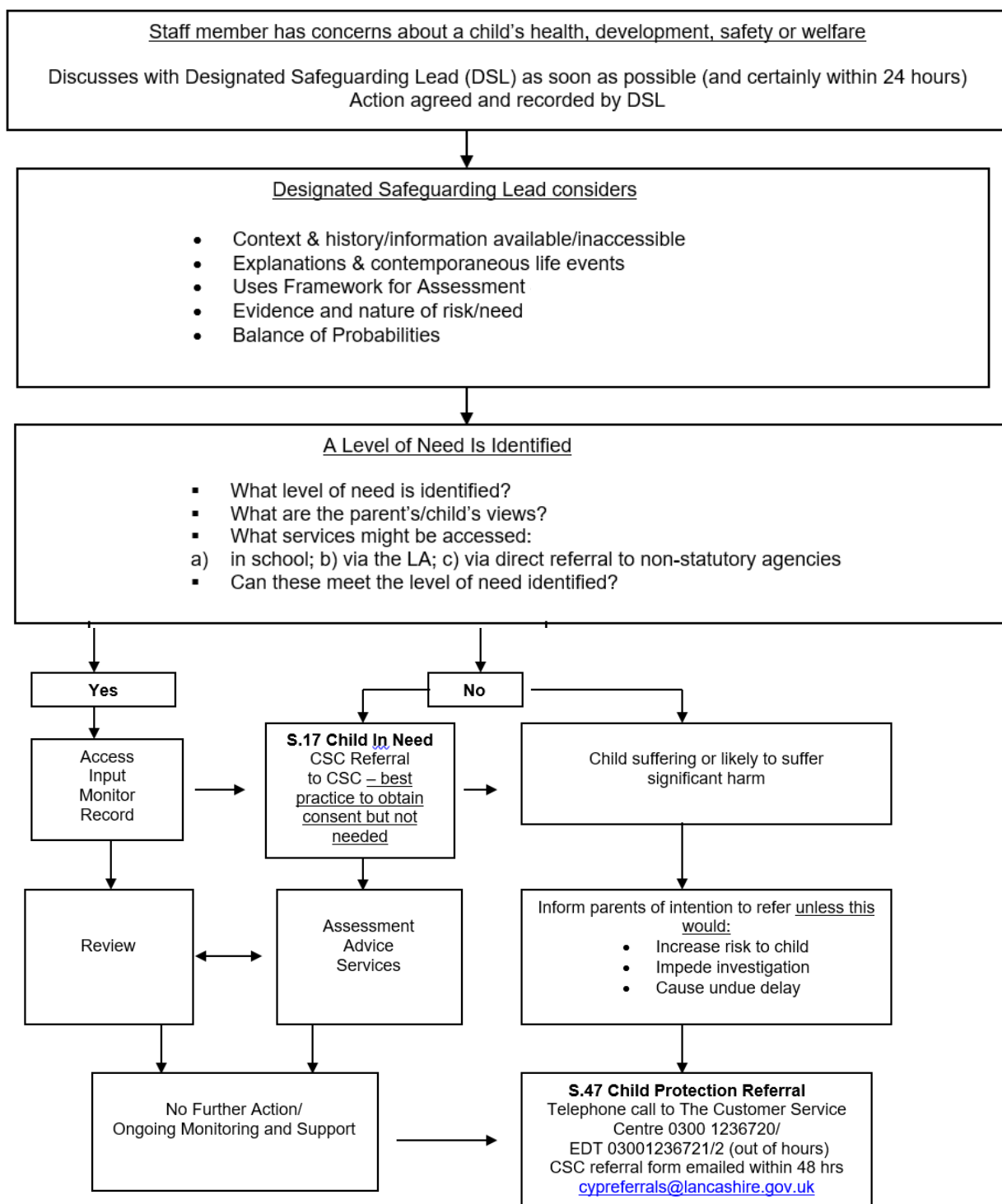
The policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Anti-bullying policy
- Online Safety policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Managing Pupils with Medical Conditions
- Emotional, Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

- Safer Working Practices
- SEND policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Visitors Policy
- GDPR (safeguarding of children and individuals at risk is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data)
- Intimate Care Policy

Governors Reviewed: Live Document

APPENDIX 1: TAKING ACTION ON CHILD WELFARE/PROTECTION CONCERNS IN SCHOOL



APPENDIX 2: Risk Assessment 'Checklist'

- ☐ Does/could the suspected harm meet the safeguarding threshold and local safeguarding partnership definitions of abuse?
- ☐ Are there cultural, linguistic or disability issues?
- ☐ I am wrongly attributing something to impairment?
- ☐ Does the chronology indicate any possible patterns which could/do impact upon the level of risk?
- ☐ Are any injuries or incidents acute, cumulative, episodic?
- ☐ Did any injuries result from spontaneous action, neglect, or intent?
- ☐ Explanations consistent with injuries/behaviour?
- ☐ Severity and duration of any harm?
- ☐ Effects upon the child's health/development?
- ☐ Immediate/longer term effects?
- ☐ Likelihood of recurrence?
- ☐ Child's reaction?
- ☐ Child's perception of the harm?
- ☐ Child's needs, wishes and feelings?
- ☐ Parent's/carer's attitudes/response to concerns?
- ☐ How willing are they to cooperate?
- ☐ What does the child mean to the family?
- ☐ What role does the child play?
- ☐ Possible effects of intervention?
- ☐ Protective factors and strengths of/for child (i.e., resilience/vulnerability)
- ☐ Familial strengths and weaknesses?
- ☐ Possibilities?
- ☐ Probabilities?
- ☐ When and how is the child at risk?
- ☐ How imminent is any likely risk?
- ☐ How grave are the possible consequences?
- ☐ How safe is this child?
- ☐ What are the risk assessment options?
- ☐ What are the risk management options?
- ☐ What is the interim plan?

APPENDIX 3: TALKING AND LISTENING TO CHILDREN

If a child wants to confide in you, you *SHOULD*

- Be accessible and receptive;
- Listen carefully and uncritically, at the child's pace;
- Take what is said seriously;
- Reassure children that they are right to tell;
- Tell the child that you must pass this information on;
- Make sure that the child is okay;
- Make a careful record of what was said (see *Recording*).

You should NEVER

- Investigate or seek to prove or disprove possible abuse;
- Make promises about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets' to children;
- Assume that someone else will take the necessary action;
- Jump to conclusions, be dismissive or react with shock, anger, horror etc;
- Speculate or accuse anybody;
- Investigate, suggest or probe for information;
- Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved;
- Offer opinions about what is being said or the persons allegedly involved;
- Forget to record what you have been told;
- Fail to pass this information on to the correct person (the Designated Senior Leader);
- Be factual/state exactly what was said;
- Differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation, observation and/or allegation.

What else should we think about in relation to disclosure?

- Is there a place in school which is particularly suitable for listening to children e.g., not too isolated, easily supervised, quiet etc.?
- We need to think carefully about our own body language – how we present will dictate how comfortable a child feels in telling us about something which may be extremely frightening, difficult and personal;
- Be prepared to answer the 'what happens next' question;
- We should never make face-value judgements or assumptions about individual children. For example, we 'know that [child.....] tells lies;'
- Think about how you might react if a child DID approach you in school. We need to be prepared to offer a child in this position exactly what they need in terms of protection, reassurance, calmness and objectivity;
- Think about what support **you** could access if faced with this kind of situation in school.

Appendix 4: Sexting

Sexting: how to respond to an incident

An overview for all teaching and non-teaching staff in schools and colleges



This document provides a brief overview for frontline staff of how to respond to incidents involving 'sexting'.

All such incidents should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and managed in line with your school's safeguarding policies.

The DSL should be familiar with the full 2016 guidance from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS), ***Sexting in Schools and Colleges: Responding to Incidents and Safeguarding Young People***, and should **not** refer to this document instead of the full guidance.

What is 'sexting'?

In the latest advice for schools and colleges (UKCCIS, 2016), sexting is defined as **the production and/or sharing of sexual photos and videos of and by young people who are under the age of 18**. It includes nude or nearly nude images and/or sexual acts. It is also referred to as 'youth produced sexual imagery'.

'Sexting' does not include the sharing of sexual photos and videos of under-18 year olds with or by adults. This is a form of child sexual abuse and must be referred to the police.

What to do if an incident involving 'sexting' comes to your attention

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

- **Never** view, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a child to share or download – **this is illegal**.
- If you have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), report this to the DSL.
- **Do not** delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it.
- **Do not** ask the young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the DSL.
- **Do not** share information about the incident to other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
- **Do not** say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.
- **Do** explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

If a 'sexting' incident comes to your attention, report it to your DSL. Your school's safeguarding policies should outline codes of practice to be followed.

For further information

Download the full guidance [Sexting in Schools and Colleges: Responding to Incidents and Safeguarding Young People](https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis) (UKCCIS, 2016) at www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis.