Oakhill

faith stronger than the oak

Oakhill Safeguarding Policy – updated September 2025

This policy applies to both Oakhill school and the EYFS registered setting.

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Designated Safeguarding Team Contact Details

All of the team can be contacted by telephone via the School Office on 01254 823546 or via their individual email addresses below.

Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead Member of SLT	**Lisa Hitchen (VP)**	**hitchen.l@oakhillschool.co.uk safeguarding@oakhillschool.co.uk**
Designated Safeguarding Lead Member of SLT	**Claire Raho (AH)**	**raho.c@oakhillschool.co.uk safeguarding@oakhillschool.co.uk**
Deputy DSL Member of SLT (EYFS)	**Gemma Curley**	**curley.g@oakhillschool.co.uk**
Deputy DSL Member of SLT (EYFS)	**Angela Ragen**	**ragen.a@oakhillschool.co.uk**
DS Team Member of SLT/ Principal	**Jane Buttery**	**principal@oakhillschool.co.uk**
DS Team Prep Teacher	**Louise Barnes**	**barnes.l@oakhillschool.co.uk**
DS Team Teaching Assistant	**Sarah Langford**	**langford.s@oakhillschool.co.uk**
SENDCo CLA (Looked After Child) nominated staff	**Lyndsey Meechan**	**meechan.l@oakhillschool.co.uk**
Named governor with Safeguarding responsibilities	**Nadine Baron**	**Can be contacted via Nikki Hunt, Clerk to the Governors hunt.n@oakhillschool.co.uk**
Chair of Governors	**Anthony Baron**	**tonybaron@oakhillschool.co.uk**

2. Statement

Oakhill School and Nursery recognises that all adults, including governors, teachers and support staff, whether full-time, part-time or temporary, employed or volunteer, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that children's welfare is always of paramount concern. We should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child. In considering abuse, all staff are encouraged to be alert to the fact that "it could happen here".

3. Introduction

Oakhill is committed to safeguarding and acting in the best interests of the child. The Oakhill safeguarding policy is provided for all parents and pupils on the school's website: www.oakhillschool.co.uk, for staff on the school's shared intranet, and it is also available on request from the school office. The policy is reviewed annually and any deficiencies or weaknesses in safeguarding are remedied without delay**.**

Safeguarding or child protection 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 the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Oakhill recognises the five outcomes from *Every Child Matters* that every child has the right to:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being

The term 'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18. Where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, action should be taken to protect that child. Action should also be taken to promote the welfare of a child in need of additional support, even if they are not suffering harm or are at immediate risk.

This policy provides clear instructions to staff and others about expected procedures in dealing with child protection concerns and referrals. It demonstrates Oakhill's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures to ensure that child protection concerns are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which prioritise the needs of the child where alleged or suspected abuse might have occurred either in or outside of school by a member of the school community or other person.

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 for an area within the local authority; and the chief officer of police for an area (any part of which falls) within the local authority area) 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. Oakhill School is committed to working with and following the procedures and advice established by the three safeguarding partners, specifically our local safeguarding partners Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) Welcome to the Procedures Manual. Oakhill undertakes to implement procedures in accordance with locally agreed inter agency procedures where applicable to independent schools, in line with statutory guidance.

This policy was written taking regard of the following guidance:

- Keeping children safe in education 2025 incorporating disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006
- ISI Regulatory Requirements for Independent Schools (September 2023)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (March 2015)
- Working together to safeguard children(2018, updated June 2025) including non-statutory but important advice: Information sharing (May 2024)

- Preventing bullying - GOV.UK (2017)
- Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023) - GOV.UK (2023) supplemented by the non-statutory advice and briefing note: The Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childminders (September 2023)
- Mental health and behaviour in schools - GOV.UK (November 2018)
- DfE advice for schools: Teaching online safety in schools (January 2023)
- UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance: Education for a connected world (revised June 2020)
- UKCIS guidance: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (March 2024)
- The UKCIS External visitors guidance will help schools and colleges to ensure the maximum impact of any online safety sessions delivered by external visitors (October 2022)
- National Crime Agency's CEOP education programme: thinkuknow

The policy should be read in conjunction with the following school documents:

- Staff Handbook
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Children Absent from Education Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safer Recruitment policy
- Extremism and anti-radicalisation policy
- Data Protection Policy

These policies are reviewed and amended in light of any relevant changes to KCSIE.

4. Policy Aims

There are three main elements to the Oakhill Safeguarding Policy:

- **Prevention**:
  Through the Roman Catholic ethos of the school, we have established and maintain an ethos where children feel safe and secure, are encouraged to talk and are always listened to in a caring, safe and positive environment

- **Protection**
  By following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection and safeguarding concerns.

- **Support**
  To offer full support to children and staff in maintaining a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

Oakhill fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support all pupils in the School and Nursery. Oakhill therefore endeavours:

- To ensure that all staff working within the School and Nursery who have substantial access to children, have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications, and a satisfactory DBS check (according to KCSIE guidance), and a single central record is kept for audit.
- to ensure that school checks are made when using external agencies that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation when working with children both in school and on another site
- to ensure that accompanying adults on residential school trips have had the appropriate DBS checks and received the appropriate level of safeguarding training including safer working practices
- to ensure that all staff are made aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, are adequately trained in safeguarding procedures (including the fact that anyone can make a referral) and are familiar with the policy and other relevant policies
- to provide and implement robust procedures for identifying, reporting and handling concerns or cases or suspected cases of abuse
- to ensure a culture of safety; raising concerns; valuing staff and reflective practice
- to establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to when they have a worry or concern
- to ensure that the children know that there are adults in the School whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty through teaching and learning, extra-curricular activities and pastoral care.
- to include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse including online safety and/or communicate their fears and concerns about abuse
- to ensure that from September 2020, children throughout the school have full access to the mandatory Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education as appropriate to their age. A one-stop page of resources for teachers from the DfE is available at Teaching about relationships sex and health
- to ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies.
- to ensure that every child's previous school is contacted by the DSL to ask if there are any safeguarding records to share.

- to support pupils and their families through the Early Help Assessment (EHA) and Team Around the Family (TAF) processes and in accordance with their Child Protection Plan, if required
- for the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) to meet on at least a half termly basis to discuss issues, policies and good practice including a review of any bullying incidents.

5. Safer Recruitment

- Oakhill operates a safer recruitment procedure that includes statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children in compliance with Independent School Standards Regulations. Further details are given in the Safer Recruitment Policy.
- Online checks are to be done for all new staff to identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school might want to explore with the applicant at interview.
- All staff, at induction, receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, the Safeguarding Policy, Safer Working Practices (Code of Conduct) which includes guidance on staff / pupil relationships, pupil behaviour policy, the role and names of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputies, and Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1. All staff sign to say they have read and understood these.
- Staff are directed to the 'Children Missing Education policy' at induction and are given guidance on the school's safeguarding response to children absent from education.
- All staff receive the ICT Acceptable Use Policy during induction and this contains guidance on acceptable use of ICT, communications and the use of social media. Staff sign to agree with the conditions contained in this policy.
- All staff receive basic safeguarding training which is regularly updated, in line with CSAP (LCSB) advice, and receive updates (for example, via email and at INSET), as required, but at least annually.
- All members of staff are trained in and receive regular updates in online safety. All staff receive Prevent training.
- Staff are trained in reporting concerns, including the reporting of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- All governors have regular child protection awareness training, updated by the DSL as appropriate, to maintain their understanding of safeguarding issues, and governors are made aware of their responsibilities in Part 2 of the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- The names of the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputies, are clearly advertised in the school.

6a. Role of the Designated Safeguarding Leads

The Designated Safeguarding Leads are members of the School's Senior Leadership Team. In addition to the role and responsibilities of all staff, the key elements of the role of DSLs are:

Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- to hold the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) in the School, this responsibility is not able to be delegated

Both Designated Safeguarding Leads:

- to be alert to the specific needs of children in need, including those with special educational needs and young carers

- to act as a point of contact and support for staff to discuss concerns
- to liaise with the three safeguarding partners (the local authority; a clinical commissioning group for an area within the local authority; and the chief officer of police for an area (any part of which falls) within the local authority area) and work with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children
- To understand when they should consider calling the police and what to expect when they do. (NPCC- When to call the police gives further information)
- to have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
- to have a clear understanding of the access and referral process for providing early help and intervention, and offer support and advise members of staff where early help intervention is appropriate by:
    - → undertaking an EHA assessment, when appropriate
    - → signposting and referring to appropriate support agencies
    - → leading on TAF meetings where is it appropriate
    - → utilising the Children and Family Wellbeing Service
- referring to Children's Social Care where Early Help has not been successful in reducing risk and meeting unmet needs using Lancashire Continuum of Need and Thresholds Guidance and CSC referral form
- to refer all cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care (CSC) within 24 hours where there are concerns that a child may be in need of help or at risk and, where applicable:
    - → The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member)
    - → Disclosure and Barring Service (cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child)
    - → Police (cases where a crime may have been committed).
    - → the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern via the MASH
- to liaise with the Principal to inform him or her of issues especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations
- to encourage and promote a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, amongst all staff in any measures the School may put in place to protect them
- to access training and support to ensure they have the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. DSL training should be updated at least every two years and their knowledge and skills refreshed at regular intervals
- to access resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses and safeguarding conferences
- to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals
- to ensure that where children leave the School their child protection file is copied for any new school or college as soon as possible but transferred separately from the main pupil file and a receipt of this to be kept on file
- to ensure Oakhill's safeguarding and child protection policy is reviewed annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing body regarding this. Records should 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
- to meet all other responsibilities as set out for DSLs in Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE.

6b. Role of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

All Deputy DSLs are trained to the same standard as the lead DSLs. Deputy DSLs work alongside the DSLs and are able to perform any of the roles of the DSLs in their absence. The named Deputy DSLs with responsibility for the EYFS are the nursery managers.

The ultimate lead responsibility for child protection lies with the Lead DSL. This lead responsibility will not be delegated.

6c. Role of the Principal

The Principal will liaise closely with the DSLs and safeguarding team and be attentive to the concerns raised. In addition to the role and responsibilities of all staff the Principal will ensure that:

- the Designated Safeguarding Leads are members of the School's Senior Leadership Team and at least one Deputy to take the lead responsibility in dealing with child protection issues and to adequately cover the requirements of the EYFS
- each member of staff has access to and understands the School's Safeguarding policy and procedures and all staff are aware of the identity and role of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and deputies
- the Safeguarding Policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers
- sufficient time, training, support, funding, resources, including cover arrangements where necessary, is allocated to the DSLs to carry out their role effectively, including the provision of advice and support to staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy discussions/meetings and other inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so and to contribute to the assessment of children
- the DSLs and Deputy DSLs undertake training every two years (inter-agency working and informal updates) and all other staff undertake basic safeguarding training at least annually, both formally via INSET and informally via updates and staff briefings
- KCSIE part 1 and annex B have been read and understood by all teaching and teaching assistant staff; ensure this is updated annually and any changes or additions are covered in annual INSET especially new and part-time.
- All ancillary staff have read and understood Annex B
- All new employees receive an appropriate induction which will clearly identify the School policies and procedures, including the Safeguarding Policy and procedures, the role and responsibility of the DSLs and deputies, the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education (CME) policy, the Whistleblowing Policy, the ICT Acceptable Use policy, the Code of Conduct (Safer Working Practices), Part One and Annex B of KCSIE and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.
- All staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the Whistleblowing policy
- pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online
- checks are made in respect of the central register of appointments, including governors, and that it complies with current regulations and is kept up to date
- the Local Authority Designated Officer is informed of child protection concerns in cases which concern a member of staff or a volunteer and refer cases where a person is dismissed or left service due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service and Teaching Regulation Agency, as required
- any deficiencies or weaknesses in the School's Safeguarding policy and processes are remedied without delay.

6d. Role of the Governing Body

All members of the Governing Body need to understand and fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that:

- they facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding which is paramount and underpins all relevant aspects of process and policy development. Where everything operates with the best interests of the child at their heart.
- they recognise the important role governors play in holding school leaders accountable.
- 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 and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training will be regularly updated.
- the governing body must have a sound understanding of safeguarding so that they can support and challenge their school leaders effectively and with confidence.
- the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Appropriate systems are in place, and these are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback
- the school contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children and that they are aware of and follow their local arrangements.
- they are kept up-to-date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt
- the school has clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems and child on child abuse including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems
- Policies are in place to cover online safety, special educational needs and disabilities and where appropriate, these reflect issues regarding serious violence
- relevant staff have due regard to comply with the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share (and withhold) personal information, fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. Further details are contained in the Data Protection and Freedom of Information policy. In addition, see the DfE data protection guidance for schools, which will help school staff, governors and trustees understand how to comply with data protection law, develop their policies and processes, know what staff and pupil data to keep and follow good practices for preventing personal data breaches.
- the school operates a safer recruitment procedure that includes statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and disqualification by association regulations and by ensuring that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel who has completed safer recruitment training, if there is not a panel conducting interviews then the individual will have completed the safer recruitment training
- at least one member of the governing body has completed safer recruitment training and is updated as required
- there is a designated governor with responsibility for safeguarding on the governing body at all times
- an annual review and evaluation of the Safeguarding policies and procedures and the efficiency with which the duties have been carried out takes place
- the school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff (including the Principal), supply staff and volunteers and against other children and that a referral is made to the DBS and/or the Teaching Regulation Agency (as applicable) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have had they not resigned

- Enhanced DBS checks (without barred list checks, unless the governor is also a volunteer at the school) are in place for all Governors
- any weaknesses in Safeguarding are remedied immediately
- staff undergo regular updated safeguarding training, including online safety and are taught about safeguarding including online safety
- safeguarding training for staff, including online safety training, is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole school safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning.
- all teachers manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe educational environment and requires teachers to have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils.
- Governing bodies and proprietors should be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act, the Equality Act, and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

6e. Role of all Staff

All staff have a responsibility to protect children and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties. They have a key role to play in identifying concerns early and in providing help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns form escalating. To achieve this, they will:

- provide a safe environment in which children can learn
- 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 school who they can approach if they are worried or have concerns
- be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- 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 and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.
- plan opportunities within the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to assess and manage risk appropriately and keep themselves safe
- recognise and allow for the special needs of young people with disabilities and learning difficulties
- recognise the importance of mental health and the link between mental health concerns and safeguarding issues and be able to signpost guidance (see section 24)
- attend appropriate child protection training on a regular basis in line with LSCP advice, including Prevent and on-line safety and pay close attention to informal updates in order to be aware of and alert to the signs of abuse and know how to respond
- record concerns if they are worried that a child is being abused and report these to the one of the DSLs immediately that day. If one of the DSLs are not contactable immediately a Deputy DSL should be informed
- identify children who may benefit from Early Help, who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. All staff have a responsibility to take appropriate action, working with other services as needed. Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life form the foundation years through to the teenage years.
- if, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to children's social care immediately. Anybody can make a referral. Parental consent is not required for referral to statutory agencies.

- follow the allegations procedures (section 9) if the disclosure is an allegation against a member of staff
- ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place the pupils or themselves at risk of harm or allegations of harm to a pupil. All staff and volunteers should follow Oakhill's Safer Working Practices Policy
- be aware of the systems within school which support Safeguarding such as the Safeguarding Policy, the Safer Working Practices policy, part one of KCSIE, the identity and role of the Designated Senior Leader, their Deputies and the team of Designated Safeguarding Persons
- Be aware of the procedures in place to deal with child-on-child abuse and measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice based and discriminatory bullying
- sign to acknowledge they have received and read the Safeguarding policy at induction and at the end of any training and take part in any online tests set and assessed by the School's leadership team to demonstrate understanding
- follow the advice set out in Oakhill Safer Working Practices Policy, adopt an 'it could happen here approach'

7. Child Protection Procedures – what to do if you have a concern

The following procedures apply to all staff working in the School and will be covered by training to enable staff to understand their role and responsibility.

The aim of our procedures is to provide a robust framework which enables staff to take appropriate action when they are concerned that a child is being harmed or abused or is at risk of harm or abuse.

The prime concern at all stages must be the interests and safety of the child. Where there is a conflict of interest between the child and an adult, the interests of the child must be paramount.

If a child wants to confide in you, you should:

- be accessible and receptive
- listen carefully and uncritically, at the child's pace
- take what is said seriously
- reassure the child that they are right to tell
- tell the child that you must pass this information on
- make sure that the child is safe
- be clear about what is being said in terms of who, what, where and when
- make a careful record of what was said

You should never:

- investigate or seek to prove or disprove possible abuse
- ask leading questions **-** only use **minimal prompts** such as, 'go on', 'tell me more', 'tell me everything you can remember'.
- ask closed questions, i.e., the ones to which children can answer 'yes' or 'no'.
- make suggestions about who, how or where someone is alleged to have touched, hit etc.
- make promises about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets' to children
- assume that someone else will take the necessary action
- jump to conclusions, be dismissive or react with shock, anger, horror etc.
- speculate or accuse anybody
- investigate, suggest or probe for information
- confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved
- offer opinions about what is being said or the person allegedly involved

The question you should be able to answer at the end of the listening process is, "might this child be a child protection matter."

Action to be taken when abuse is suspected

If a member of staff suspects abuse, spots signs or indicators of abuse, or they have a disclosure of abuse made to them they must:

1. Make a written record of the information related to the concern.
2. Report it to the one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads immediately (or to a member of the Designated Safeguarding Team in school in their absence). This should always occur as soon as possible and certainly within 24 hours.
3. The DSLs will consider if there is a requirement for immediate medical intervention, however urgent medical attention should not be delayed if the DSLs are not immediately available
4. Make an accurate record (which may be used in any subsequent court proceedings) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the occurrence, of all that has happened, including details of:
    - a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
    - dates and times of their observations
    - dates and times of any discussions in which they were involved.
    - any injuries
    - explanations given by the child / adult
    - decisions made, rationale for decision making and action taken
    - be factual – state exactly what was said. Wherever possible include any actual words or phrases used by the child
    - details of how the concern was followed up and resolved;
    - a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.
    - information should be kept confidential in a separate child protection file for each child and stored securely.

    If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (or deputy).

5. The records should state who was present, time, place and date. Written records must be in ink. They must be signed and dated by the author or / equivalent on electronic based records. These must be kept by the DSLs.
6. The DSLs, usually in consultation with the Principal, will decide whether to make a referral to Children's Social Care. In the absence of both of the DSLs or their Deputy, staff must be prepared to refer directly to Children's Social Care (and the police if appropriate) if there is the potential for immediate significant harm. Any staff member can refer their concerns to children's social care directly. Parental consent is not required for referral to statutory agencies.
7. If an allegation is made against a member of staff, then the LADO will be informed immediately

8. Making Referrals to Children's Services

Where the DSLs or the Principal consider a referral to Children's Services may be required, there are thresholds for and types of referrals that need to be considered. These are detailed in the Lancashire Continuum of Need which can be used to decide which level of help is required and whether or not there are sufficient grounds for suspecting significant harm, in which case a referral must be made to the children's social care and the police if it is appropriate.

Children's social care assessments should consider where children are being harmed in contexts outside the home, so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm.

Level 1 – Universal

At this level, needs and risks can be met through a Universal Services or a simple specific agency response.

Level 2 – Early Help

Oakhill is committed to providing our families with the right help at the right time. 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 school
- 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.
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect;

We therefore ensure that all staff and volunteers can identify the risk factors that indicate a family or pupil may benefit from Early Help and will use the school's agreed format for letting the DSLs know about any requirements.

Level 3 - Child in Need/Section 17 Referrals

Under section 17 (s17 (10) of the Children Act 1989) a child is in need if:

a. He/she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, without the provision of service by a local authority.
b. His/her health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services.
c. He/she is disabled.

One of the DSLs should complete a common assessment framework (CAF) form and email it to: cypreferrals@lancashire.gov.uk

This is a request for assessment/support/services and, as such, you must obtain the consent of the parents/carers and young person where appropriate. This should be identified on the CAF. Where the parent/carer/child/young person refuses to give consent, you should make clear your ongoing plans and responsibilities in respect of support, monitoring etc. and the possibility of a child protection referral at some point in future if things deteriorate or do not improve.

Level 4 - Child at Risk/Section 47 Referral

Under section 47 (1) of the Children Act 1989, a local authority has a duty to make enquiries where they are informed that a child who lives or is found in their area:

a. is the subject of an Emergency Protection Order
b. is in Police Protection or where they have:
c. reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

It is the 'significant harm threshold' that justifies statutory intervention into family life. The Designated Safeguarding Leader will make judgments around 'significant harm' and levels of 'need' and when to refer.
If a crime has been committed, immediately or at least within 24 hours, make a telephone call to the police. If no crime is committed make a telephone call to the Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) Formerly Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). You will speak to a Customer Care officer whose role is to receive your referral information, enter it onto the appropriate IT system and forward to the relevant Social Work team leader for consideration.

You should still complete an EHA form and should forward this as soon as possible and certainly within 48 hours – cypreferrals@lancashire.gov.uk
You do not require the consent of a parent/carer or child/young person to make a child protection referral.

A parent/carer should, under most circumstances, be informed by the referrer that a child protection referral is being made. The criteria for not informing the parents/carers are:

- because this would increase the risk of significant harm to the child
- because in the referrer's professional opinion, to do so might impede an investigation that may need to be undertaken
- because there would be undue delay caused by seeking consent which would not be in the child's best interests.

Fear of jeopardising a relationship with parents because of a need to refer is not sufficient justification for not telling them that you need to refer. On the contrary, this lack of openness will do little to foster ongoing trust, particularly as the source of referrals will be disclosed to the parents except in a limited number of circumstances. If you feel that your own or another adult's immediate safety would be placed at risk by informing the parent/carer then you should seek advice and/or make this clear on the forms and in any telephone contacts with Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) Formerly Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

9. Allegations of abuse against staff

Oakhill has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (including supply staff and volunteers who work with children) that aim to strike a balance to protect children from abuse (the overriding principle) but also to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations. If

an allegation is made against a member of staff the quick resolution of that allegation must be a clear priority to the benefit of all concerned. In the event of an allegation being made against a member of supply staff working for an agency, the agency will be fully involved at all stages.

If an allegation is made against a member of staff working in the EYFS registered setting or an allegation is made of any abuse being made on the premises then Ofsted will be informed by the Principal as soon as is practicable and within 14 days at the latest

Procedures for dealing with concerns/allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff, including the Principal, the DSLs, volunteers, supply staff and governors that may meet the Harms threshold

Allegations of abuse against teachers, including the DSLs, and other staff will be dealt with according to the statutory guidance set out in part four of KCSIE and Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) and applies when staff (including volunteers) have (or are alleged to have):

- behaved in a way that has harmed a pupil, or may have harmed a child; and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Local Authority procedures require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the Principal, senior named person or the Chair of Governors must inform the duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day. However, wherever possible, contact with the LADO will be made immediately as they will then advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to pupils and parents. The School will not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO. In borderline cases, the School may discuss informally with the 'designated officer' on a no-names basis.

All allegations should be investigated as a priority to avoid any delay.

1) All allegations which appear to meet the above reporting criteria are to be reported straight away to the Principal. Where the Principal is absent or is the subject of the allegation or concern, reports should be made to the Chair of Governors. Where the Principal is the subject of the allegation or concern, the Principal must not be informed of the allegation.

2) The Principal should immediately discuss the allegation with the designated officer (LADO) and consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action including any involvement of the Police. The Principal will also discuss with the designated officer if an independent investigator is required. Where the Principal deems there to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence, the Police may be involved immediately. All discussions will be recorded in writing, and any communication with both the individual and the parents of the child(ren) agreed.

3) The individual would normally be informed as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course or action after the result of any initial investigation authorised or conducted by the designated officer is known and provided there is no objection by children's social care or the police. The School will normally appoint a named representative to keep the person informed of the likely course of action and the progress of the case. The Principal will consider what other support is appropriate for the individual.

4) The Principal should give careful consideration as to whether the circumstances of the case warrant suspension or whether alternative arrangements should be put in place until the allegation is resolved. The Principal will give due weight to the views of the designated officer and KCSIE when making a decision about suspension. Where the individual is suspended, the Principal will ensure they know who their point of contact is in the School and shall provide them with their contact details.

5) The Principal will ensure that parents are informed as soon as possible and kept informed about progress of the case, subject to any advice from children's social care or the police.

6) The Principal will discuss with the designated officer whether a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service or Teaching Regulation Agency should be made where an allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the School ceases to use their services, or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services. The School has a legal obligation to report promptly to the Disclosure and Barring Service any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or a student) who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. Further, or in the alternative, if an investigation leads to the dismissal or resignation prior to dismissal of a member of teaching staff specifically, the School must consider making a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency and a prohibition order may be appropriate. The Trustees will also consider their serious incident reporting duties to the Charity Commission.

7) On conclusion of the case, the Principal should review the circumstances of the case with the designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the School's safeguarding procedures or practices to help prevent similar events in the future.

The School will make every reasonable effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity whilst an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The outcome of an investigation of an allegation will record whether it is substantiated (sufficient evidence either to prove or disprove it), unsubstantiated (insufficient evidence either to prove or disprove it), false (sufficient evidence to disprove it) malicious (sufficient evidence to disprove it and that there has been a deliberate act to deceive) or unfounded (no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made). If it is established that the allegation is malicious, no details of the allegation will be retained on the individual's personnel records.

Allegations proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious will not be included in employer references. If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the Principal will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against a pupil who made it; or whether the police should be asked to consider if action might be appropriate against the person responsible even if they are not a pupil. In all other circumstances a written record will be made of the decision and retained on the individual's personnel file in accordance with DfE advice.

If the LADO or any of the statutory child protection authorities decides to take the case further, any staff member concerned may be suspended if this is felt appropriate. The reasons and justification for suspension will be recorded and the staff member informed of them. In the case of staff, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure. Where a member of the residential staff is suspended pending an investigation of a child protection nature, suitable arrangements must be put in place for alternative accommodation away from children. In the case of a pupil the matter will be dealt with under the behaviour and / or exclusion policy.

During the course of the investigation the School in consultation with the LADO will decide what information should be given to parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with. In reaching their decision due consideration will be given to the provisions in the Education Act 2011 relating to reporting restrictions identifying teachers who are the subject of allegations from pupils.

Any pupils who are involved will receive appropriate care.

Should historical (non-recent) allegations of child abuse be made the School will, in accordance with KCSIE, report the matter to the police. Similarly, allegations against a teacher who is no longer working at the School will also be referred to the police. All allegations of historical abuse should be referred to the Principal or one of the DSLs straight away.

The School will assess the need and report accordingly to the Charity Commission.

Procedures for dealing with concerns about teachers and other staff, including the Principal, DSLs, volunteers, supply staff and governors, that do not meet the harms threshold (low level concerns)

The School is aware that staff may have concerns that appear to them to be low level. Staff must still report any such concern to the Principal to allow the School's safeguarding arrangements to be implemented and for appropriate action to be taken if necessary. Concerns can be logged using the link which can be found in the Staff Safeguarding Hub.

Reports of low-level concerns should be recorded in writing or by email, with details of the concern, the context in which it arose and action taken. The name of the person reporting should be noted, respecting wishes to remain anonymous as far as reasonably possible.

The purpose of the School's procedure for low level concerns is to support a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which the School's values and expected behaviour are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff, including to:

- ensure staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others;
- empower staff to share any low-level safeguarding concerns;
- address unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct it at an early stage; and
- provide a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised.

Staff must share their concerns, no matter how small. A low-level concern can be any concern, even if no more than a 'nagging doubt', that an adult may have acted in a manner which:

- is not consistent with the Safer Working Practices; and/or
- relates to their conduct outside of work which, even if not linked to a particular act or omission, has caused a sense of unease about that adult's suitability to work with children.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- 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.

Staff are encouraged 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.

Staff do not need to be able to determine whether a concern is a low-level concern, or if it meets a safeguarding threshold (for example is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO), that determination will be made by the Principal who will discuss with the Designated Safeguarding Leads as appropriate.

Records of any concerns that do not meet the harms threshold, will be held by DSLs and only accessible for the DSLs and Principal. When a low-level concern has been raised by a third party, the Principal and/or DSLs will collect as much evidence as possible by speaking where possible with the person who raised the concern, to the individual involved and to any witnesses. These records will be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and responded to. Where a pattern of behaviour is identified, the school should decide on a course of action. This might be internal disciplinary procedures, or referral to the LADO if the harms threshold is met.

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

At all times, the School will consider if there are any wider cultural issues that enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of recurrence. The rationale for all decisions and actions taken will be recorded.

10. Unsuitable Persons

When a person ceases to work, in whatever capacity, as employee, volunteer, contractor at Oakhill because there are grounds to believe s/he may be unsuitable to work with children, or may have committed misconduct, Oakhill has a legal duty to report this to the DBS. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. Referrals should be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual and in all cases within 14 days. It is the duty of Oakhill to make reports and to provide relevant information to the Secretary of State.

Where a teacher has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed had they not resigned) because of serious misconduct, Oakhill will make a referral to the Department for Education, Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) and a prohibition order may be appropriate. The reasons such an order would be considered are, ‘unacceptable professional conduct’, ‘conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute’ or a conviction at any time for a relevant offence.

Oakhill will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person working or looking after children at the premises whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere. This includes any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises and of the action taken in respect of these allegations. **Ofsted via the Disclosure and Barring Service, (DBS) will be informed as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days.**

11. Use of Mobile Phones, Cameras and Videos (IT)

Children at Oakhill may have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for developmental records, as well as for use in educational activities and school displays. Photographic images may also be used in publicity providing consent has been obtained from the parents. This is

carried out upon registration. Oakhill has a separate ICT Policy and each student in the Prep and Senior School and member of staff has signed an ICT Acceptable Usage Policy. This policy covers measures for internet safety, including a description of the use of filters and monitoring of usage and also gives details on the use of mobile technology, for example the management of access to 3G/4G.

It is a specific legal requirement however, that the EYFS providers have a policy and procedure that covers the use of mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities.

The following procedures are therefore in place in EYFS to provide an environment in which children, parents and staff are safe from images being used inappropriately. The policy also applies to staff outside EYFS unless stated.

- Under the Data Protection Act 2018, photographs and video images of children and staff are classified as personal data under the terms of the act. Using such images for school publicity requires the consent of the parents, which is requested on registration.
- Oakhill Early Years allows staff to bring in personal mobile telephones for their own use. Users bringing personal devices into EYFS must ensure there is no inappropriate or illegal content on the device.
- All mobile phones are stored in the staff room lockers and are not permitted within EYFS, unless on a break and in designated areas away from children, staff must not text, take or receive any calls.
- Oakhill staff are allowed to bring in personal mobile phones, but staff must not text, take or receive any calls unless on a break and not with pupils.
- Visitors may only use their personal devices outside the School/Nursery building and not in any area accessible by pupils.
- If a member of staff has a family emergency or similar, they should inform the office staff so that any message is conveyed as a matter of priority.
- Staff must only use school/nursery devices to photograph or record children.
- Cameras, mobile phones and digital media devices are prohibited in the toilet and changing areas.
- All images must only be downloaded onto school devices which are password protected.
- Staff are responsible for the secure storage of school devices assigned to their department.

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be vigilant and report any concerns to the EYFS Manager or any member of SLT. **Any non-compliance will be taken seriously and could lead to disciplinary action.**

Careful consideration should be given as to how activities involving the taking of images are organised and undertaken. Care should be taken to ensure that all parties understand the implications of the image being taken especially if it is to be used for any publicity purposes or published in the media, or on the internet. There also needs to be an agreement as to whether the images will be destroyed or retained for further use, where these will be stored and who will have access to them.

Adults need to remain sensitive to any pupils who appear uncomfortable, for whatever reason, and should recognise the potential for such activities to raise concerns or lead to misunderstandings.

It is not appropriate for adults to take photographs of pupils for their personal use.

When an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery comes to the School's attention, the incident should be referred to one of the DSLs as soon as possible and the Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (sexting) policy followed.

Adults should not take images of a child's injury, bruising or similar (e.g., following a disclosure of abuse) even if requested by children's social care; or make audio recordings of a child's disclosure

12. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is paramount when working in the context of child protection. Training in safeguarding will ensure that every adult working in the School understands the need for and basic principles regarding confidentiality.

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes. Schools have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes.

It has been recognised that professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. Any disclosure of personal information to others (including Children's Social Care services), must always have regard to both common and statute law.

Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information (*Data Protection Act 2018, European Convention of Human Rights, Article 8)*. Wherever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances, consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of a child dictates that the information necessarily to safeguard a child or children. Disclosure should therefore be justifiable in each case, according to the particular facts of the case and legal advice should be sought if in doubt.

Rules of confidentiality mean that it may not always be possible or appropriate for the DSLs to feedback to staff who report concerns to them. Such information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only and the DSLs will decide on which information needs to be shared, when and with whom. The primary purpose of confidentiality in this context is to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

13. Records and Monitoring

Well-kept records are essential to good safeguarding practice. Oakhill is clear about the need to record any concerns held about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records, or part thereof, should be shared with other agencies.

- Records showing concern about the welfare or behaviour of the child are kept on the School's wellbeing system and are subject to discussion in the weekly DSL and Principal's meeting.
- Staff need to be aware that this information is confidential within the School and is there as a help to relevant staff and as such is not public record.
- Child Protection concerns are recorded by the DSLs and are kept in a secure electronic file.
- These files are subject to strict gatekeeping procedures and may only be viewed by authorised staff.
- Staff-held notes will become part of general school records only after the concern is felt to have been resolved and then only after agreement by the Principal or DSLs. These should be scanned and uploaded with other safeguarding information and the originals destroyed
- The monitoring of the administration is the responsibility of the DSLs.
- Monitoring records indicate sufficient concerns to warrant a referral when the DSLs and the Principal consider that the child is at risk of significant harm and that the School cannot support and protect the child.

- If a child transfers to another school, their child protection file must be sent to the DSL at the new school. A confirmed receipt would be expected.
- When a child leaves and the new school is unknown, the DSLs will inform the local authority so the child's name can be included on the data base for missing pupils. (See section 18 – Children Missing in Education)
- KCSIE requires schools to retain a copy of all substantiated, unsubstantiated or false allegations on a staff member's personnel file (paragraph 170) but to refer only to substantiated allegations in references (paragraph 173). KCSIE requires records of all allegations (save for malicious) that meet the threshold for referral to be retained until the accused has reached normal pension age, or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer (paragraph 171).
- Child Protection information must be transferred 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 or college to have support in place for when the child arrives.

14. Supporting Pupils at Risk

Oakhill recognises that children who are abused or who witness abuse or violence may find it difficult to have a positive outlook on life and to have high self-esteem. School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of the children at risk. Whilst at school, they may still present with challenging and defiant behaviour. It is also recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a measured, careful approach so that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

Pupils need to have an 'appropriate adult' during police investigations who will "support, advise and assist" the young person, and also "observe whether the police are acting properly and fairly to their rights and entitlements, and inform an officer of the rank of inspector or above if they consider that they are not".

Oakhill will endeavour to support children through the curriculum to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation. The Catholic ethos of the School promotes positive, supportive and a safe environment which gives all pupils and staff a sense of being respected and valued. E-safety training is carried out annually for all staff and pupils cover e-safety through the curriculum.

Self-awareness / control and British values are instilled throughout all curriculum subjects in seniors and enforced by all teaching staff. Particular expectations and skills are taught specifically through PSHE lessons. Prep / Early Years staff enforce these values and expectations in the daily running of the School.

The implementation of the School behaviour management policy ensures a consistent approach which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which is displayed.

Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies ensures support for the pupils and their families. Oakhill is committed to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, wherever possible and as long as it is in the child's best interests to do so.

Oakhill recognises that children with SEND are particularly vulnerable to abuse and that there can be additional barriers when recognising signs of abuse and neglect in this group of children. School staff who work, in any capacity, with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behavioural problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse. Indicators of possible abuse are to be identified early and not assumed to be related to the child's SEND. Further information can be found at:

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) | NSPCC Learning

NSPCC - Safeguarding child protection/deaf and disabled children and young people

In some cases, there may be domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse at home. These children may also be particularly vulnerable and in need of support or protection. Children who have been the victims of abuse of have witnessed violence or trauma may need additional support and care in order to develop their self-esteem. Their behaviour may be challenging and Oakhill will endeavour to support the pupil in a number of ways:

- appropriate curriculum
- maintaining an ethos promoting a positive, secure and supportive environment to build pupil self esteem
- ensure that the behavioural policy provides support for vulnerable pupils
- liaison with other agencies and professional services e.g., East Lancashire Child And Adolescent Services. (ELCAS)
- ensure that if any child on the Child Protection register leaves Oakhill that their information is transferred to the new school and the child's social/case worker is informed. If no explanation is given, the Principal will inform the LEA.

Children potentially at greater risk of harm

Children 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.

The DSLs will be aware that a child is under the care of a social worker and will bear this in mind as a matter of routine 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 should 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.

A child or young person being LGBTQ+ 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 child ren to be LGBTQ+ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are.

In line with managing internally, the school or college may decide that the children involved do not require referral to statutory services but may benefit from early help.

Early Help

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. More information on early help is set out in Part one of KCSIE 2025 and WTSC 2025.

15. Categories of child abuse, neglect and exploitation

All school and nursery staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. 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. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Children may be abused in a family or in an institution or community setting by those known to them or by others (e.g., via the internet). Abuse may take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Contextual Safeguarding

All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the Designated Safeguarding Leads (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families, including online. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

15a. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to the child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly known as ‘Fabricated or induced illness (FII)’. Also included in physical abuse is Female Genital Mutilation and breast ironing

Possible indicators of Physical Abuse

There can never be a definitive list of indicators of physical abuse but the following are cause for concern. The indicators can be divided into physical and behavioural indicators:

- unexplained bruises, marks, welts, lacerations, abrasions:
- on face, lips, mouth
- on torso, back, buttocks, thighs
- in various stages of healing
- clustering forming regular patterns
- reflecting shape of an article used e.g., belt, buckle and electrical flex
- on several different surface areas
- regularly appear after absence, weekends or holiday
- bite marks or fingernail marks
- cigar, cigarette burns especially on the soles, buttocks, palms or back
- immersion burns, where hands and feet or body have been forcibly immersed in very hot water
- patterned like electrical burner, iron etc.

- rope burns on arms, legs, back or torso
- unexplained fractures to nose, skull and facial structure in various stages of healing
- pain when sitting and walking, bleeding. (Female genital mutilation)

Possible Behavioural/Emotional indicators of Physical Abuse:

- significant changes in the child's behaviour
- difficult to comfort
- apprehension when other children cry
- above normal crying/irritability
- frightened of parents or carers
- afraid to go home
- rebelliousness
- behavioural extremes –aggressive – withdrawn – impulsiveness
- regresses to child-like behaviour
- apathy
- depression/poor peer relations
- panics in response to pain
- refusal to discuss/improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- talking about punishment which seems excessive
- fear of parents being contacted
- self-destructive tendencies
- chronic running away
- children's comments which give cause for concern

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15b. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued insofar as they meet the needs of the other person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. 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. They may include limiting exploration and learning, preventing the child participating in normal social interaction or being overprotective. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying) causing the 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, though it may occur alone.

Possible Physical indicators of Emotional Abuse:

- failure to thrive
- not growing or putting on weight
- delays in physical development or progress

Possible Behavioural/Emotional indicators of Emotional Abuse:

- physical, mental and emotional developmental progress
- talk about being punished in a way that seems excessive
- over react to mistakes
- develop sudden speech disorders

- show fear of new situations
- show inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- demonstrate neurotic behaviour – rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking
- self-mutilation
- fear of parents being contacted
- show extremes of passivity or aggression
- become involved in drink/drug abuse
- chronic running away
- compulsive stealing
- scavenging for food
- be seen to 'buy' affection
- deterioration in general well-being

Emotional abuse causes damage to emotions and feelings and because it is difficult to measure it is the most difficult form of abuse to prove. Parents and carers can emotionally abuse a child by being cold and unloving and not giving or returning love and affection. They may show an active dislike of a child by being rude and unpleasant all or most of the time, being negative and always complaining instead of praising. Equally can be inconsistent by being loving one day and very unpleasant the next. Often one child in the family becomes the 'scapegoat' or focus of family unpleasantness.

15c. Sexual abuse

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

Possible Physical indicators of Sexual Abuse:

- pregnancy
- sickness
- excessive crying
- difficulty in walking and sitting down
- stained or bloody underclothing
- pain or itching in genital area

Possible Behavioural/Emotional indicators of Sexual Abuse

The possible emotional/behavioural signs of possible sexual abuse are likely to vary according to the extent of the abuse, the duration of the abuse and their age. Children of different ages have different levels of knowledge and understanding about sexual matters. This means that sexual abuse will impact differently on a young child compared to an adolescent.

Children aged 11+

- hint about secrets they cannot tell
- say that a friend has a problem

- ask you if you will keep a secret if they tell you something
- begin lying, stealing, blatantly cheating in the hope of being caught
- have unexplained sources of money
- start wetting/soiling
- show sudden, inexplicable changes in behaviour, such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- stop enjoying previously liked activities such as music, sport, gym
- be reluctant to undress for PE
- become fearful of or refuse to see certain adults for no apparent reason
- act in a sexual way inappropriate for their age
- draw sexually explicit pictures depicting some act of abuse
- write about sexually explicit acts that is inappropriate to their age
- seem old beyond their years
- develop eating disorders
- become depressed and even attempt suicide
- have a poor self-image, self-mutilate
- continually run away
- regress to younger behaviour patterns
- surround themselves in previously discarded cuddly toys
- say they are no good, evil, dirty
- engage in criminal behaviour
- use drink or drugs
- unable to concentrate
- have low self esteem
- become abusers themselves

This list is not exhaustive.

15d. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter. (Including exclusion from home or abandonment) They may fail to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger. They do not ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care givers. They fail to ensure the child has access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsive to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect is not always easy to recognise, but the following may cause concern when considered in relation to the age of the child.

- Constant hunger
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate dress
- Poor state of clothing
- Consistent lack of supervision
- Unattended physical problems or medical needs
- Abandonment
- Weight problems
- Stealing food
- Constant fatigue, listlessness
- Problems in relationship with carer

- Regularly not collected on time from school
- Frequent lateness, non-attendance at school
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self esteem
- Neurotic behaviour – rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking
- Begging

15e. Exploitation

Child exploitation is when someone uses a child for financial gain, sexual gratification, labour or personal advantage.
Using cruel and violent treatment to force a child to take part in criminal or sexual activities often leads to physical and emotional harm to the child, to the detriment of their physical and mental health, education, and moral or social development.
"The exploitation of children can take a number of different forms and perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse at the same time, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation."
The Home Office, 2019 (updated 2022)
All staff at Oakhill are to be vigilant to indicators of exploitation and report any concerns to the DSLs. They understand that 'it could happen here.'

16. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issue, for example NSPCC offers information for schools and colleges on the TES website and also on its own website www.nspcc.org.uk . Staff can also access broad government guidance on the issues listed in Annex A and B of Keeping Children Safe in Education, which also provides links to other organisations and information, and via the GOV.UK website. The list of issues covered in Annex A is as follows:

- children and the court system
- children absent from education
- children with family members in prison
- child sexual exploitation
- child criminal exploitation: county lines
- domestic abuse
- homelessness
- so-called 'honour-based' violence (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage)
- preventing radicalisation
- child on child abuse
- sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
- upskirting
- the response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment

17. Alternative provision

The School will remain responsible for a pupil's welfare during their time at an alternative provision provider, it will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs. When placing a pupil with an alternative provider, the School will obtain written information from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at their establishment (i.e. those checks that schools

would otherwise perform on their 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. The checks will be regularly updated and stored centrally.

18. Child-on-Child Abuse / Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children

Child-on-Child Abuse

Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. 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 and other children. We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and this will be dealt with under our Safeguarding policy and in line with KCSIE.

Child-on-child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate). We recognise the sexual bias of child-on-child abuse (i.e., that it is more likely that girls will be “victims” and boys “perpetrators”). We also recognise that those with learning difficulties, those who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community, or who are thought by others to do so even if they are not, may be particularly vulnerable.

Child-on-child abuse can be associated with factors outside school and can occur online and offline and between children of any age or gender. We take a contextual safeguarding approach to managing child-on-child abuse and all child-on-child abuse will be taken seriously and we will respond to all concerns.

It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports. All staff should understand, that even if it seems as there are no reports in school, it does not mean it is not happening, it may just that it is not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse they should speak to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (or deputy).
Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts
- up skirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- abuse linked to the sex of an individual - such as being sexually touched or initiation rituals

- initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)
- gangs and youth violence

The School's approach to sexting / youth produced sexual imagery is that it is totally unacceptable and, in any case, a full investigation will be carried out, parents informed and providing there has been no coercion and the pupils are of a similar age, school disciplinary procedure will be applied. In more serious cases, the police will be informed.

Any bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm and warrants a response under these procedures rather than the School's behaviour policies.

If the alleged incident has taken place away from school, our duties remain the same.

Procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse

We aim to reduce the likelihood of child-on-child abuse by training staff to:

- promote the established values and ethos of respect, friendship, courtesy and kindness
- promote high expectations of behaviour
- ensure clear consequences for unacceptable behaviour
- provide a developmentally appropriate PSHE curriculum which tackles issues such as: healthy and respectful relationships, respectful behaviour and consent, gender roles, stereotyping, equality, body confidence and self-esteem, prejudiced behaviour; teaches that sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong, and addresses cultures of sexual harassment
- ensure that lessons, sports and activities are all based on pupils working together and teamwork and respectful collaboration are encouraged explicitly and implicitly
- school assemblies often focus on the importance of respect and tolerance
- ensure clear systems and procedures are in place for pupils to raise concerns with staff, knowing they will be listened to, valued and believed so that they can confidently report abuse via the pastoral support system, with tutors or with DSLs / DDSLs
- ensure young people are aware of the NSPCC bespoke helpline for children and young people who have experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals that need support and guidance. Anyone concerned about something, can contact the NSPCC helpline Report Abuse in Education on 0800 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

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Research indicates that young people rarely disclose child-on-child abuse and that if they do, it is likely to be to their friends. Therefore, school will also educate pupils in how to support their friends if they are concerned about them, that they should talk to a trusted adult in school and what services they can contact for further advice

.
School will engage with specialist support and interventions where necessary.

Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

At all times, staff should make it clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is unacceptable, will not be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up and should never be dismissed as 'banter', 'part of growing up', 'just having a laugh' or 'boys being boys'.

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.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children, adult students and staff are supported and protected as appropriate**.**

We recognise that a child is likely to disclose an allegation to someone they trust: this could be any member of staff. By making such a disclosure the pupil is likely to feel that the member of staff is in a position of trust. Any response and action will, as always, have at the centre the best interests of the child, including if the children may benefit from early help. The DSLs will reassure any victim that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. The victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment; nor would a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

All concerns/allegations of child-on-child abuse will be handled sensitively, appropriately and promptly and will be investigated (with a written record made), including consideration of the wider context in which it may have occurred (as appropriate). We treat all children involved (both victim and perpetrator) as being at potential risk and will ensure a safeguarding response is in place for both the child who has allegedly experienced the abuse, and the child who has allegedly been responsible for it. Immediate consideration will therefore be given as to how best to support and protect all children involved/impacted.

How to manage a report on sexual violence or harassment

- If possible, reports should be managed with two members of staff present, (preferably one of them being one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads or a deputy). Where the report includes an online element, be aware of searching screening and confiscation advice (for schools) and UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes:• advice for education settings working with children and young people **The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child.** The advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to confiscate any devices to preserve any evidence and hand them to the police for inspection

- Do not promise confidentiality at this initial stage as it is very likely a concern will have to be shared further (for example, with one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads or children's social care) to discuss next steps. Staff should only share the report with those people who are necessary in order to progress it. It is important that the victim understands what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed to

- Recognise that a child is likely to disclose to someone they trust: this could be anyone on the school staff. It is important that the person to whom the child discloses recognises that the child has placed them in a position of trust. They should be supportive and respectful of the child

- Recognise that an initial disclosure to a trusted adult may only be the first incident reported, rather than representative of a singular incident and that trauma can impact memory and so children may not be able to recall all details or timeline of abuse

- Keep in mind that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation

- Listen carefully to the child, reflecting back, using the child's language, being non-judgmental, being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed, not asking leading questions and only prompting the child where necessary with open questions –

where, when, what, etc. It is important to note that whilst leading questions should be avoided, staff can ask children if they have been harmed and what the nature of that harm was

- Consider the best way to make a record of the report. Best practice is to wait until the end of the report and immediately write up a thorough summary. This allows the staff member to devote their full attention to the child and to listen to what they are saying. It may be appropriate to make notes during the report (especially if a second member of staff is present). However, if making notes, staff should be conscious of the need to remain engaged with the child and not appear distracted by the note taking. Either way, **it is essential a written record is made**

- Only record the facts as the child presents them. The notes should not reflect the personal opinion of the note taker. Be aware that notes of such reports could become part of a statutory assessment by children's social care and/or part of a criminal investigation; and informing one of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy), as soon as practically possible, if a particular Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) is not involved in the initial report.

- If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral will be made to cypreferrals@lancashire.gov.uk

Following a report, one of the DSLs will make an immediate risk and needs assessment on a case-by-case basis which will consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support.
- the alleged perpetrator, their support needs and any discipline action.
- all other children at the school.
- the victim and the alleged perpetrator sharing classes and space at school.

This will be recorded and kept under review. In completing this assessment, the DSL will consider:

- the wishes of the victim
- the nature of the incident including whether a crime has been committed and the harm caused
- ages of the children involved
- developmental stages of the children
- any power imbalance between the children
- any previous incidents, whether the alleged incident is a one-off or sustained pattern
- ongoing risks
- other related issues or wider context.

When there has been a report of sexual violence, one of the DSLs will make an immediate risk assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The DSLs will consider as part of the School's response, the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur and the importance of anonymity. Risk assessments will immediately be recorded and kept under review. The DSLs will consider the risks posed to all pupils and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe. This may include consideration of the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and considerations regarding shared classes, school premises and school transport.

The risk assessment will consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support;

- whether there may have been other victims,
- the alleged perpetrator(s); and
- all the other children, (and, if appropriate, staff) at the school especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harms.

The DSLs will follow any of these options as appropriate:

- manage internally
- Early Help intervention
- refer to Children's Social Care
- report to the police (generally in parallel with a referral to Children's Social Care).

The School will follow the actions as detailed in Part 5 of KCSIE.

The School will take into account the views of the child/children affected. Unless it is considered unsafe to do so, the DSLs should discuss the proposed action with the child/children and their parents following appropriate liaison with children's social care. The School should manage the child/children's expectations about information sharing, and keep them and their parents informed of developments, where appropriate and safe to do so.

The School will do everything possible to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, including the possible impact of social media.

A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation. The School will take advice from Lancashire CSAP on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils involved including the alleged "victim" and "perpetrator".

If it is necessary for a pupil to be interviewed by the Police in relation to allegations of abuse, we will ensure that, subject to the advice of Lancashire CSAP, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the pupils involved are supported during the interview by an appropriate adult and until the investigation is completed.

Confidentiality will be an important consideration for the School and advice will be sought as necessary from Lancashire CSAP and/or the Police as appropriate. The DSLs will manage each case individually and will ensure the risk assessment is reviewed regularly with relevant partner agencies, for example the Police and Children's Social Care.

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the School will, if it has not already, consider any suitable sanctions in light of the Behaviour Policy, which may include consideration of permanent exclusion. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases. The School will consider whether disciplinary action may be appropriate for any child/children involved. Before deciding on appropriate action, the School will always consider its duty to safeguard all children from harm; the underlying reasons for a child's behaviour; any unmet needs, or harm or abuse suffered by the child; the risk that the child may pose to other children; and the severity of the child-on-child abuse and the causes of it. Exclusion will only be considered as a last resort and only where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the other children in the School.

The DSLs will ensure that where children move to another educational institution following an incident of child on-child abuse, the new institution is made aware of any ongoing support needs and, where appropriate, any potential risks to other children and staff.

19. Online Safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. At Oakhill we are working towards an approach to online safety which protects and educates pupils, students, and staff in their use of technology with mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **content**: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- **contact**: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: child-to-child pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes'.
- **conduct**: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g., consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **commerce** - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If pupils, students or staff are at risk, they should report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (https://apwg.org/).

At Oakhill, we want to ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing policies and procedures. This will include considering how online safety is reflected as required in all relevant policies and considering online safety whilst planning the curriculum, any teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Leads and any parental engagement.

20. Children Missing Education (CME)

Oakhill recognises that all children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. (see Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities)
We recognise that children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse and harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

All children absent from school without warning / reason will be investigated by the School Secretary, who will on the day of absence contact by telephone and / or email the parents / guardian of the child in order to establish the reason for their absence, following the procedures set out in our Attendance Policy. Pupils who are absent from school for 10 days or more without a valid reason will be reported by the DSLs using the procedures set out in our Children Missing in Education policy.

At induction all members of teaching staff are informed of the School's Attendance Policy, the Missing Child Policy and Children Absent from Education Policy. This is available on the website and from the School Office. All staff responsible for the registration of pupils are aware of the School's procedures for pupils missing from school set out in the Children Absent from Education Policy, the Attendance Policy and the Missing Child Policy. These policies give full details of the School's safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.

As set out in the School's Admissions Policy, we ensure that there is a record of joiners and leavers as defined in The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations (England) 2006 revoked and full school procedures can be found in this policy.

21. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) or Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) occur when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual or criminal activity. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse 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 clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

Exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection). It involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. Child sexual and criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. All staff are aware of the link between online safety and vulnerability to CSE/CCE. It also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually or criminally exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal 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 and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

The School is aware there is a clear link between regular non-attendance at school and CSE/CCE. Staff will consider a child to be at potential risk in the case of regular non-attendance at school and make reasonable enquiries with the child and parents to assess this risk.

Any concerns that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually exploited should be passed immediately to the DSLs. The DSLs will use the CSE Operational Protocol Pan Lancashire to assess potential risk and act accordingly if there is a concern that a child is being, or is at risk of, being sexually exploited.

22. County Lines and Gangs

There are a number of areas in which young people are put at risk by gang activity, both through participation in, and as victims of, gang violence which can be in relation to their peers or to a gang-involved adult in their household.

A child who is affected by gang activity or serious youth violence may have suffered, or may be likely to suffer, significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect.

The risk or potential risk of harm to the child may be as a victim, a gang member or both - in relation to their peers or to a gang-involved adult in their household. Teenagers can be particularly vulnerable to recruitment into gangs and involvement in gang violence. This vulnerability may be exacerbated by risk factors in an individual's background, including violence in the family, involvement of siblings in gangs, poor educational attainment, or poverty or mental health problems.

Criminal exploitation of children is a typical feature of County Lines criminal activity. Key identifying features of involvement in county lines are when children are missing, when the victim may have been trafficked for transporting drugs, a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (Human trafficking victims referral and assessment forms October 2024) should be considered with Children's Social Care and Police colleagues.

A child who is affected by gang activity, criminal exploitation or serious youth violence can be at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Girls may be particularly at risk of sexual exploitation. Any concerns that a child is being or is at risk of being criminally exploited will be passed without delay to the DSLs. The School is aware there is a clear link between regular non-attendance at school and exploitation. Staff will consider a child to be at potential risk in the case of regular non-attendance at school and make reasonable enquiries with the child and parents to assess this risk.

A referral to the MASH will be made when any concern of harm to a child as a consequence of gang activity including child criminal exploitation becomes known. If there is concern about a child's immediate safety, the police will be contacted on 999.

Anyone worried about a child or young person involved in, or at risk from, gangs can call the NSPCC. Helpline practitioners have been trained as part of the Home Office Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme, and can offer advice, support and information on what action to take to help young people who are in, or at risk from, a gang.

23. Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), all of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Domestic abuse represents one quarter of all violent crime. It includes actual or threatened incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, age, religion, mental or physical ability. It involves the use of power and control by one person over another. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

We use the term domestic abuse to reflect that a number of abusive and controlling behaviours are involved beyond violence. Slapping, punching, kicking, bruising, rape, ridicule, constant criticism, threats, manipulation, sleep deprivation, social isolation, and other controlling behaviours all count as abuse.

Living in a home where domestic abuse takes place is harmful to children and can have a serious impact on their behaviour, wellbeing and understanding of healthy, positive relationships. Children who witness domestic abuse are at risk of significant harm and staff are alert to the signs and symptoms of a child suffering or witnessing domestic abuse.

If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of domestic violence, they should refer this to the DSLs who will activate the local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and social care.

Operation Encompass

Oakhill is part of Operation Encompass. This is a police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Abuse.

Operation Encompass means that the police will share information about Domestic Abuse incidents with our school PRIOR to the start of the next school day when they have been called to a domestic incident.

The Operation Encompass information is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information.

The Key Adult, who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead, delivers training for all school staff and Governors about Operation Encompass, the prevalence of Domestic Abuse and the impact of this abuse on children. We have also discussed how we can support our children following the Operation Encompass notification.

We are aware that we must do nothing that puts the child/ren or the non-abusing adult at risk. We will report on Operation Encompass in report to Governors. All information is anonymised for these reports.

The Key Adult has used the Operation Encompass Toolkit to ensure that all appropriate actions have been taken by the school.

24. Honour Based Violence (HBV)

So called 'honour-based' violence encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and / or community. All forms of HBV regardless of motivation are abuse and should be escalated as such. If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV they should activate the local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and social care.

25. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Staff 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. Victims 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 MUST personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out.

26. Mental Health

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. 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 guidance in this policy and speaking to the DSLs or a deputy. The Designated Safeguarding Leads also have a role as senior mental health promoting wellbeing and mental health in school.

School can access a range of advice to help them identify children in need of extra mental health support, which includes working with external agencies. The Department has published advice and guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying and The Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools guidance sets out how schools can help prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience as part of an integrated approach to social and emotional wellbeing, which is tailored to the needs of pupils. Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. Its resources include social media, forming positive relationships, smoking and alcohol. Rise Above also provides links to materials and lesson plans.

27. Forced marriage

Forcing a person to marry is a crime in England. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (learning difficulties for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Schools can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage. School staff can contact the forced marriage unit if they need guidance.

28. Preventing Radicalisation

The Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (2023, revised March 2024) places a duty on education and other children's services to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Some children are at risk of being radicalised; adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. This can happen both online and offline.

Oakhill aims to build pupils' resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology. As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.

The School is clear that exploitation of vulnerable children and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern. Staff receive training to help identify early signs of radicalisation and extremism and opportunities are provided in the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture.

When any member of staff has concerns that a pupil may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with one of the DSLs. They should then follow the safeguarding procedures and refer cases to the MASH. If the matter is urgent then police must be contacted by dialling 999. In non-urgent cases where police advice is sought then dial 101 and ask to speak to the Prevent Coordinator.

Indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation

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

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.

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.

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.

Pupils 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. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) making a Prevent referral.

Indicators of vulnerability include:

- identity crisis – the student / pupil is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences / discomfort about their place in society;
- personal crisis – the student / pupil 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 question about identity, faith and belonging;
- personal circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student / pupil'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;
- unmet aspirations – the pupil may have perceptions of injustice or a feeling of failure;
- experiences of criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement / reintegration;
- Special Educational Needs and Disability – pupils may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

Indicators of someone being radicalised could include:

- disclosing their exposure to extremist actions
- possession of or duplication of symbols or materials associated an extremist cause
- use of extremist or 'hate' terms to exclude others or incite violence
- intolerance of difference whether secular or religious or views based on, but not exclusive to gender, disability, race or culture
- attempts to impose extremist views on others
- anti-British views

More critical risk factors could include:

- being in contact with extremist recruiters
- accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element
- possessing or accessing violent extremist literature
- using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage
- justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues
- joining or seeking to join extremist organisations; and
- significant changes to appearance and / or behaviour
- experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and / or personal crisis.

However, these lists are not exhaustive, nor does they mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism.

29. School Security and Safe Environment

Oakhill makes provision for teaching children to keep safe online and in other settings. Prep children upwards receive online safety education within computing lessons; PSHE; form time and assemblies. Further details can be found in the ICT Acceptable Use Policy, which also contains information on maintain internet safety, the use of filters, the monitoring of usage and the management of access to 3G/4G. Staff using ICT within school must sign the acceptable use policy.

To help ensure appropriate staff/pupil relationships, all staff should read and follow the Safer Working Practices Policy which is based on the document *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings.*

All visiting speakers will have pre-visit checks to ensure their suitability and will be appropriately supervised.

The School is a safe and secure environment for all pupils. All classrooms, where possible, are secured behind external doors with keycode entry. The School codes are changed annually. Staff are vigilant to any unknown persons on the School site. A visitor's badge is required by all visitors and if not visible, staff are required in their duty of care to take the visitor to reception for a badge. All gym/leisure members are to stick to the official pathways that lead to the leisure facility, and leisure areas are clearly marked and segregated. Key fob entry is required to enter the prep building from the Leisure facility. Leisure members cannot access this door. CCTV is monitored throughout the day in the School's main office and in the Proprietor's office. There are also supervision policies in place to ensure safe movement around the School.

30. Private Fostering Arrangements

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16 years old or 18 years old if the child is disabled. Children looked after by the local authority or who are place in residential schools, children's homes or hospitals are not considered to be privately fostered. Private fostering occurs in all cultures and children may be privately fostered at any age.

School recognises that most privately fostered children remain safe and well but are aware that safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases. Therefore, all staff are alert to possible safeguarding issues. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify Children's Social Care as soon as possible. However, where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will raise this will the DSLs and the DSLs will notify the MASH.

31. Use of taxis to transport children

There may be occasions when pupils need to travel between their school and home in a taxi. Although many taxi firms and taxi drivers are careful to ensure the safety of young passengers, children can be very vulnerable when travelling alone. We do not recommend that pupils of primary school age are routinely allowed to travel to and from school in a taxi when unaccompanied. Where this is a necessity, school should be made aware of this arrangement in writing to inform school that such a journey will be made and what the frequency of such journeys may be. We also recommend that other pupils who are vulnerable but who are not of primary school age should not travel unaccompanied in a taxi and a similar agreement should be signed by parent, guardian or carer. The expectation placed upon parents, guardians or carers is that children should be dropped off and collected at school by a responsible adult. This would mean that pupils who need to travel by taxi

are accompanied on that journey by a parent, guardian or carer. If a pupil travels “occasionally” in a taxi, we would expect school to be notified by phone to allow the school to ensure that the pupil arrives safely and when expected.” A failure to act responsibly and in the best interests of the young person will result in a letter from school re-stating the expectations with regard to travel in taxis and if necessary, a formal meeting with school staff will be held to discuss the possible associated safety concerns. We also feel obligated to state that children travelling in cars or taxis should be seated on an appropriate car seat or booster seat to ensure their safety when travelling. When schools send pupils in a taxi, we suggest that staff should write down all the details from the badge of the taxi driver and note the name of the firm and the registration number of the vehicle.

32. Contact Details

Designated Safeguarding Team Contact Details

All of the team can be contacted by telephone via the School Office on 01254 823546 or via their individual email addresses below.

Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead Member of SLT	**Lisa Hitchen (Lead)**	**hitchen.l@oakhillschool.co.uk safeguarding@oakhillschool.co.uk**
Designated Safeguarding Lead Member of SLT	**Claire Raho**	**raho.c@oakhillschool.co.uk safeguarding@oakhillschool.co.uk**
Deputy DSL Member of SLT (EYFS)	**Gemma Curley**	**curley.g@oakhillschool.co.uk**
Deputy DSL Member of SLT (EYFS)	**Angela Ragen**	**ragen.a@oakhillschool.co.uk**
DS Team Member of SLT/ Principal	**Jane Buttery**	**principal@oakhillschool.co.uk**
DS Team Member of SLT/ SENDCo	**Lyndsey Meechan**	**meechan.l@oakhillschool.co.uk**
DS Team Prep Teacher	**Louise Barnes**	**barnes.l@oakhillschool.co.uk**
DS Team Teaching Assistant	**Sarah Langford**	**langford.s@oakhillschool.co.uk**
CLA (Looked After Child) nominated staff	**Lyndsey Meechan**	**meechan.l@oakhillschool.co.uk**
Named governor with Safeguarding responsibilities	**Nadine Baron**	**Can be contacted via Nikki Hunt, Clerk to the Governors hunt.n@oakhillschool.co.uk**
Chair of Governors	**Anthony Baron**	**tonybaron@oakhillschool.co.uk**

Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) *Formerly Lancashire Safeguarding Children's Board*

LCC Schools Safeguarding Officer	*Mechelle Lewis / Victoria Wallace/ Sarah Holyhead* *01772 531196* *victoria.wallace@lancashire.gov.uk* *mechelle.lewis@lancashire.gov.uk* *sarah.holyhead@lancashire.gov.uk* *safeguardingeducationteam@lancashire.gov.uk*
LCC Safeguarding Advice line (24hr)	*Requesting support from Children's Services - Lancashire County Council – form to fill in and send to safeguardingadviceline@lancashire.gov.uk* *01772 531196*
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	*Tim Booth / Shane Penn / Donna Green – 01772 536694* *LADO.admin@lancashire.gov.uk*
Education Early Support Coordinators	*Jenny Ashton 01772 531643* *jennifer.ashton@lancashire.gov.uk* *Matt Chipchase 01254 220989* *matt.chipchase@lancashire.gov.uk*
Lancashire Children's Social Care (Children's Services Referrals)	*0300 1236720* *cypreferrals@lancashire.gov.uk*
Whistleblowing	*01772 532500* *WhistleblowingComplaints@lancashire.gov.uk*

Police	01772 20320
OFSTED Helpline	0300 123 1231
OFSTED Whistleblowing	0300 123 3155 whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
OFSTED Complaints	0300 123 4666
National Childline	0800 1111
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline	0800 800 5000 help@nspcc.org.uk
Channel referrals	01772413029
Lancashire Prevent Team	concern@lancashire.pnn.police.uk 01282 472329/ 01282 472324

ISI Contact Details
ISI
Cap House
9-12 Long lane
London
EC1A 9HA
Tel: 0207 600 010

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:

- NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available. Staff can call 0800 0280285 – 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends. The email address is: help@nspcc.org.uk. Alternatively, staff can write to: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH.

- Ofsted provides guidance on how to make complaints about a childcare provider: Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

- General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: Whistleblowing for employees.

IF AT ANY TIME A DEFICIENCY IS FOUND IN THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE, THIS WILL BE REMEDIED IMMEDIATELY.

This policy will be monitored by the Principal, the DSL and the staff; updated as necessary and reviewed annually by the governors.

Policy Updated: September 2025

Last Annual Review by Governing Body: June 2025

Safeguarding and KCSIE Training for all staff: September 2025
Prevent training: October 2024
Training for the Designated Safeguarding Lead – Lisa Hitchen – 01/07/2025 Claire Raho- 25/9/25
Deputy DSL Training 04/07/23
Training for EYFS Designated Safeguarding Leads 03/01/25
Safer Recruitment: 23/09/23 (AR) 24/09/24 (GC) 23/11/23 (JB) 1/11/24 (LH) 29/09/25 (LB)
Single Central Record – Getting it Right 14/10/24 (LH)