

# CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING POLICY MAINTAINING A CULTURE OF VIGILANCE

September 2025

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## 1. Rationale

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

### Safeguarding is defined as

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

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

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

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

Dudley Safeguarding Partnership <http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk>

Dealing with a Disclosure. School guidance (*See Appendix 1*)

Children Act 1989/2004;

Domestic Abuse Act 2022;

Working together to Safeguard Children (DfE) Dec;

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE) September;

Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings February 2022;

What do you do if you are worried a child is being abused March 2015; (*See Appendix 2*)

The Prevent Duty June 2015 (under section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2023);

Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019;

Teaching Online Safety in School (DfE) June 2019;

When to call the police – National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) 2020;

Sharing nudes and semi nudes; advice for education settings March 24;

Filtering and monitoring standards for school and colleges (DfE) 2023;

Cyber security standards for school and colleges 2023;

PACE Code C 2019;

Working Together to improve school attendance August 2024

This policy adheres to the principles under data protection law. For further information please review

our data protection policy published on our website.

## Aims

Dormston School is committed to safeguarding children and young people and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment. Our aim is to ensure that all students are safe in school and that measures are put in place to support any child who is at risk of harm. Overall the policy provides information for all adults working with children to carry out their duty of care responsibly. Dormston School will provide information and training for all staff and other adults to carry out this duty of care.

Students attending Dormston School will also be taught about safeguarding, including online safety, through various teaching and learning opportunities, including a comprehensive P.S.H.E programme, safeguarding assemblies, police awareness talks and weekly reminders.

The school will also regularly update parents on key safeguarding issues and offer advice through an annual parents evening, monthly group calls and links on the school website to assist in safeguarding their child at home.

## 2. Prevention

The six main elements of the policy are:

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

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

- establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to;
- ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- include in the curriculum, activities and opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm.

In addition, when students use the school's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems. However, many students are able to access the internet using their own data plan. To minimise inappropriate use, at Dormston School students sign an Acceptable Use Contract, which parents/carers are made aware of and a forensic monitoring company is commissioned to alert the DSL to any potential safeguarding concerns.

## Procedures

Dormston School will ensure that all staff follow the procedures set out by the Dudley Safeguarding Partnership and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE) to: ensure we have a Designated Safeguarding Lead for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role. The formal training will be updated every 2 years. The DSL will be updated on a regular basis (at least annually) to keep up with current safeguarding developments and priorities.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Dormston School is Jayne Elliott**

**The Deputy Safeguarding Leads are Nick Amos, Lisa Smith, Kate Beer, Rebekah Milward**

**The Designated Governor for Child Protection is Mrs E Hindle;**

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

The DSL will:

- ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for child protection;
  - ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and governing body members knows the name of the designated safeguarding lead responsible for child protection and their role;
  - ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead responsible for child protection;
  - ensure that parents/carers understand the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection. Parents should be made aware of the policies and procedures;
  - ensure that parents/carers are aware that this policy is available on request, and make the policy available on the school website;
  - develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at child protection meetings;
  - develop links with other agencies that support the child, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Education Investigation and Education Psychology Service;
  - keep clear and comprehensive summary of concerns about children. Details of follow up and resolution, any actions taken and the outcome for the child, even where there is no need to refer the matter to Social Care and other relevant agencies immediately.
  - ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main student file, and in locked locations.
  - ensure that if a child who has a child protection plan leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately (within 5 working days) and Social Care is informed;
  - ensure that all staff are aware of what to do if there are concerns around a child.
- Appendix 2 refers to *What to do if you are concerned*.** A copy of the interagency referral form that must be completed when making a referral can be accessed from the DSCP website. The DSL should be consulted for completion of this form.

### 3. The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at Dormston is a Deputy Head Teacher and has responsibility, management oversight and accountability for child protection, along with the Head Teacher. There are four Deputy DSLs that are trained to the same standard as the DSL and the role is explicit within their job description. DSL training is undertaken every year and has been updated to allow the DSL to recognise

the additional risks that children with SEND and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident that they have the capability to support SEND students to stay safe online.

### Availability

During term time the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should always be available (during school or college hours) for staff in the school or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Whilst generally speaking the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) would be expected to be available in person, it is a matter for individual schools and colleges, working with the designated safeguarding lead, to define what “available” means and whether in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and or Skype or other such media is acceptable. It is a matter for individual schools and colleges and the designated safeguarding lead to arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

The key role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is to:

- to promote the educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, to identify the impact that these issues might be having on children’s attendance, engagement and achievement at school;
- to ensure that the school is aware of children who currently need a social worker, and understand their academic progress and attainment, maintaining a culture of high aspirations for them;
- support teaching staff to feel confident, to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to support children who need or have needed a social worker to reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children educational outcomes;
- manage referrals from school staff or any others from outside the school;
- work with external agencies and professionals on matter of safety and safeguarding;
- undertake training;
- raise awareness of safeguarding and child protection amongst the staff and parents;
- ensure that child protection information is transferred to the student’s new school;
- to ensure that the use of technologies such as CCTV and walkie talkies are used appropriately and used in line with associated school policies.

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

Child protection information will be dealt with in a confidential manner. Staff will be informed of relevant details only when the Designated Safeguarding Lead feels their having knowledge of a situation will improve their ability to deal with an individual child and/or family.

Staff should only involve those who need to be involved when a child tells them that they being abused or neglected.

A written record will be made of what information has been shared with whom, and when. **(Written records at Dormston are made using the CPOMS online database)**. Child protection records will be stored securely on the CPOMS database separate from academic records. Individual files will be kept for each child: the school will not keep family files. Files will be kept for at least the period during which the child is attending the school, and beyond that in line with current data legislation and guidance. Access to these records by staff other than by the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be restricted.

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.

Parents will be aware of information held on their children and kept up to date regarding any concerns or developments by the appropriate members of staff. General communications with parents will be in line with our home school policies and give due regard to which adults have parental responsibility. In keeping with best practice, the school will seek to hold more than one emergency contact number for each student.

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

Where children leave Dormston, the DSL will ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible, within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term to allow the new school enough time to have support in place for when the child arrives. Direct contact between the two schools may be necessary, especially on transfer from primary to secondary schools or in instances where advance information would allow the new school to continue supporting the target of abuse and have the appropriate support in place for the student's arrival. We will record where and to whom the records have been passed and the date.

If sending by post student records will be sent by "Special/Recorded Delivery". For audit purposes a note of all student records transferred or received should be kept in electronic format (on CPOMS where applicable). This will include the child's name, date of birth, where and to whom the records have been sent and the date sent and/or received. If a student is permanently excluded and moves to a Student Referral Unit, child protection records will be forwarded on to the relevant organisation.

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

#### **4. Staff Support**

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

#### **5. Roles and Responsibilities of Governors and Governing Bodies**

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

The guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education places statutory requirements on all governing bodies. In line with page 23, in the section titled: "Part two: The management of safeguarding", we uphold the responsibility for governors to receive safeguarding training. At Dormston, we will ensure that all governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training will equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools at Dormston are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Governor training will be regularly updated, at the very least on an annual basis. The designated child protection governor is trained at DSL level and other members of the governing body undertake regular safeguarding training and receive regular updates in order to ensure that they know what good practice looks like. Our governing body makes sure that the school has policies and procedures in place and consider any guidance issued by the Secretary of State, any LA guidance and locally agreed inter- agency procedures.

The Governing body ensures that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place when hiring out school premises/facilities to other organisations. In all lettings there will be an appropriate agreement between the school and the other organisation.

## **6. Part or Whole School Closures**

During any part or whole school closures (such as those linked to Covid-19/Strikes), Dormston School will continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education. We will ensure that whether children are on site or at home, we have appropriate support in place for them. We will take advice and work with the local safeguarding partners and follow the latest Government guidance.

Dormston School will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be: Mrs J Elliott.

In circumstances where a parent/carer is hesitant about or does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and Dormston School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risks of their child attending school, Dormston School or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by the Government.

## **7. Safer Recruitment and Employment Practices**

### **Our statement of commitment**

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

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

- declaration of our statement of commitment and the intent to undertake a DBS check in the advertisement;
- ensuring that at least one member of the interview panel has attended Safer Recruitment training;
- ensuring that references are gained before interview;
- ensuring that a safeguarding question is included in the interview;
- ensuring that any gaps in employment are explored at interview;
- undertake a DBS check\* at the relevant level to the position of staff and governors in line with the new DBS government workforce guide;
- undertake a TRA Section 28 check in respect of governor/member recruitment;
- ensuring that a prohibition check is carried out for anyone involved with 'teaching work', not just those with QTS;
- a teaching role is defined as planning and preparing lessons and courses for students, delivering lessons to students, assessing and reporting on the development, progress and attainment of students, however, these activities are not classed as teaching work for the purposes of Keeping Children Safe in Education regulations if the person carrying out the activity does so (other than for

the purposes of induction) subject to the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher or other person nominated by the Head Teacher to provide such direction and supervision;

- Where the school places a student with an alternative provision provider it will obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment, i.e. those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff. This includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the commissioning school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that the commissioning school can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff

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

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

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

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

### Online checks for new staff

At Dormston any potential new staff will be subject to a "digital screening" process prior to interview. As part of the shortlisting process, Dormston will carry out an online search as part of our due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help us to identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which we might want to explore with the applicant at interview. As well as performing the checks, we will update our job advertisements accordingly and create a protocol for performing the checks. Our job application forms will reflect that we will be checking candidates online presence. We will also use a matrix, within which the parameters of what we are searching for are recorded, to ensure that there is consistency in the range of what is searched for with each candidate.

### Visitors

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

We understand the importance of visitors and external agencies to enrich the experiences of our pupils.

In order to safeguard our children, we expect all visiting speakers to read and adhere to the statements below.

- Any messages communicated to pupils support fundamental British Values and our school values.
- Any messages communicated to pupils are consistent with the ethos of the school and do not marginalise any communities, groups or individuals.

- Any messages communicated to pupils do not seek to glorify criminal activity or violent extremism or seek to radicalise pupils through extreme or narrow views of faith, religion or culture or other ideologies.
- Activities are properly embedded in the curriculum and clearly mapped to schemes of work to avoid contradictory messages or duplication.
- Activities are matched to the needs of pupils.
- Visitors will always be accompanied by a member of staff

## 8. Allegations of Abuse made against other Children: (Child on Child)

At Dormston School we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students. We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under our school's Behaviour Policy.

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a student, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

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

Government guidance suggests that girls, the LGBTQ+ community and those children with SEND need are at greater risk of sexual violence and sexual harassment within school. Any child thought to be the target of such abuse should therefore be regarded as in need of protection. Both the target and the parent/carer will be offered appropriate internal and external support.

Electronic forms of communication have developed rapidly in recent years and the vast majority of children have access to a computer and or mobile phone. Children are frequently exposed to internet abuse including sexual violence and harassment by phone is on the increase. This includes when abuse takes place in intimate, personal relationships between peers. Even though the child themselves may not consider themselves to be targeted they should be regarded as in need of protection. At Dormston, online safety is taught within the curriculum and staff are provided with training around safeguarding issues such as sexual violence and sexual harassment in respect of Child on Child abuse. Staff are also provided with training to address contextual safeguarding. This means assessments of children will consider wider environmental factors affecting the child's life that may pose a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Wherever a referral is made, the school will provide as much contextual information as possible as part of the referral process.

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation has developed a HSB toolkit, which amongst other things, provides support, advice and information on how to prevent it, links to organisations and helplines, resources about HSB by children, internet safety, sexual development and preventing child sexual abuse.

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation in collaboration with the Home Office, has developed 'Shore Space', an online resource which works to prevent harmful sexual behaviour. Shore Space offers a confidential chat service supporting young people who are concerned about their own or someone else's sexual thoughts and behaviour.

The NSPCC provides free and independent advice about HSB: NSPCC Learning: Protecting children from harmful sexual behaviour and NSPCC - Harmful sexual behaviour framework.

## Sharing nudes and semi-nudes (previously known as ‘sexting’)

In cases where nudes or semi-nudes have been shared, we follow guidance given to schools and colleges by the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS): Sharing nudes and semi-nudes (March 2024) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>

Staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via Child on Child abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
  - physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
  - sexual violence and sexual harassment;
  - gender-based violence
  - sharing nude and semi-nude images/videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- and
- initiation-type violence and rituals.

At Dormston, all of our safeguarding procedures operate with the best interests of the child at heart. School leaders and governors will ensure that there are suitable systems and means by which children can say what is happening to them and know that they will be heard. At Dormston we adopt a zero-tolerance approach, and that even if there are no reported cases, staff must not take the view that it does not happen in our school.

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

## Child on Child sexual violence and sexual harassment

At Dormston, we recognise that Child on Child sexual violence and sexual harassment can happen in or outside of school, as well as online and as such we adopt an “it could happen here” approach. All reports or disclosures will be taken seriously and targets are supported throughout.

At Dormston, we have a zero-tolerance approach. Our staff are trained to recognise the scale and impact of harassment and abuse, and that non-recognition / downplaying the scale and scope may lead to a dangerous culture in the school. Staff are encouraged to remain vigilant and, rather than waiting for a disclosure, recognise that children may not always make a direct report and information may come from overheard conversations or observed behaviour changes. As a school, we recognise that how well we respond will influence the confidence of others to report what is happening to them. As a school we regularly review decisions and actions to update and improve our policies and practice.

At Dormston, we also recognise the importance of the post incident response, recognising that for the targets of sexual assault there can be a number of physical and mental health implications which may require additional support. This may also require the school to support the alleged perpetrator with further information about harmful sexual behaviour and provide signposting to sources of support. (Please refer to page 12).

## Minimising the risk of safeguarding concerns towards students from other students.

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

When dealing with such incidents, they will usually, in the first instance, be investigated by the Head of Year. If there is a safeguarding concern it will then be passed to the DSL; Head teacher and, in extreme cases, the Governing Body. At the Head teacher's discretion, the police may be informed, in certain circumstances and parents/carers informed (of both the student being complained about and the alleged target) at the earliest opportunity. Dormston will follow the NPCC 'When to call the police' guidance.

The DSL should contact social care to discuss the case. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a social care referral where appropriate. The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in both students' files. It may be appropriate to exclude the student being complained about for a period of time according to the school's behaviour policy and procedures.

Where neither social care or the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation should take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures.

In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment will be prepared and shared with staff, parents and the student. The risk assessment will be monitored and a date set for a follow-up review meeting with everyone concerned. We recognise that every case will be unique and that they may need to be dealt with in a variety of ways. Appropriate interventions and strategies will be put in place to support the target and perpetrator, including signposting to external support.

All staff have received training in managing sexual violence and sexual harassment to make sure that they are able to reassure targets that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A target will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting a sexual violent or sexual harassment incident. Targets will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

To minimise the risk of Child on Child abuse the school has an ethos of promoting friendship and cooperation, which are linked to our core values of Respect and Responsibility. Through assembly time, PSHE and other curriculum areas the students are taught tolerance, empathy and understanding. Each year group is regularly monitored by their Head of House/ Deputy Head of House and the Behaviour and Welfare Team are specifically trained to support both targets and perpetrators.

## 9. Allegations against Staff / Whistle Blowing

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

Dormston School will follow the schools policy on "Managing Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers" and have regard for the DfE 'Harm Test' guidance in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a teacher or other member of staff, including volunteers, has;

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children. This is to take account of situations where a person's behaviour outside of school may

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

The Head Teacher will deal with allegations made against school staff. All staff have access to the counselling service with Dudley Council.

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

In the event of the allegation being made against the Head Teacher, the **Chair of Governors** is to be notified. Contact details for our chair of governors can be found in the staff handbook and on our safeguarding notice board situated in the staffroom.

If an allegation is made against any governor, including the Chair of Governors, the Head Teacher will contact the LA appointed Designated Officer.

- if any allegation is made a quick resolution should be a clear priority. If the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the school will endeavour to instigate appropriate action within three working days;
- in response to an allegation all other options should be considered before suspending a member of staff;
- allegations that are found to be malicious should be removed from the personnel records;
- reporting restrictions only apply to teachers in schools;
- students that are found to have made malicious allegations are likely to have breached the school behaviour policies; the school will therefore consider the appropriate sanction;
- we as the employer have a duty of care to all staff; support for the individual is the key to fulfilling this duty;
- when an allegation is made it is extremely important that every effort is made to maintain confidentiality;
- after any allegations of abuse have been made, the outcome will be categorised as either; substantiated, malicious, false, unsubstantiated or unfounded;
- where an allegation is deemed to be a low-level concern, unsubstantiated or does not meet the harm threshold the school will take the incident into consideration making the link between low level concerns, staff code of conduct and safeguarding policies, and recording and sharing information with relevant parties, including whether this information should be included in references.
- where an allegation has been substantiated and the individual is dismissed or resigns, the school may consider referring the matter to the TRA for consideration for a prohibition order.

### Low-Level Concerns

Concerns may be graded low-level if the concern does not meet the criteria for an allegation; and the person has acted in a way that is inconsistent with our staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. Example behaviours include, but are not limited to:

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

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

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

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

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

Low-level concerns should be recorded in writing, including:

- name\* of individual sharing their concerns
- details of the concern
- context in which the concern arose
- action taken

(\* if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible)

Records will be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. Records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

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

The records' review might identify that there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the behaviour to occur. This might mean that our policies or processes could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

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

If staff have concerns about a fellow colleague, they should follow the Whistle Blowing Procedures. Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other channels are open to them such as the NSPCC Whistle Blowing helpline: **0800 028 0285**. The email address is [help@nscpp.org.uk](mailto:help@nscpp.org.uk)

## **Supply Teachers**

In some circumstances Dormston will have to consider an allegation against an individual not directly employed by the school, where our disciplinary procedures do not fully apply, for example, supply teachers provided by an employment agency. Whilst the school is not the employer of supply teachers, we will ensure allegations are dealt with properly in line with our Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy. In no circumstances will the school 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. The governing board will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out their investigation. Agencies will be kept fully involved and should co-operate in any enquiries from the LADO, police and/or children's social services. The school will usually take the lead because agencies do not have direct access to children or other school staff, so they will not be able to collect the facts when an allegation is made, nor do they have all the relevant information required by the LADO as part of the referral process.

Supply teachers, whilst not employed by the school, are under the supervision, direction and control of the governing board when working in the school. They will be advised to contact their trade union representative if they have one, or a colleague for support. The allegations management meeting which is often arranged by the LADO will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure that any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are considered by the school during the investigation. When using an agency, the school will inform the agency of its process for managing allegations.

## **10. Referral to Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS)**

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

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

## **11. Information Sharing, Confidentiality and Record Keeping**

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

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

In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children, we recognise that the school does not need consent to share personal information provided if there is a lawful basis to do so. We will continue to ensure transparency and to inform parents and carers that we are sharing information and seek to work co-operatively with them. In cases where agreement to an Early Help Assessment cannot be obtained, we will consider how the needs of the child might be met.

At Dormston, we are mindful that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate provision, whether this is when problems first emerge, or where a child is already known to Social Care.

Information will be stored in via CPOMS (where there is a separate file for each child containing a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of follow-up and resolution then any actions taken

and the outcome for the child) with restricted access to designated people and be maintained in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

A Child Protection Online Monitoring System (CPOMs) system is used at Dormston. All concerns are recorded online within 24 hours. Electronic body maps are used where appropriate.

If a child who is subject to a child protection plan leaves, their file will be securely forwarded, within 5 days, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the new school, in line with the government guidance on the transfer of such records.

The governing board will ensure relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share (and withhold) personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. This includes:

- being confident of the processing conditions which allow them to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal, and should be treated as 'special category personal data';
- understanding that 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner but it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk;
- not providing pupils' personal data where the serious harm test under the legislation is met. For example, in a situation where a child is in a refuge or another form of emergency accommodation, and the serious harms test is met, the school must withhold providing the data in compliance with schools' obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. Where in doubt the school will seek independent legal advice.

***\*\*The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children\*\****

### **Involving parents/carers**

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

We all have a legal and moral responsibility for the welfare and safety of our children. If something concerns you about the welfare of a child within school then please contact the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead. If you have concerns which are not school based, you can call the children's services referral and advice service on 0300 555 0050 during office hours (9am - 5pm), contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0300 555 8574 (out of hours)

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

## 12. Early Help Assessment

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. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent HSB and may prevent escalation of sexual violence. It is particularly important that the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) know what the local early help process is and how and where to access support.

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare they should act on them immediately and speak to the DSL. The DSL will take the lead role when early help is appropriate. The LA should make a decision, within one working day of a referral being made, about the type of response that is required and should let the referrer/school know the outcome. Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care,
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- 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 alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child.

Our training will ensure that our staff have a greater awareness of the potential for multiple issues overlapping, be vigilant and report this.

The local authority guidance and thresholds can be found at:

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

## 13. Multi Agency Working

Dormston contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children. New safeguarding partners and child death review partner arrangements are now in place. Locally, the three safeguarding partners (the local authority; a clinical commissioning group within the local authority; and the chief officer of police within the local authority area) will make arrangements to work together with appropriate relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs.

It is especially important that schools and colleges understand their role in the three safeguarding partner arrangements. Governing bodies, proprietors and their senior leadership teams, especially their designated safeguarding leads, should make themselves aware of and follow their local arrangements.

The three safeguarding partners have a shared and equal duty to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. To fulfil this role, they must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies. Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement that the three safeguarding partners consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children with regard to local need.

The three safeguarding partners will have set out in their published arrangements which organisations and agencies they will be working with and the expectations placed on any agencies and organisations by the arrangements. The three safeguarding partners should make arrangements to allow the school to be fully engaged, involved and included in safeguarding arrangements. It is expected that, locally, the three safeguarding partners will name schools and colleges as relevant agencies and will reach their own conclusions on the best way to achieve the active engagement with individual institutions in a meaningful way. If named as a relevant agency, schools and colleges, in the same way as other relevant agencies, are under a statutory duty to co-operate with the published arrangements.

The school will work with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans. The school will allow access for children's social care from the local authority and, where appropriate, from a placing local authority, for that authority to conduct, or to consider whether to conduct, a section 17 or a section 47 assessment.

## 14.The Curriculum

The DFE expects to publish revised guidance on Relationships, Sex, and Health Education this summer. If published, we will signpost parents to this guidance in September 2025.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

Child Protection and wider child safety issues will be addressed as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, especially in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Information Technology, Citizenship and Sex and Relationships. Additional relevant issues will be explored and discussed, for example self-esteem, emotional literacy, assertiveness, power, online-safety, radicalisation, FGM, British Modern Values and bullying. **Children are taught how to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.**

## 15.Looked After Children

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

## 16. Other Areas of our work

All our policies which address issues of power and potential harm, for example bullying, equal opportunities, physical handling, positive behaviour, will be linked to ensure a whole school approach. At Dormston School, we support staff in the use of appropriate physical contact in order to keep students safe using reasonable force. The use of reasonable force means using no more force than is needed and that the use of force may involve passive physical contact or active physical contact, following a dynamic risk assessment.

### The use of reasonable force

Under Section 93 of the Education and Inspection Act (2006) the Head Teacher is empowered to authorise those members of his staff who are enabled to use reasonable force. In line with the revised 2025 guidance, the Head Teacher has empowered the following members of staff to use reasonable force:

- DSL's that are trained to de-escalate situations
- teachers and any member of staff who has control or charge of students in a given lesson or circumstance have permanent authorisation;
- other members of staff such as site management and administrative teams also have the power to use reasonable force if a circumstance should arise in which immediate action should be taken.

On extremely rare occasions it may be appropriate for staff to intervene physically with or between children. Deciding whether to use reasonable force under English law, members of staff are empowered to use reasonable force to prevent a student from or stop them continuing:

- to commit an offence;
- injury or risk of injury to another child;
- injury or risk of injury to a member of staff;
- serious damage to property;
- prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any students receiving education at the school, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

All members of staff will make decisions about when, how, and why to use reasonable force. To help staff in making decisions about using reasonable force the following considerations may be useful:

- whether the consequences of not intervening would have seriously endangered the wellbeing of a person;
- whether the consequences of not intervening would have caused serious and significant damage to property;
- whether the chance of achieving the desired outcome in a non-physical way was low;
- the age, size, gender, developmental maturity of the persons involved.

Staff are also expected to remember that physical intervention is only one option and for behaviours involving extreme levels of risk it may be more appropriate to gain support from other agencies, including the police. The Government has published guidance on reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention. The guidance aims to help settings adopt a preventative approach to supporting children and young people whose behaviour challenges as a result of learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions or mental health difficulties. Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention.

(HMGovt., June 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-the-need-for-restraint-and-restrictive-intervention>

All staff owe a duty of care to children, to take no action, where the outcome is that a child injures him/herself, or another, including staff, could be seen as negligence.

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

## 17. Training and Development

Dormston School is committed to ensuring all staff are fully trained to a high standard. The key training elements are set out below.

### Induction Training – this is mandatory and includes;

- the child protection policy;
- the behaviour policy;
- the staff code of conduct policy;
- the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education;
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies.)
- Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Anti-Bullying Training
- Prevent Training
- Cyber Security Training
- Trauma Informed Approach

### Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any deputies will undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. The training is updated every two years.

In addition to the formal training their knowledge and skills should be updated (for example via emails and bulletins, meetings with other Designated Safeguarding Leads or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, but at least annually, to keep up to date with any developments relevant to their role.

### All other staff

Staff safeguarding training is integral to our whole school approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning. Training also refers to the teacher standards with regards to the expectations within the standards around behaviour and understanding the needs of all pupils.

All staff will receive a formal INSET session at the start of the academic year where clear reminders of the school's procedures, the local safeguarding context and KCSiE is clarified. In addition to this, as part of a two-year rolling programme, staff also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates via weekly briefing, e-mails and INSET to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. This includes bespoke WRAP and FGM training. A training record is kept for all adults working in contact with children.

**Safer Recruitment** training is available to all relevant staff and governors who are involved in the recruitment process.

- all policies and procedures will follow DFE guidance on Child Protection issues;

- governors will be kept informed about procedures through the Safeguarding Link Governor;
- good monitoring takes place of students identified as at risk;
- the pastoral team works closely with outside agencies to share information and co-ordinate support for the student.

The school requests that the Governing Body undertake Child Protection Awareness Training upon induction. Their Child Protection training, along with all other staff will be updated every year.

### **Safer Recruitment and Employment Practices**

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

- declaration of our statement of commitment and the intent to undertake a DBS check in the advertisement **in line with April 2025 DBS guidance changes;**
- online searches for shortlisted candidates;
- ensuring that at least one member of the interview panel has attended DSPP Safer Recruitment Training;
- ensuring that references are gained before interview;
- ensuring that a safeguarding question is included in the interview;
- ensuring that any gaps in employment are explored at interview;
- undertake a DBS check at the relevant level to the position;
- all governors now require an enhanced DBS check;
- the Prohibition of teaching checks must be completed for everyone engaged in 'teaching work', whether a qualified teacher or not, and recorded on the Single Central Record.
- ensure checks are carried out for individuals who have lived or worked abroad for more than three months during their adult life. Where these checks are not able to be completed the school will carry out a risk assessment in every instance.

(An enhanced DBS check with barred list information will be appropriate for all staff as the majority of staff will be engaging in 'regulated activity'.)

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

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

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

## **18. Definitions and signs of abuse**

All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation (see below), understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the school/college, inside and outside of home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

There are four main types of child abuse. They are defined in the UK Government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education; statutory guidance for schools and colleges (September 2023);

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

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

### Physical Abuse

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

### Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction.

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

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

### Sexual Abuse

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

## Neglect

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

## Significant Harm

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

## Signs of Abuse

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

The physical signs of abuse may include:

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

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

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

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

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

## Domestic abuse

In April 2021, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent and introduced a statutory definition for the first time.

### Definition

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either

as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- (a) physical or sexual abuse;
- (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
- (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
- (d) economic abuse (adverse effect of the target to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and
- (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.

People are 'personally connected' when they are, or have been married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. If the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives.

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a target of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

Dormston School is part of Operation Encompass (refer to section 27)

The National Domestic Abuse helpline can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on **0808 2000 247**.

Domestic abuse can take many forms, including any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

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

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

**Controlling Behaviour** – a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and /or dependant by;

- isolating them from support;
- exploiting them for personal gain;
- depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape;
- regulating their everyday behaviour.

**Coercive Behaviour** – an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation, intimidation, or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten the target.

### **Psychological, Physical, Sexual, Financial and Emotional**

Controlling behaviour is: A range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: An act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their target.

## Online Safety

The government guidance 'Teaching online safety in school (DfE, June 2019)' outlines the importance of helping children and young people not only to use the internet safely, but also to give them opportunities to learn how to behave online. At Dormston School, our staff are made aware of the importance of teaching that is always age and developmentally appropriate. Teaching online safety in school says that there are many areas in the curriculum where the topics could be taught such as within the Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum. In these curriculum areas, students will be taught what positive, healthy and respectful online relationships look like. The guidance includes the following underpinning knowledge and behaviours:

- How to evaluate what students see online
- How to recognise techniques used for persuasion
- Online behaviour
- How to identify online risks
- How and when to seek support

Although the nature of online harms is discussed within the curriculum, it is not until we look through the comprehensive risk in this document that they together they reflect how harmful the internet might be. It is easy to see the potential harms, but it important that we communicate them in a safe and beneficial way, so that students remain respectfully cautious and not fearful. Potential harms covered in the guidance include:

- Age restrictions
- Content: How it can be used and shared
- Disinformation, misinformation, hoaxes and conspiracy theories.
- Fake websites and scam emails
- Fraud (online)
- Password phishing
- Personal data
- Persuasive design which keeps 'users online for longer than they might have planned or desired'
- Privacy settings
- Targeting of online content
- Abuse (online)
- Challenges [to do something and post about it]
- Content which incites...hate, violence
- Fake profiles
- Grooming
- Live streaming
- Pornography
- Unsafe communication
- Impact on confidence (including body confidence)
- Impact on quality of life, physical and mental health and relationships
- Online vs. offline behaviours
- Reputational damage
- Suicide, self-harm and eating disorders

In an important section, the teaching online safety in school guidance, reminds schools that when teaching about these safeguarding topics (and others), staff should be mindful that there may be a child

or young person in the lesson who is or has been affected by these harms. During or after a lesson, a student may be prompted to disclose about something that may have happened online. The guidance says that it is good practice to consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead 'when considering and planning any safeguarding related lessons or activities (including online) as they will be best placed to reflect and advise on any known safeguarding cases, and how to support any students who may be especially impacted by a lesson'.

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

- Guidance from PSHE Association
- Be Internet Legends by Parent Zone and Google
- Half-termly lessons devoted to safety when online.
- Parental information evening in Year 7 around online safety and regular safeguarding updates throughout the year.

***Students are not allowed to have access to their own electronic devices during the school day. If a child needs a mobile phone to arrange transportation when leaving school, they can bring their mobile phone to school and hand it in for safe keeping in the school office or have it turned off in their school bag***

## Generative Artificial Intelligence

The DfE's Generative AI: Product Safety Expectations sets out clear guidance for ensuring AI tools used in school are safe by design, including expectations for risk assessment, content moderation, transparency, and reporting – providing a helpful benchmark when determining which generative AI platforms should be accessible through school filtering systems.

England – [Generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) in education – GOV.UK \(Jan 2025\)](#)

## Filtering and Monitoring

At Dormston all staff will receive training on the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place. Our safeguarding related policies will contain information on appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and networks. We follow the DfE guidance for filtering and monitoring standards (2023) and Cyber Security standards for School and Colleges (2023) which we use to support us in having effective systems in place.

## Positive Mental Health, Well-Being and Resilience

Positive mental health is the concern of the whole community and recognise that schools play a key part in this. Our school wants to develop the emotional well-being and resilience of all pupils and staff, as well as provide specific support for those with additional needs. We understand that there are risk factors, which increase someone's vulnerability and protective factors that can promote or strengthen resiliency. The more risk factors present in an individual's life, the more protective factors or supportive interventions are required to counterbalance and promote further growth of resilience.

All staff should also 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. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Dormston staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they

may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following the child protection policy and speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy. (See school Social, Emotional and Mental Health Policy)

### **Children requiring mental health support**

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. The governing board will ensure there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems. The school has access to a range of advice to help them identify children in need of extra mental health support, this includes working with external agencies and using the mental health and behaviour in school's guidance. Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people.

## **19. Specific Safeguarding Issues**

Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. For example NSPCC offers information for schools and colleges on its own website [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk). Schools can also access local guidance on the issues listed below via the website:

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

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

### **Appropriate Adult**

Pupils need to have an 'appropriate adult' during police investigations. Should this arise, the headteacher/DSLs will liaise to discuss any issues - especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This will include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - PACE Code C 2019.

PACE Code C 2019 details the role a person undertakes when acting as the "appropriate adult" (usually a parent, guardian or social worker) while a pupil is being questioned or detained by the police. It includes an expectation that the appropriate adult will "support, advise and assist" the young person, and also "observe whether the police are acting properly and fairly to respect [the young person's] rights and entitlements, and inform an officer of the rank of inspector or above if they consider that they are not".

### **Modern Slavery**

Modern day slavery refers to any form of forced human exploitation for labour or service, such as human trafficking and forced labour.

### **So-called 'Honour Based' Abuse (HBA)**

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) 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. Following legislation that came into force on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023, it is an offence to engage in any conduct for the purpose of causing a child to marry before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used.

All forms are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If a member of staff has any doubt or concern, it should be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead.

### Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The school currently works to the updated 2024 guidance and makes use of the FGM resource tool kit. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Targets of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject.

Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care. Teachers and members of staff with teaching responsibilities have a specific legal duty to act with regards to concerns about female genital mutilation must personally report to the police a disclosure that FGM has been carried out, in addition to liaising with the DSL. All staff should speak to the DSL where there are concerns. Please call 101 to report a disclosure.

FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that the majority of cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

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

### Symptoms of FGM

FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter out-of-school to visit an 'at-risk' country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM.

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 college, 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

## Child Sexual Exploitation(CSE)/Child Criminal Exploitation(CCE)

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

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. A child may also be sexually exploited for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups within an increasingly widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) includes drug networks or gangs grooming and exploiting children to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban areas, rural areas, seaside and market towns. The key to identifying potential involvement in county lines is 'missing episodes', where the target may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs. In such cases, the school may consider a referral to the National Referral Mechanism.

What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the target which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex. Child Sexual Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology including cyberbullying, 'sexting' and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited or criminally exploited do not exhibit any external signs of abuse.

Indicators of CSE/CCE 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, college or work;
- 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.

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of CSE/CCE, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Exploitation can occur without any of these issues.

Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;

Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example);

- recent bereavement or loss;

- social isolation or social difficulties;
- absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality;
- economic vulnerability;
- homelessness or insecure accommodation status;
- connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited;
- family members or other connections involved in adult sex work;
- having a physical or learning disability;
- being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories); and
- sexual identity.

### County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of targets. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children’s homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards targets (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network. One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the target may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism<sup>103</sup> should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to targets of county lines exploitation. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation.

Both staff and students will receive awareness training to allow for more effective referrals to take place. The attendance officer will track absence of all students vigilantly and notify DSL immediately of any concerns regarding a child missing from education.

### Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning

A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are.

However, the Cass review identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there remain many unknowns about the impact of social transition and children may well have wider vulnerabilities, including having complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases additional diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. It recommended that when families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning children, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. When parents are supporting pre-pubertal children, clinical services should ensure that they can be seen as early as possible by a clinical professional with relevant experience. As such, when supporting a gender questioning child, schools should take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with the child's parents (other than in the exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child), including any clinical advice that is available and how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying. Schools should refer to our Guidance for Schools and Colleges in relation to Gender Questioning Children, when deciding how to proceed. Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where they can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

### Upskirting

At Dormston School, we have ensured that staff are aware of the changes to the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 which criminalise the act of 'upskirting'. The [Crown Prosecution Service](#) (CPS) defines 'upskirting' as a colloquial term referring to the action of placing equipment such as a camera or mobile phone beneath a person's clothing to take a voyeuristic photograph without their permission. It is not only confined to targets wearing skirts or dresses and equally applies when men or women are wearing kilts, cassocks shorts or trousers. It is often performed in crowded public places, for example on public transport or at music festivals, which can make it difficult to notice offenders."

### Cyber Crime

Children with particular skill in computing and technology may inadvertently stray into cyber dependant crime. At Dormston pupils are educated to avoid the dangers of this within our PSHE programme.

### Children Missing Education (CME) or absent from education

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

- not on a school roll;
- not being educated other than at school;
- identified as having been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (4 weeks);
- children go missing from education for a number of reasons including:
  - they don't start school at the appropriate time and so they do not enter the educational system;
  - they are removed by their parents;
  - behaviour and/or attendance difficulties;
  - they cease to attend, due to exclusion, illness or bullying;
  - they fail to find a suitable school place after moving to a new area;
  - the family move home regularly;
  - problems at home;

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

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 others safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

We will always follow up with parents/carers when students are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

As part of our approach to children missing in education the school has:

- staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly;
- appropriate policies, procedures and responses for students 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 students 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);
  - are permanently excluded;

We will ensure that students who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority. When a student leaves the school, we will record the name of the student's new school and their expected start date.

### **Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

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

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- Children with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outward showing any signs;
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

At Dormston School we identify students who might need more support to be kept safe or to keep themselves safe by:

- Whole school SEND INSET for all staff annually and regular reminders throughout the year in terms of monitoring the welfare of such students with extra vigilance;
- All staff to have SEND students marked upon their teaching lists, for easy reference;
- Regular review meetings between DSL and SENCO, where safeguarding is a standard item on the agenda;
- Heads of House meet with form tutors regularly and monitor the behaviour and welfare of all students, with an additional emphasis upon SEND.

At Dormston, we recognise that some pupils are disproportionately vulnerable. For example, in addition to the factors identified above, some pupils may be more at risk of harm from specific issues such as sexual violence, homophobic, biphobia or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination. This policy has therefore been designed to integrate the measures being taken to protect children who are more at risk from harm.

## Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (with involvement of the local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18 if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. (A close family relative is defined as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt and includes half – siblings and step-parents; it does not include great aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins) Given the ‘hidden’ nature of much private fostering, local authorities have a duty to raise awareness and needs to notify the local Children’s Care department. Each party involved in a private fostering arrangement has a legal duty to inform the local authority 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to start. Not to do so is a criminal offence. It is important to note that although schools have a duty to inform the local authority, there is no duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the school. However, the school will be clear on who has parental responsibility.

## Prevent Strategy (Radicalisation and Extremism)

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk will be a part of Dormston’s safeguarding approach.

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

**Radicalisation** is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

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

Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism, there are factors that may indicate concern. It is possible to protect people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being drawn to terrorism. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children’s behaviour, which could indicate that they may need help or protection. Dormston staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) making a Prevent referral

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

1. to promote and reinforce school and British Values;
2. to create space for free and open debate; listen and support the learner voice and enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self- confidence;

3. to promote social cohesion by supporting inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and to engage all students in playing a full and active role in wider engagement in society;
4. To ensure student safety and that the school is free from bullying, harassment and discrimination;
5. To provide support for students who may be at risk and offer appropriate sources of advice and guidance.

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

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

### Indicators of Vulnerability to Radicalisation

1. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.
2. Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy as:  
Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.
3. Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:
  - The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:
  - Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;
  - Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;
  - Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts; or
  - Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK. (remove)
4. There is no such thing as a “typical extremist”: those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.
5. Students may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that school staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.
6. Indicators of vulnerability include:
  - a. Identity Crisis – the student is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society;
  - b. Personal Crisis – the student may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
  - c. Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student’s country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy;
  - d. Unmet Aspirations – the student may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life;

- e. Experiences of Criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement / reintegration;
  - f. Special Educational Need – students may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.
7. However, this list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism.
8. More critical risk factors could include:
- a. Being in contact with extremist recruiters;
  - b. Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element;
  - c. Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature;
  - d. Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage;
  - e. Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues;
  - f. Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations; and
  - g. Significant changes to appearance and / or behaviour;
  - h. Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and / or personal crisis.

## Preventing Violent Extremism

### Roles and Responsibilities of the Single Point of contact (SPOC)

The SPOC is responsible for:

- Ensuring that staff of the school are aware of who is the SPOC in relation to protecting students from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- That staff understand local procedures and how to report a concern.
- Maintaining and applying a good understanding of the relevant guidance in relation to preventing students from becoming involved in terrorism, and protecting them from radicalisation by those who support terrorism or forms of extremism which lead to terrorism;
- Raising awareness about the role and responsibilities of the school in relation to protecting students from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- Monitoring the effect in practice of the school's RE curriculum and assembly policy to ensure that they are used to promote community cohesion and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs;
- Raising awareness within the school about the safeguarding processes relating to protecting students from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- Acting as the first point of contact within the school for case discussions relating to students who may be at risk of radicalisation or involved in terrorism;
- Collating relevant information from/ in relation to referrals of vulnerable students into the Channel\*\* process;
- attending Channel\*\* meetings as necessary and carrying out any actions as agreed;
- Reporting progress on actions to the Channel\*\* Co-ordinator; and
- Sharing any relevant additional information in a timely manner.

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

- Establish an effective multi-agency referral and intervention process to identify vulnerable individuals;
- Safeguard individuals who might be vulnerable to being radicalised, so that they are not at risk of being drawn into terrorist- related activity; and
- Provide early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risks they face and reduce vulnerability.

## Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass operates in the majority of police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult (usually the designated safeguarding lead) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable support to be given to the child according to their needs. Police forces not signed up to operation encompass will have their own arrangements in place. National Domestic Abuse Helpline Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Its website provides guidance and support for potential targets, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked. Additional advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

- NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects
- Refuge what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children
- SafeLives: young people and domestic abuse.

## Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm

Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans) may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health. Local authorities should inform the school if a child has a social worker, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. Where children need a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education

where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

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

## 20. Implementation, Review and Monitoring

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

This Policy will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis. A copy of this policy is also available on the School website.

## 21. Supporting Documents

DSPP Safeguarding People Partnership <http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/>

Working Together to Safeguard Children

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Safer Working Practice Guidance

Filtering and monitoring standards for school and colleges (DfE)

Cyber security standards for school and colleges

**Useful Numbers** (Relevant contact details are displayed on posters around the school)

Emergency Duty Team 0300 555 8574  
Local Authority Designated Officer: 01384 813061  
Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit  
Halesowen Police Station  
101 Extension 79026071 or 79026072  
Prevent referrals <https://dudleysafeandsound.org/prevent>

Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. For example NSPCC offers information for schools and colleges on its own website [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk).

Schools can also access DSCB guidance on the issues listed below via the website <http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/>

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

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

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

Referrals – How to make (Thresholds Framework) <http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/child/work-with-children-young-people/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub/>

#### **Local Guidance**

- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people In Education Settings
- Online safety and the use of images (version 12)
- Guidance in respect of a serious or critical safeguarding incident affecting a school incident

#### **National Guidance**

- Ofsted – Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Information Sharing Protocol
- What to do if you are worried about a child
- The Prevent Duty
- Home Office Guidance on Mandatory Reporting of FGM – Procedural Information
- Teaching Online Safety in School (DfE)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation DfE September
- Behaviour in School Guidance September
- Suspensions and exclusions guidance

Templates/Forms for use in Dudley The DSPP Multi Agency Referral Form is available via the Report It page.

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

The DSPP Multi Agency Referral Form is available via the Report It page § The Role of the LADO Allegations against a Professional - Flow Chart § Allegations against Staff in personal lives § DSCB Allegations Procedures

### **Anti-Bullying**

[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

[www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org)

[www.gethelpwithbullying.org.uk](http://www.gethelpwithbullying.org.uk)

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

[www.parentscentre.gov.uk](http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk)

### **Child sexual exploitation**

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

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

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

[www.afruca.org](http://www.afruca.org)

[www.feminist.org](http://www.feminist.org)

### **Forced Marriage**

[www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage](http://www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage)

### **Legislation**

[www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)

### **Mental Health**

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools

### **Neglect Strategy**

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

Stay Safe [www.staysafe.org](http://www.staysafe.org) Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

[www.baspcan.org.uk](http://www.baspcan.org.uk) Teenage Pregnancy [www.teenagepregnancy.org](http://www.teenagepregnancy.org) Use of images/ e-safety

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

## Useful Numbers

Dudley Single Point of Access:	Dudley - 0300 555 0055 Wolverhampton - 01902 555392 Sandwell - 0121 5693100
Emergency Duty Team:	Dudley - 0300 555 8574 Wolverhampton - 01902 552999
Local Authority Designated Officer: Yvonne Nelson-Brown	01384 813061 / 07811 991432
Education Safeguarding Trainer	Jdicken@dudley.gov.uk
Education Liaison Offer : Bev Leddington	01384 813224
Police: Child Abuse Investigation Unit (Kay Redfern) MASH (Dudley CSE)	01384 817777
FGM Disclosure: Halesowen Police Station	101
Local Authority Prevent Liason: Sue Haywood	01384 818 115
Ofsted: General enquiries	0300 123 1231
NSPCC Helpline	0808 5000
NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: Website: <a href="http://safeguardingchildren.dudley.gov.uk">http://safeguardingchildren.dudley.gov.uk</a>	0800 0280285

## Dealing with a Disclosure of Abuse

### APPENDIX 1

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

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

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

### Immediately afterwards

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

Complete a referral on CPOMS or the reporting form (Appendix 3) available in your planner / safeguarding noticeboard/ t drive-safeguarding and hand it directly to the DSL. Do not leave it in their pigeon hole or on their desk for them to 'find'. It may be urgent and require an immediate response.

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

## Making a referral:

## APPENDIX 2

We expect ALL staff to complete a concern form if they have any worries or concerns about a child's safety. It is always our policy to:

### RECOGNISE → RESPOND → REFER → RECORD → REFLECT

It is important that concerns are logged on CPOMS and fully completed in a timely manner. They are important. To help the Safeguarding Team respond appropriately by following the below guidance.

- Log onto CPOMS and enter all relevant admin details (refer to help guide appendix 4);
- Always include all 3 DSL in any referral;
- If the child is considered to be at immediate risk the member of staff must **also** speak directly to the DSL within 10 minutes of the concern being identified.
- If the *Designated Safeguarding Lead* is not available, then the Head Teacher or the person currently responsible for the school should be informed/and or take advice from Social Care.
- Make sure the concern is noted in detail, preferably in the child's own words;
- Don't report what other people have told you/third hand information. They must write their own form.
- Only write about one child on each referral;
- Remember that referrals are used in court cases and inquests as primary documents, so they must be complete, accurate and stick to the facts.
- If CPOMS is down please use a paper concern form. These can be found on the staff safeguarding notice board or printed from the staff area;
- Do not use e-mail to send your concerns. You must complete a hard copy instead
- Paper concern forms must be handed directly to J Elliott/N Amos/L Smith;
- Please alert the Safeguarding Team to concerns as soon as possible. The earlier we start the better. Staff who are teaching a class, please find emergency cover and alert the DSL. The safeguarding concern ALWAYS takes priority.
- Finally sign, date and time the concern form.
- Social Care Team and the *Designated Safeguarding Lead* will decide how to involve the parents/carers. Parents should not be informed if to do so would increase risk to the child.
- Maintain confidentiality on a **need to know** basis only.

### Information for social care or the police about suspected abuse

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

- the reasons for your concern;
- full name and date of birth of the child;
- names and dates of birth of the child's family/household members;
- other agencies/professionals involved with the family;
- the child's first language and any special educational needs;
- the child's developmental needs, family and environmental factors and parenting capacity;
- any work you may have already undertaken with the child and family.

*All incidents will be reported on a Multi Agency Referral Form.*

## **Responding to allegations or suspicions (about someone working with children or young people (e.g. parent/carer))**

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

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

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

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they are likely to pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children. This is to take account of situations where a person's behaviour outside of school may suggest 'transferable risk'. For example, where a member of staff or volunteer is involved in an incident outside of school which did not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children.

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

- Having a sexual relationship with a child under 18 if in a position of trust, is an offence, even if consensual. (*s16-19 Sexual Offences Act 2003*);
- 'Grooming', i.e. meeting a child under 16 with intent to commit a relevant offence (*s15 Sexual Offences Act 2003*);
- Other 'grooming' behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature (e.g. inappropriate text/email messages or images, gifts, socialising etc.);
- Possession of sexual images of children/pseudo-photographs of children.

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

Action if there are concerns about poor practice:

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

Concerns about suspected abuse

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Head Teacher, who will take such steps as

considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Head Teacher will refer the allegation to the Social Care Team who may involve the Police. All allegations against people who work with children must be passed onto the DO (Designated Officer for Managing Allegations).
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Social Care Team.
- If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the concern must be shared with the Head Teacher. If the Head Teacher is the subject of the concern/ allegation, the concern must be shared with the Chair of Governor. (Contact name and number can be found on the Safeguarding Notice Board within the staffroom.) The Chair of Governors will liaise with the Designated Officer for Managing Allegations and HR.

#### Internal Enquiries and Suspension

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

## FLOW CHART FOR RAISING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD

