

## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure

Policy:	Version 5 2025 (V4 2024 V3 2023 V2 2021 V1 2017)
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Reviewed by:	Whole Team
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Approved by:	Headteacher
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The British School Costa Daurada is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and secure environment for children to be cared for and educated. We recognise that it is our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children by committing to a practice that protects them.

‘Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.’

This policy applies to all pupils in the school:

- This policy applies to all teaching, non-teaching, residential, pastoral, support, peripatetic, contract and ancillary staff, volunteers, non-school-based staff and any other adults working at the school
- All references in this document to "staff" or "members of staff" should be interpreted as relating to the aforementioned, unless otherwise stated.
- It applies to adults in the Early Years phase of the school.
- This Safeguarding Policy applies to all pupils and adults in the school when they are being educated on site, off-site, or undertaking an educational visit.
- It also applies to students on an exchange and being hosted by the school.
- In accordance with the terms set in LOPIVI Art. 51, this Safeguarding Policy applies to all children and young people in Spanish territory, regardless of nationality or administrative status, and to all children of Spanish nationality abroad.
- This policy also reflects the duties and functions of the Coordinador/a de Bienestar y Protección as required under Catalan Decrees 175/2023 and 169/2024, ensuring protection and participation rights for every pupil.
- The school’s safer recruitment procedures are aligned with the BISSC Cross-Association Code of Conduct (2025), which establishes shared expectations for recruitment practice, background checks, reference verification, and the maintenance of rigorous, transparent processes across all member schools.

The British School Costa Daurada is committed to inter-agency working to secure the highest standards of safeguarding for all pupils. The school contributes to inter-agency collaboration in accordance with Ley Orgánica 8/2021 (LOPIVI), Catalan Decree 175/2023, and the principles outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2025), which emphasise a whole-school, child-centred approach, transparency in information-sharing, and proactive early-help coordination.

This policy is based on the:

- Department for Education's statutory guidance KCSIE (2023, updated 2024 and 2025) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018, updated 2023).

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- BISSC Cross-Association Safer Recruitment Code of Conduct (May 2025), which provides a unified international standard for safer recruitment practice, evidence-based vetting, reference verification, and record-keeping for all staff and volunteers.
- Decret 169/2024 and Decret 175/2023 (Catalonia), which regulate the organisation, training and responsibilities of the *Coordinador/a de Benestar i Protecció*, promote inter-agency collaboration, and require annual safeguarding reports and training updates.
- Ley Orgánica 8/2021, de 4 de junio, de Protección Integral a la Infancia y la Adolescencia frente a la Violencia (LOPVI), which establishes the national framework for child protection and the role of the *Coordinador/a de Bienestar y Protección* in all schools in Spain.
- Ley Orgánica 3/2020, de 29 de diciembre, de Educación (Education).
- Documents per a l'Organització i Gestió dels Centres, Resolució del 20 de juny de 2018.
- Ley Orgánica 3/2018, de 5 de diciembre, de Protección de Datos Personales y Garantía de los Derechos Digitales.
- Part 3 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques.
- The Children Act 1989 (and 2004 amendment), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children.
- Ley Orgánica 5/2000, de 12 de enero, Reguladora de la Responsabilidad Penal de los Menores (Minors' Criminal Liability).
- Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación (Education).
- Ley Orgánica 1/1996, de 15 de enero, de Protección Jurídica del Menor, de modificación parcial del Código Civil y de la Ley de Enjuiciamiento Civil.
- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with:**

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Secondary Conflict Resolution Policy
- ICT Policy and Procedure
- Applying reasonable force recommendations.
- Policy on Use of Phones and Devices in the Early Years and across the school.
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Arrivals and Dismissals Policy

**Our aims are:**

- To promote protection for all the children in our care
- To provide all staff with clear guidance on the correct procedures they must follow if they suspect a child may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm — including how and to whom to make a referral.
- To ensure all staff understand their duty to record and share concerns promptly, following the school's procedures and the principles of confidentiality and proportionality outlined in KCSIE 2025 and LOPIVI.
- To provide all staff with guidance on what will happen if an allegation is made against them, including information about the low-level concerns process introduced in KCSIE 2025.
- To provide parents with guidance on who to contact if they suspect a member of staff of possible abuse towards a child.
- To promote a whole-school culture of safeguarding, early help and wellbeing, ensuring that children's voices are heard and that early support is offered where emerging needs are identified, in line with Catalan Decree 175/2023 and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).
- To ensure recruitment and induction procedures reflect the BISSC (2025) Safer Recruitment Code of Conduct, reinforcing the school's commitment to safer practice from appointment to ongoing professional conduct.

## Key Principles

- The child's needs and welfare are paramount. All children have a right to be protected from abuse and neglect and have their welfare safeguarded.
- Children should be listened to and their views and wishes should inform any assessment and provision for them. Staff should always act in the interests of the child in order to protect them.
- At the British School of Costa Daurada, we recognise that scrutiny, challenge and supervision are key to safeguarding children.
- The School is committed to working with other agencies to provide early help for children before they become at risk of harm, in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and LOPIVI (Art. 18–21).
- All staff should be aware of the early help process and understand their role in it. This includes identifying emerging problems, supporting children's mental health and wellbeing, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment, as emphasised in KCSIE 2025.
- All staff have equal responsibility to report their concerns about a child or the behaviour of any adult without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or, in their absence, to the Deputy DSL.
- Everyone has the responsibility to escalate their concerns and 'press for reconsideration' if they believe a child's needs remain unmet or if the child is failing to thrive and in need, or if the child is at risk of harm. 'Concerns about a child should always lead to help for a child at some point.'
- Staff must remain alert to risks both offline and online, recognising that safeguarding extends to digital and virtual environments, in line with the filtering and monitoring duties outlined in KCSIE 2025.

KCSIE (DfE 2025) reminds us that all staff should maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" where safeguarding is concerned.

- The School will work in partnership with other agencies to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm, including the need to share information about a child in order to safeguard them. Information will always be shared in line with LOPIVI (Art. 33–35) and the UK Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR, ensuring that confidentiality is respected while prioritising the child's safety and wellbeing.
- In accordance with Catalan Decree 175/2023, the DSL leads inter-agency collaboration and ensures that all information-sharing decisions are recorded, proportionate, and made in the child's best interests

## **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:**

Protecting children from maltreatment

Preventing impairment of children's health or development

Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm.

Safeguarding also includes protecting children from harm in online and digital environments, addressing risks linked to mental health and wellbeing, and recognising contextual and peer-related factors that may place a child at risk, as outlined in KCSIE (2025).

## **Process for considering and acting on concerns about child abuse**

### **Recording and reporting concerns**

- If a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, make a referral to children's social care and/or the police immediately if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger. Anyone can make a referral by calling 112.
- Where any adult in the School has concerns about a child, they should discuss these in the first instance with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or in their absence, the Deputy. Discussions should be recorded on the School's record form, with details of the concern and any agreed action that is to be taken. The record must be signed and dated and kept securely in the Safeguarding Office. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that concerns and discussions are written up properly and acted on appropriately.

As a School we recognise that children will talk to an adult they know and trust and therefore our expectation is that this person will listen to the child about their concerns and then report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead where relevant. *The child should not then be asked to repeat their story unless the School has been advised by Children's Social Care to seek more information.*

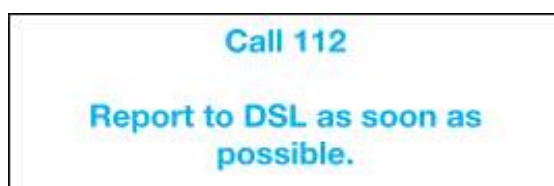
When a child discloses abuse to an adult in the School, that person is responsible for making a written record of the disclosure as soon as possible after the event and reporting it urgently to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputy. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider next steps to be taken, including referral to Children's Social Care.

If a child makes a disclosure to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions.
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset.

- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner.
- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret.
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it.
- Sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL.
- If the disclosure involves digital content (for example, messages, images, or social media communication), preserve relevant evidence and include this information in your report

**Procedure for reporting when believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.**



**Procedure if you have concerns about a child's welfare**



## Confidentiality

Information about pupils given to us by the children themselves, their parents, or carers, or by other agencies will remain confidential. Staff will be given relevant information only on a “need to know” basis in order to support the child if that is necessary and appropriate.

We are, however, under a duty to share any information which is of a child protection nature. We understand that this is in the best interests of the child and overrides any other duties we have regarding confidentiality and information sharing.

Staff should not promise to keep secret information given to them by a child but should explain that they will pass the information on to those who need to know and can help.

We have a duty to keep any records which relate to child protection work undertaken by us or our partner agencies and to ensure that these are kept apart from the main pupil record, stored securely and only accessible to key members of staff. We also have a duty to send copies of these records to any school to which the pupil transfers.

All information sharing and record management must comply with KCSIE (2025) and UK GDPR principles, ensuring data is processed lawfully, fairly and proportionately. In

accordance with LOPIVI (Articles 33–35) and Catalan Decree 175/2023, the DSL oversees all data sharing and ensures that safeguarding information exchanged between schools and external agencies is documented and justified in the child's best interests.

### **Involving parents/carers**

We will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents unless we believe that notifying the parents would increase the risk to the child. In such cases, we will discuss the situation with the local children's social care team before doing so.

The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure after a discussion with the DDSL. Other staff will only talk to parents about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will notify the parents of all the children involved.

In accordance with *KCSIE (2025)* and *LOPIVI (Article 34)*, the decision to inform parents or delay contact must always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child. The DSL will record the rationale for such decisions and, when necessary, consult with Serveis Socials or EAIA prior to parental contact.

### **Safer working practice**

All adults working with children in School have read and signed the School's Code of Conduct.

Although it is an uncomfortable thought, it needs to be acknowledged that there is the potential for staff in school to abuse children.

All staff working within our organisation must report any potential safeguarding concerns about an individual's behaviour towards children and young people immediately. Allegations or concerns about colleagues and visitors must be reported directly to the Headteacher unless the concern relates to the Headteacher. If the concern relates to the Headteacher or CEO, it must be reported immediately to the Stakeholders, who will decide on any action required.

In line with *KCSIE (2025)*, all staff should feel confident to report not only allegations but also low-level concerns, defined as any behaviour that may be inconsistent with the Code of Conduct or could lead to a pattern of concern if unaddressed. Such reports must be recorded and reviewed by the DSL and relevant Headteacher to ensure early intervention and accountability.

The School's Code of Conduct aligns with the BISSC (May 2025) Safer Recruitment Code of Conduct, ensuring that the same safeguarding principles guiding recruitment continue to apply throughout employment.

In compliance with Ley Orgánica 8/2021 (LOPIVI) and Catalan Decree 175/2023, all staff, volunteers and regular external providers must present an up-to-date Certificado de Delitos de Naturaleza Sexual at the beginning of each school year. These records are securely maintained by the Human Resources Department within the School's Single Central Record



(SCR). The DSL oversees annual verification and ensures that any non-compliance is addressed immediately.

## **Child Protection in specific circumstances**

### **Children of Drug Using Parents**

Further enquiries and/or further action will be taken, as well as keeping records of every incident, when the School receives reliable information about drug and alcohol abuse by a child's parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- The parental misuse is regarded as problematic (i.e. multiple drug use including injection).
- A chaotic and unpredictable home environment which can be attributed to drug or alcohol misuse.
- Children are not being provided with acceptable or consistent levels of social and health care.

## **Attendance**

We are aware that a pupil's unexplained absence from school could mean that they are at risk from harm.

We will always seek to clarify the reason for a child's absence from school with the child's parent or carer as soon as is practicable and no later than the second day of absence. Parents must notify the school as soon as possible or on the first day of a child missing school and give a reason.

Parents must notify the school in advance in writing to seek permission if they are taking their child on a long break during the school term time.

In line with KCSIE (2025) and Working Together for School Attendance (2025), unexplained or repeated absences may indicate wider safeguarding concerns such as neglect, exploitation, or domestic abuse. The DSL reviews attendance patterns regularly and, where concerns persist, liaises with Serveis Socials or relevant agencies in accordance with Catalan Decree 175/2023 and LOPIVI.

## **Pupil Behaviour**

We will always aim to maintain a safe and calm environment by expecting good behaviour from our pupils in line with our behaviour policies.

We are aware that any physical response from a member of staff to a pupil's poor behaviour could lead to a child protection concern being raised by the child or parent/carers.

No member of staff will use force when dealing with a pupil's breach of our behaviour policy unless the potential consequences of not physically intervening are sufficiently serious to

justify such action. Members of the staff are aware of the recommendations for applying reasonable force documents and we will act as advised.

We will always record any occasion when physical intervention has been necessary. We will always notify parents or carers of any such incident.

Children that present repetitive unacceptable behaviour will be supported within the team members and, if necessary, referred to external agencies after assessment and consent from parents. Records stating type of behaviour, context, action taken and result will be kept in a separate file and monitored regularly.

In line with KCSIE (2025) and LOPIVI, behaviour concerns may sometimes indicate unmet emotional or safeguarding needs. The DSL will review patterns of behaviour that cause concern, ensuring that any intervention upholds the child's dignity and rights and, where appropriate, involves Serves Socials or external support professionals.

## **Bullying**

We understand that bullying is harmful to children. We have an anti-bullying policy that sets out our aim of ensuring no child becomes a victim of bullying and the work that we carry out in school to foster an environment where bullying behaviour is known to be unacceptable. We will always take any reports of bullying seriously and respond appropriately.

We understand that bullying may take different forms and may include racist or homophobic behaviour. Any such reported or observed incident will be dealt with in accordance with our Anti-bullying Policy and Behaviour Policies.

Allegations of abuse made against other children. Staff are aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse (previously referred to as peer-on-peer abuse). This can include, but is not limited to: bullying (including cyberbullying), gender-based violence, sexual assaults, and the sharing of sexualised images. Staff recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and must challenge any form of derogatory, discriminatory, or sexualised language or behaviour.

Staff are vigilant to sexualised or aggressive touching and grabbing, particularly towards girls. Behaviours by children should never be passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.

The school curriculum supports children to become more resilient to inappropriate behaviours towards them, risk-taking behaviours and behaviours that children may be coerced into, including 'sexting' or 'initiation/hazing' behaviours.

In accordance with KCSIE (2025) and LOPIVI, the School also recognises online and technology-based bullying, including the use of social media or AI-generated content to harass or harm others, as forms of violence requiring the same safeguarding response. The DSL ensures all incidents of bullying or child-on-child abuse are recorded, monitored for patterns, and, where appropriate, reported.

## Use of Technology and Online Safety

We recognise that children's use of the internet and technology is an important part of their education but that there are also risks of harm associated with its use. The School's ICT Policy outlines clear expectations for the safe, responsible, and ethical use of technology by pupils, staff, and visitors. All staff are required to read and follow the ICT Policy and ensure that online safety is promoted in all areas of school life.

The School follows a Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) programme and is recognised as a Common Sense Media School, promoting the safe and positive use of technology across all age groups. Screens are not used before Year 1, and from Year 1 onwards they are used only for educational purposes, ensuring that technology supports learning while protecting children's wellbeing and development.

The School maintains robust filtering and monitoring systems to prevent access to harmful or inappropriate material. These systems are reviewed regularly to ensure their effectiveness and compliance with KCSIE (2025), which emphasises the shared responsibility of school leaders, staff, and technical providers in maintaining safe digital environments.

Staff and pupils are reminded that artificial intelligence (AI) tools, online platforms, and social media must be used responsibly. In line with *KCSIE 2025*, AI-generated content must never be used to create, share, or replicate harmful or discriminatory material, and staff must remain vigilant to the misuse of technology that could cause reputational, emotional, or physical harm.

If a member of staff becomes aware of inappropriate, illegal, or harmful content on any digital device — including a school-owned device — they must immediately confiscate the device and make a written report describing what was seen, where it was located on the device (if known), and the circumstances in which it was discovered. Staff must not delete, screenshot, copy, forward, or share any material. The device and written report must be handed directly to the DSL, who will determine next steps in consultation with the ICT Coordinator and, if necessary, the police.

All teaching and learning activities involving digital tools must promote digital literacy, critical thinking, and online resilience. The School is committed to teaching pupils how to recognise misinformation, manage screen time, and report unsafe or inappropriate online behaviour.

Under LOPIVI and Catalan Decree 175/2023, schools are required to implement educational and preventive measures to protect children from digital and cyber violence. The DSL ensures compliance with these regulations and coordinates any responses to online safety concerns, working with families and local services (Serveis Socials or Mossos d'Esquadra) where appropriate.

All incidents related to the misuse of technology are logged, investigated, and, when necessary, referred through safeguarding channels. The ICT Policy and safeguarding procedures are reviewed annually to reflect evolving risks and technological developments.

## **Health & Safety**

The School has a Health & Safety Policy which demonstrates the consideration given to minimising any risk to children when on the School premises and when undertaking activities out of School under the supervision of staff.

All Health & Safety procedures form part of the School's safeguarding framework and include regular risk assessments for site security, school trips, and external activities. Health & Safety measures also include the prevention of violence, the promotion of wellbeing, and the duty to ensure that all environments — physical and digital — are safe and appropriate for children.

## **Mobile Technology**

The School is a phone-free environment for both pupils and staff.

No photographs may be taken on personal mobiles or tablets, or for an adult's own records, when around the School, including photos of displays.

Parents and visitors are not allowed to take pictures of children or displays, nor to use mobile phones within the classroom or on school trips. In emergencies, phone use must take place in the entrance hall.

The School insists that parents should not enter the premises to collect their children while using a mobile phone. This ensures that parents are fully present, supporting communication and their child's social and emotional development.

The use of personal devices by staff is restricted to designated staff-only spaces, such as the staffroom or offices. Staff must never use personal technology to photograph, record, or communicate with pupils. All digital recording and communication must occur through approved, secure School systems and devices.

Work devices provided by the School must be used for professional purposes only. Personal social media, messaging services, or non-educational apps must not be accessed on School equipment.

Smart watches must have notifications silenced during the working day to prevent distraction or data breaches. Any breach of these expectations will be managed in line with the Staff Code of Conduct and may constitute a safeguarding concern under *KCSIE 2025*.

## **Prevention**

The School recognises that it plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to children by providing them with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends, and an ethos of protection.

### **The School community will therefore:**

- Work to establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are always listened to.

- Include regular consultation with children, asking pupils to reflect on their experiences at playtimes and in lessons to ensure that they feel safe and supported.
- Ensure that all children know that all adults in the School can be approached if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Provide structured opportunities for prevention through the curriculum, wellbeing workshops, and sessions with external professionals such as local police, health professionals, and community safety officers.
- Integrate digital citizenship education and responsible technology use into the School's prevention work, promoting online safety and resilience.
- Promote emotional wellbeing and mental health awareness through the School's PSHE programme, ensuring pupils understand how to seek support both inside and outside of School.

The School's prevention work also includes fostering participation, equality, and respect among pupils, ensuring that all preventive measures address both physical and digital environments.

## **Training**

The School ensures all staff members, including administration and services, undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures, to ensure they understand the School's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect.

Yearly safeguarding refreshers are provided to ensure that all staff remain up to date with current statutory guidance, local protocols, and School procedures.

Monthly meetings are held with the British Council National Safeguarding Committee.

Safeguarding training also includes online safety, mental health awareness, artificial intelligence (AI) and digital risk, and the identification of contextual safeguarding issues such as child-on-child abuse and exploitation. The DSL ensures that training records are maintained and that all staff complete required updates within the stipulated timeframe.

## **Safer Recruitment**

The School is committed to the safer recruitment of all staff, volunteers, contractors, and external providers in order to protect the welfare of children. Recruitment and vetting procedures are carried out in full compliance with *KCSIE (2025)*, *LOPVI (Art. 32)*, *Catalan Decree 175/2023*, and the *BISSC Safer Recruitment Code of Conduct (2025)*.

All recruitment processes follow the School's Safer Recruitment Policy, which sets out detailed procedures for advertising, shortlisting, interviewing, and appointing staff. These include identity verification, qualification checks, reference validation, and criminal record vetting (*Certificado de Delitos de Naturaleza Sexual* and DBS where applicable).

All staff, volunteers, and contractors are required to present an updated *Certificado de Delitos de Naturaleza Sexual* annually. Records of all recruitment checks are maintained securely within the Single Central Record (SCR) by the Human Resources Department and audited termly by the DSL and Senior Management Team (SMT).

All staff involved in recruitment must have completed accredited Safer Recruitment Training. The School cooperates fully with NABSS, BISSC, and local authorities in demonstrating compliance with international and national safeguarding standards.

### **Types of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation**

The term ‘abuse’ is often used as an umbrella term. All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

Abuse and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

The *LOPVI* (Article 1.2) defines abuse (*violencia*) as any act, omission, or negligent treatment that deprives children of their rights or wellbeing; that threatens or interferes with their physical, mental or social development, regardless of the form the abuse takes, including via technology and digital means.

Staff should also be alert to indicators of contextual abuse, digital exploitation, and mental health-related harm. This includes recognising that abuse may occur online, through social media, messaging platforms, or AI-generated content.

Schools must ensure that all forms of violence — physical, emotional, sexual, digital, and institutional — are identified, documented, and reported in line with safeguarding procedures.

### **Abuse, neglect and/or exploitation**

Abuse, neglect and/or exploitation are all forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse, neglect and/or exploit a person by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children and young people may be abused in a family, 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.

In line with *KCSIE (2025)*, abuse may also involve AI-assisted grooming, image-based abuse, or financial and digital exploitation. *LOPVI* and *Catalan Decree 175/2023* further recognise institutional and technological violence as forms of abuse, placing a duty on schools to prevent, detect, and respond to them as part of their safeguarding responsibilities.

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

Abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

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. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

The four categories of child abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

### **Physical abuse:**

- 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.

Physical abuse signs and symptoms may include:

- physical injuries such as cuts, bruises, fractures
- unexplained or unusual injuries
- improbable excuses, reluctance, or refusal to explain injuries
- reluctance to change clothing for games or PE
- fear of physical contact
- fear of suspected abuser being contacted

Physical abuse: how did it happen?

- Does the explanation fit the injury?
- Is there a reluctance to explain the injury?
- Are there any other concerns about this pupil?

### **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 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.

#### **Emotional abuse signs and symptoms may include:**

- feeling depressed
- withdrawal from social interaction
- low self-esteem
- isolation from friends and family
- fearfulness, increased anxiety
- feeling of shame or guilt
- mood changes
- not trusting others
- extreme dependence on others
- telling lies
- aggressive behaviour
- Substance misuse

#### **Common types of emotional abuse:**

- neglecting or rejecting
- isolating or scape-goading
- abusive expectations, demands and criticism
- ignoring, denying refusal to listen or understand child's feelings
- exploiting
- constant chaos
- emotional blackmail and threatening
- aggression: blaming, commanding, threatening
- dominating
- verbal assaults: sarcasm, berating
- unpredictable behaviours: mood changes, emotional outbursts

#### **Sexual abuse:**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether the child is aware of what is happening.

Sexual abuse signs and symptoms may include:

- frequent need to urinate or urinary tract infections
- age-inappropriate sexual knowledge, language, behaviours
- regressive behaviours e.g. thumb sucking, needing
- previously discarded cuddly toys
- loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- withdrawal, isolation
- inability to focus
- reluctance to go home
- bed-wetting
- drawing sexually explicit pictures
- trying to be 'ultra-good'
- overreacting to criticism



### **‘Grooming’ for sexual abuse:**

- An abuser may ‘groom’ a victim by giving or withholding rewards such as gifts or special attention
- They may use physical or psychological threats to ensure cooperation
- The grooming process is often well planned and very effective, ensuring that parents and other adults trust the abuser and find it difficult to believe that abuse has taken place.

Abusers who groom are often:

- in a position of trust, or leadership
- good at their job or able to win respect, affection, or fear from colleagues
- charismatic
- articulate
- domineering, bullies
- caring
- dutiful, over-helpful
- manipulative
- distorted in their thinking

### **Neglect:**

Neglect is persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs and is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development.

#### **Neglect may involve failure to:**

- provide adequate food, shelter, or clothing
- protect children from physical harm or danger - including exposure to domestic abuse.

Neglect signs and symptoms may include:

- constant hunger
- emaciation
- compulsive scavenging
- poor personal hygiene
- constant tiredness
- clothing poor, dirty, inappropriate for weather
- untreated medical problems
- poor social relationships
- destructive tendencies

### **Responses from Parents**

Research and experience indicate that the following responses from parents may suggest a cause for concern across all four categories:

- Delay in seeking treatment that is obviously needed.
- Unawareness or denial of any injury, pain, or loss of function (for example, a fractured limb).
- Incompatible explanations offered, several different explanations or the child is said to have acted in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development.
- Reluctance to give information or failure to mention other known relevant injuries.
- Frequent presentation of minor injuries.
- A persistently negative attitude towards the child.

- Unrealistic expectations or constant complaints about the child.
- Alcohol misuse or other drug/substance misuse.
- Parents request removal of the child from home; or Violence between adults in the household.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.**

When working with children with disabilities, practitioners need to be aware that additional possible indicators of abuse and/or neglect may also include:

- A bruise in a site that might not be of concern on an ambulant child such as the shin,
- might be of concern in a non-mobile child.
- Not getting enough help with feeding leading to malnourishment.
- Poor toileting arrangements.
- Lack of stimulation.
- Unjustified and/or excessive use of restraint.
- Rough handling, extreme behaviour modification such as deprivation of medication, food, or clothing, disabling wheelchair batteries.
- Unwillingness to try to learn a child's means of communication.
- Inappropriate invasive procedures

### **Sexting**

Your responsibilities when responding to an incident. If you are made aware of an incident involving sexting (also known as 'youth produced sexual imagery'), you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must **not**:

- View, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it. If you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved. You should explain that you need to report the incident, and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL. Initial review meeting

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to pupil(s)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care
- If it is necessary to view the imagery in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, imagery should not be viewed)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response

- Whether the imagery has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the pupils involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the pupils involved (in most cases parents should be involved)

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care if:

- The incident involves an adult
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)
- What the DSL knows about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the imagery is under 13
- The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the Headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care. Further review by the DSL If at the initial review stage a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review. They will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate) to establish the facts and assess the risks. If at any point in the process there is a concern that a pupil has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

### **Informing parents**

The DSL will inform parents at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the pupil at risk of harm. Referring to the police If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through a police community support officer or dialling 112.

### **Recording incidents**

All sexting incidents and the decisions made in responding to them will be recorded.

### **Curriculum coverage**

Pupils are taught about the issues surrounding sexting as part of our PSHE education and computing programmes.

Teaching covers the following in relation to sexting:

- What it is
- How it is most likely to be encountered
- The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive
- Issues of legality
- The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation

Pupils also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

- Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
- The receipt of such images

## **Specific Safeguarding Issues**

### **Peer on peer abuse**

Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as peer-on-peer abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to):

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Staff are aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;

- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts.

Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

## **Sexual violence**

When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

Rape:

A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration:

A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault:

A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

## **What is consent?**

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another (e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex) or may be given with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if they agree by choice to that penetration and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

In accordance with the *Sexual Offences Act 2003* and *LOPVI*, children under the age of 16 cannot legally consent to sexual activity. Any sexual activity involving a person under 16 — and any sexual contact involving power imbalance, coercion, or exploitation up to the age of 18 — must be treated as a child protection concern and reported immediately to the DSL.

Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment, we mean “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature” that can occur online or offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to violate a child’s dignity, make them feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated, and/or create a hostile, offensive, or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual “jokes” or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (schools and colleges should consider when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence – it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim), and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature;
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
  - o non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;
  - o creation or sharing of digitally altered or AI-generated sexual images (deepfakes);
  - o sexualised online bullying;
  - o unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media;
  - o sexual exploitation, coercion and threats; and
  - o upskirting.

All forms of online or in-person sexual harassment must be taken seriously, recorded, and reported immediately to the DSL

### **Upskirting**

“Upskirting” typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or to cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

It is a criminal offence under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 and is considered both a form of sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Upskirting can also occur through digital or AI-assisted recording, including the use of hidden devices or altered images. All incidents of upskirting must be treated as safeguarding concerns and reported immediately to the DSL, who will determine next steps

### **Serious Violence**

There are signs that children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries.

Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Staff should also be alert to online and digital recruitment, including the use of social media, messaging platforms, and gaming networks to groom or exploit young people for criminal activity. The DSL will monitor patterns of absence or concerning behaviour and liaise with the police or local safeguarding partners where there are indicators of exploitation or gang involvement.

The school takes proactive measures to prevent exposure to violence and to support children identified as being at risk, ensuring early intervention and coordination with external agencies.

### **Children Missing from Education**

A child going missing from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation, child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems or substance abuse.

The School will follow its procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect – including sexual or criminal exploitation – and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future.

In accordance with *KCSIE (2025)* and *Working Together for School Attendance (2025)*, the DSL monitors attendance data and ensures patterns of absence are shared promptly with local safeguarding partners.

When a pupil leaves the School, the DSL and administrative team ensure that confirmation of the child's new educational setting is obtained and recorded. The School will not remove a pupil from its register until written confirmation of their new enrolment has been received, in line with the *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006* and the *Education Act 2002*.

Under *LOPIVI (Art. 20 & 33)* and *Catalan Decree 175/2023*, the School coordinates with *Serveis Socials* and local education authorities to confirm that every child who leaves remains within the education system, ensuring continuity of learning and protection from potential risk.

### **Stages of Child Protection**

The School can use a number of arrangements depending on the information available and the risk of harm posed to the child. The School will always work cooperatively with external agencies, including the local authority and the police.

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, a referral to Social Services (and, if appropriate, the Police) must be made immediately by the **DSL**, who must follow the local authority's referral process.

### **Early Intervention (low risk)**

Early help is support for children of all ages that improves a family's resilience and outcomes and/or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse, and subsequently the risk of harm escalating. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later when the needs of the child are affecting their health and/or development, or when harm has already occurred and/or there is the likelihood of harm.

If early intervention is appropriate, the DSL (or Deputy) will oversee the programme of support provided within the school context. Families and relevant staff will be informed. The School may seek guidance from external agencies or encourage the family to do so. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to Social Services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

In accordance with *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*, *LOPVI*, and *Catalan Decree 175/2023*, early intervention is a shared responsibility between education, health, and social services, aimed at identifying vulnerability early and providing joined-up support.

### **Children in Need (moderate risk)**

As guidance, a *Child in Need* is defined under *Ley Orgánica 1/1996, de 15 de enero, de Protección Jurídica del Menor* as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled.

The School will seek support from external agencies such as Social Services, health services, and mental health support services for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. The DSL coordinates multi-agency communication and ensures that plans are reviewed and outcomes monitored in line with *Catalan Decree 175/2023*.

### **Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (high risk)**

Authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquiries under *Article 18 of Ley Orgánica 1/1996, de 15 de enero, de Protección Jurídica del Menor* if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment, including all forms of abuse and neglect, female genital mutilation or other so-called honour-based abuse, and extra-familial threats such as radicalisation and sexual, criminal, or financial exploitation.

Should an investigation occur, the School's involvement and any action will be determined by the advice given by the investigating agency. In accordance with *KCSIE (2025)* and *LOPVI*, the DSL will maintain accurate records, ensure information is shared lawfully with authorised professionals, and contribute to any multi-agency protection plan.



## **Appendix:**

### **1. Collaboration with External Agencies**

When external professionals or agencies visit the School to provide services or consultations (for example, *Consulta Oberta* sessions with Nurse), these interactions must relate strictly to the professional remit of the visitor — in this case, health-related matters.

If, during a consultation, a child makes a disclosure or raises a concern that may relate to their wellbeing or safety, the visiting professional must not address the concern independently. Instead, they must report it immediately to the **DSL**, who will follow the School's safeguarding procedures.

The **DSL** is responsible for ensuring that all visiting professionals are aware of the School's safeguarding procedures and understand how to report any concerns before engaging with pupils.

### **2: Safeguarding and Wellbeing Monitoring Meetings**

The Wellbeing Committee meet twice monthly to review ongoing pupil wellbeing, attendance patterns, and any emerging safeguarding or behavioural concerns in Secondary. The Head of Secondary will also sit in on necessary committee meetings throughout the year.

The Head of Primary, School Educational Psychologist, and DSL meet periodically to review the wellbeing of pupils in Primary, ensuring that early signs of emotional or behavioural concern are identified and supported promptly.

The purpose of these meetings is to ensure that all pupils identified as vulnerable or requiring monitoring are receiving appropriate and coordinated support. Minutes of meetings are stored securely and shared only with relevant safeguarding personnel.

Any new concerns or escalations identified are documented and addressed through the School's safeguarding procedures. This system ensures early identification of risk and a multi-disciplinary approach to pupil support.

### **2. Record Management and Storage Protocol**

Safeguarding records, including concern forms, meeting notes, and external agency correspondence, are stored securely and separately from pupil academic files.

Access is restricted to the DSL, Headteacher, and authorised members of the safeguarding team. All safeguarding information is retained and shared in accordance with data protection legislation, *KCSIE (2025)*, and *LOPVI*.

When a pupil leaves the School, safeguarding files are transferred securely to the receiving educational setting once written confirmation of enrolment has been received. The transfer is recorded, and the School retains confirmation of receipt to ensure continuity of safeguarding oversight.



## Concern Sheet



For completion by staff or volunteers when they become aware of child welfare concerns, in accordance with the school's policy. The Designated Child Protection Lead will monitor concerns and report where appropriate to social care if a child is deemed at risk of significant harm. This information will be disclosed only to those staff who need to know for the purposes of child protection. Concerns should usually be shared with parent/child, unless to do so may place a child/ren at increased risk of harm.

Child's Name: Date: Class: Date:	
Name and role of person writing the record:	
Nature of concern:  Attach additional sheet(s) if necessary (include observations as well as professional opinions)	
Action taken	
Reviewed by DSL	
Final Outcome with date	

Signed:  
Member of staff:

Designated Safeguarding

Body Map

