Meare Village Primary School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Review

Review Cycle	Date of Current Policy	Author(s) of Current Policy	Review Date
Annual	September 2025	A Isherwood	September 2026

Ratification

Role	Name	Email	Date
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The key safeguarding responsibilities within each of the roles above are set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)			

**Any changes to key personnel/holiday/emergency contacts will be shared with the appropriate agencies.*

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1.1 Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 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 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.

Child Protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined in the Children Act 1989 (s.47) as when a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. Under statutory guidance and legislation action must be taken to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

Effective safeguarding means practitioners should understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact children and families' lives.

1.2 Introduction

At **Meare Village Primary School**

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who encounters children, their families, and carers, has a role to play.
- In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should always consider what is in the **best interests** of the child.
- We take an '**it can happen here**' approach where safeguarding is concerned.
- **Everyone** who encounters children has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.
- Victims of harm 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.

Meare Village Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by:

- The provision of a safe environment in which children and young people can learn.

- Acting on concerns about a child's welfare immediately.
- Fulfilling our legal responsibilities to identify children who may need early help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

All action taken by **Meare Village Primary School** will be in accordance with current legislation and guidance. The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- Education Act 2002 Section 175 (maintained schools only)
- Education Act 2002 Section 157 (Independent schools incl Academies and CTC's)
- The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Teachers' Standards (Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Information Sharing 2024
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused
- Filtering and monitoring standards in schools and colleges (DfE)
- Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Local Guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership: Policies and Procedures - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Recruitment and Selection
- How to report Low Level Concerns
- Whistleblowing and Public Interest Disclosure
- Code of Conduct for Staff/ Staff Behaviour Policy
- Relational Behaviour (which should include measures to prevent child on child bullying, harmful sexual behaviour including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, and Exclusions Policy of a separate document)
- E-Safety
- Self-Harm
- Attendance (including the safeguarding response to children who are absent or are missing from education)
- Health and Safety

Through regular monitoring, Head Teachers should ensure that the above policies and procedures, adopted by governing bodies and proprietors, are accessible, understood and followed by all staff.

1.3 Equalities Statement

With regards to safeguarding we will consider our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and our general and specific duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty. General duties include:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations across all protected characteristics between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Details of our specific duties are published under Meare Village Primary School's equality statement and measurable objectives. **These are available on our website Equality Statement.docx**

Staff are aware of the additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This will be in line with our Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy SEND-Policy.pdf

Meare Village Primary School also adheres to the principals of and promotes anti-oppressive practice in line of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Act 1998.

1.4 Overall Aims

This policy will contribute to the safeguarding of children at Meare Village Primary School by:

- Clarifying safeguarding expectations for members of the education setting's community, staff, governing body, learners, and their families.
- Contributing to the establishment of a safe, resilient, and robust safeguarding culture in the setting built on shared values; and that our learners are treated with respect and dignity, taught to treat each other and staff with respect, feel safe, have a voice, and are listened to.
- Supporting contextual safeguarding practice recognising that the setting's site can be a location where harm can occur.
- Setting expectations for developing knowledge and skills within the setting's community (staff, learners, parents/carers) to the signs and indicators of safeguarding issues and how to respond to them.
- Early identification of need for vulnerable learners and provision of proportionate interventions to promote their welfare and safety.
- Working in partnership with learners, parents, and other agencies in the Local Safeguarding Partnership including Early Help.

Meare Village Primary School is named as a relevant agency in the Local Safeguarding Partnership (Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership). This policy sets out its statutory duty to co-operate, follow and comply with published arrangements as set out by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership's professional expectations, roles, and responsibilities.

1.5 Professional expectations, roles and responsibilities.

1.5.1 Role of all staff

- All staff will read and understand Part 1 of statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025). Those working directly with children will also read Annex B.
- In addition to this all staff will be aware of the systems in place which support safeguarding including reading this Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy; the Behaviour Policy; the Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct); safeguarding response to children who go missing or are absent from education; and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Know who and how to contact the DSL and any deputies, the Chair of Governors and the Governor responsible for safeguarding.
- All staff will be able to identify vulnerable learners and take action to keep them safe. Information or concerns about learners will be shared with the DSL where it includes those:
    - who may need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect.
    - requiring mental health support.
    - may benefit from early help.
    - where there is a radicalisation concern.
    - where a crime may have been committed.
- Be clear as to the setting's policy and procedures about child on child abuse, children missing or absent from education and those requiring mental health support, and the impact of technology in relation to online safety including online filtering and monitoring processes.
- Be involved where appropriate, in the implementation of individual plans to further safeguard vulnerable learners and understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.
- Record concerns appropriately and in a timely manner by using the setting's safeguarding systems.
- To be aware of the need to raise to the senior leadership team any concerns they have about safeguarding practices within the school.

1.5.2 - Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputies (DDSL)
Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025, Annex C)

Details of our DSL and Deputy DSL and how to contact them are available on the Meare Village Primary School website, our newsletters, the notice board in reception and on posters throughout the school.

- The DSL is a senior member of staff who undertakes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the setting.
- The DSL has undertaken the **SSCP** training to ensure they are compliant with the Local Authority requirement for DSLs.
- The DSL works with the Head Teacher, and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that learners in need are experiencing or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on learner's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college.
- Activities include the management of work undertaken by any Deputy DSLs.
- Manages early identification of vulnerability of learners and their families from staff through cause for concerns or notifications. This will ensure detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Manages referrals to local safeguarding partners where learners with additional needs have been identified. These can include those –
    - who need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect.
    - requiring mental health support.
    - who may benefit from early help.
    - where there is a radicalisation concern.
    - where a crime may have been committed.

The DSL will also:

- Work with others – acting as a point of contact for outside agencies about safeguarding.
- Support and advise other staff in making referrals to other agencies.
- When required, liaise with the case manager and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in relation to child protection cases which concern a staff member.
- Coordinate regular safeguarding training and raise awareness and understanding to the school community around policies and practice in relation to safeguarding.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about vulnerable learners with relevant staff. This includes ensuring that staff:
    - know who these children are,
    - understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.

- Are supported to identify the challenges that children in this group might face.
- Provide additional academic support or make reasonable adjustments to help children who have **or have had** a social worker to reach their potential.

- Ensure the secure transfer of the Child Protection File when a child moves to a new setting-within 5 days for in year transfer or the first 5 days of the start of a new term.
- Arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities, e.g. attendance at Strategy and Initial Child Protection Conferences out of term time.
- Take lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

1.5.3 - Role of the Governing Body –

Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025, Part 2)

There is a senior board level lead who takes responsibility for the setting's safeguarding responsibility to ensure that safeguarding and child protection practice, process, and policy (including online safety) is effective and is compliant with legislation, statutory guidance, and Local Safeguarding Partnership arrangements.

- The appointed Safeguarding Governor will liaise with the Head Teacher and the DSL to produce an annual report for governors and complete the annual S175/157 safeguarding audit from Somerset Council.
    - Ensure that the school remedies any actions brought to its attention without delay.
    - Ensure that this document is updated annually (or when there are significant updates)
- Ensure that the DSL is an appropriate senior member of the school's senior leadership team and ensure that they have adequate time, funding, training, resources, and support to carry out their role effectively.
- Ensure that they attend Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership training and that safeguarding learning for the school community is robust and effective.
- Ensure that learners are taught about safeguarding on the curriculum including online safety in compliance with statutory guidance Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- Ensure that teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors have appropriate checks carried out in line with statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025, Part 3).
- Ensure that there are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns or allegations against teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors who may not be suitable to work with or pose a risk to learners, this includes having a process to manage low level concerns.
- Ensure that systems are in place for learners to effectively share a concern about a safeguarding issue they are experiencing, express their views and give feedback.
- Ensure that the setting has systems in place to prevent, identify and respond to child-on-child harm (including sexual abuse and sexual harassment) and mental health concerns, and review the effectiveness of the setting's online safety practices including filtering and monitoring.
- Appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement for children in care and other care arrangements.
- Ensure the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. Ensuring that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified. Governing bodies and proprietors will consider the age range of their children, the number of children, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs verses safeguarding risks.

1.6 Safeguarding training for staff

Governing bodies and proprietors will ensure that all staff members undergo the Somerset Safeguarding Child Partnership (SSCP) safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) training at induction.

1.6.1 - All staff:

- Will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) refresher training at least annually (via formal training, email e-bulletins and staff meetings).
- Must complete FGM awareness training and will understand their legal duty under the Mandatory Reporting Duty.
- Must complete PREVENT awareness training annually. This is to ensure that they can comply with the legal expectations under the PREVENT duty.
- Will receive training which includes clear reference to internal whistleblowing policy and guidance for escalating concerns.
- All staff should receive training on the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.

1.6.2 - Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies:

- Will undergo formal training provided by the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP) to provide them with the knowledge and skills and training (including online safety) required to carry out the role. The training will be updated every two years.
- Deputies will be trained to the same level as the DSL.
- The DSL and any deputies will liaise with the SSCP and Somerset Education Safeguarding Service to ensure that their knowledge and skills are updated via e-bulletins, attend DSL network meetings, and take time to read and digest safeguarding bulletins.

1.6.3 - Other training considerations:

- The governing body will ensure that at least one person on any appointment panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training, in line School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009.
- Members of the senior leadership team will make themselves aware of and understand their role within the local safeguarding arrangements. This will ensure that those who have responsibility for the management of behaviour, inclusion, Special Educational Needs, attendance, and exclusions will carry out their duties with a safeguarding consideration.
- The Designated Teacher for Children in Care will undergo appropriate training to fulfil their role to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are in care.
- The mental health lead has access to appropriate training.
- Training around safeguarding issues in Annex B (including online safety and filtering and monitoring) will be integrated, aligned, and considered as part of a whole school safeguarding approach.
- Appropriate colleagues have received appropriate training in relation to use of reasonable force and positive handling.
- Governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction.

1.7 Safeguarding in the curriculum

Meare Village Primary School is dedicated to ensuring that children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. We recognise that effective education should be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
This is part of a broad and balanced curriculum.
This includes:

- Working within statutory guidance in respect to Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk); and Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, to explore key issues at an age-appropriate stage such as:
    - healthy and respectful relationships
    - boundaries and consent
    - stereotyping, prejudice and equality
    - body confidence and self-esteem
    - how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
    - the concepts of, and laws relating to - sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called 'honour'-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support, and
    - what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.
- A whole-school preventative education approach that prepares children for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment.
- Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place to ensure that 'over-blocking' does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught about online teaching and safeguarding. (Further information can be found in KCSIE 2025, page 40)
- The curriculum will be shaped to respond to safeguarding incident patterns in the setting identified by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding team (e.g., to respond to an increase in bullying incidents).
- Providing engagement opportunities with parents and carers to consult on key aspects of the curriculum.
- Learners can inform the curriculum via discussions with the pupil leadership team and school council.

1.8 Safer recruitment and safer working practice

1.8.1 - Safer recruitment

Meare Village Primary School pays full regard to the safer recruitment practices detailed in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part Three' (DfE 2025), ensuring we maintain an accurate Single Central Record.

- This includes scrutinising applicants, by verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history and identifying any gaps within this, and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job.

References are always obtained, scrutinised and concerns resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

- It also includes undertaking appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the barred list checks and prohibition checks (and overseas checks if appropriate), dependent on the role and duties performed, including regulated and non-regulated activity.
- Applicants must provide an application form and Curriculum Vitae will not be accepted as a stand-alone.
- As a setting we will conduct online searches as part of our due diligence checks on short listed candidates and inform them of this.
- All recruitment materials will include reference to Meare Village Primary School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of learners.
- Assurances are sought for contractors who are required on site, including identification checks on arrival.

1.8.3 – Visitors

All visitors complete a signing in/out process, wear a school ID badge and are provided with key safeguarding information including the contact details of safeguarding personnel in school.

Scheduled visitors in a professional role (e.g. fire officer, police, LA staff) are asked to provide evidence of their role and employment details (usually an identity badge) upon arrival at school. Careful consideration is given to the suitability of any external organisations.

If the visit is unscheduled and the visitor is unknown to the school, we will contact the relevant organisation to verify the individual's identity, if necessary.

1.8.4 – Site Safety

Risk assessments are undertaken and maintained in accordance with the school's health and safety policy. The school ensures that when our premises are hired or rented to other organisations (ASC, evening and weekend clubs) including shared site providers who work with children, those organisations adhere to the guidance for out-of-school settings. [After-school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)]

1.8.5 – Off site visits and exchange visits

We carry out a risk assessment prior to any off-site visit and designate the specific roles and responsibilities of each adult, whether employed or volunteers.

Any adult over 18 in a host family will be subject to DBS checks. We work with partner schools abroad to ensure that similar assurances are undertaken prior to any overseas visit by our pupils.

1.8.6 - Use of reasonable force

'Reasonable force' refers to the physical contact to restrain and control children using no more force than is needed.' The use of reasonable force is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and will be determined by individual circumstances and the vulnerability of any child with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) will be considered.

- The use of reasonable force will be minimised through positive and proactive behaviour support and de-escalation and will follow government guidance (Use of reasonable force in schools - GOV.UK; Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention, 2019).
- There is robust recording of any incident where positive handling or restraint has been used. Further review of the incident is carried out to reflect on how the incident could be avoided, this will involve the child and their family.

The process around how the setting manages concerns where a professional may pose a risk to learners and our response to low level concerns can be accessed in section 2.8 Allegations of abuse made against professionals.

1.8.7 - Whistleblowing procedures

Staff are aware of the following whistleblowing channels for situations where they feel unable to raise an issue with the senior leadership team or feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed:

- General guidance can be found at: Advice on whistleblowing https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing.
- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available here for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.
- The above channels are clearly accessible to all staff (in the staff handbook, code of conduct and staff notice boards).
- Whistleblowing.pdf

1.9 Key safeguarding areas

These topics are themes that can impact on children and families, there are specific areas of safeguarding that the setting has statutory responsibilities to address which are hyperlinked:

- Children in the court system
- Children affected by parental offending/imprisonment.
- Children missing or absent from education – including persistent absence.
- Child Exploitation (including both Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation and county lines, modern day slavery and trafficking)

- Cybercrime
- Domestic Abuse
- Homelessness
- So-called Honour based Abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage),
- Online Safety
- Mental health
- Child on child abuse:
    - Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
    - Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.
    - 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-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery).
    - Upskirting, 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; and
    - 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).

- Preventing Radicalisation (The Prevent Duty)
- Serious Youth Violence
- Substance Misuse
- Private Fostering
- Young Carers

Additional information about key safeguarding areas can also be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education Annex B (DfE 2025); the NSPCC website - Types of Abuse.
Localised resources for education settings can be accessed through Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Somerset Education Safeguarding Service.

PART 2: Procedures

2.1 Reporting concerns

All staff are clear about recording and reporting concerns to the DSL/Deputy DSL in a timely way. In the case a learner is in immediate danger, staff should phone the police.

All staff are aware of and follow the procedures to respond to a concern about a child. This includes responses to child-on-child harm and learners who present with a mental health need (Appendix B).

At Meare Village Primary School children can raise their concerns via staff members, their teacher or Headteacher, and they will be treated seriously.

2.2 Information Sharing

Meare Village Primary School is committed to have due regard to relevant data protection principles which allow for sharing (and withholding) personal information as provided for in the Data protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulations. This includes how to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal and should be treated as 'special category personal data'.

Staff at the setting are aware that:

- 'Safeguarding' and 'individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data.
- Practitioners will seek consent to share data where possible in line with Information Sharing for Safeguarding Practitioners 2024.

There may be times when it is necessary to share information without consent such as:

- To gain consent would place the child at risk,
- by doing so will compromise a criminal investigation,
- It cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent,
- or, if by sharing information it will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner, but it is not possible to gain consent.

There are also times when Meare Village Primary School will not provide pupil's personal data where the serious harm test under legislation is met, (by sharing the information the child may be at further risk). When in doubt Meare Village Primary School will seek legal advice.

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

2.3 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners.

The DSL and Deputy DSL will regularly review and monitor those children who have been identified as vulnerable and those children who are potentially at greater risk or harm as detailed in KCSIE 2025, page 48 - 56. This can include reviewing attendance data, behaviour data, attainment data and safeguarding records. This is to ensure that:

- Proportionate and early interventions can be taken to promote the safety and welfare of the child and prevent escalation of harm.
- Information is shared with teachers and school and college leadership staff to promote educational outcomes.
- Learners who currently have, or have had, a social worker will have their academic progress and attainment reviewed and additional academic support will be provided to help them reach their full potential.
- Reasonable adjustments are made in relation to school-based interventions – for example responding to behaviour.

2.4 Multi-agency working

Meare Village Primary School will work together with appropriate agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children including identifying and responding to their needs. This is in compliance with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

Occasions that warrant a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989:

- If the child is in need under s.17 of the Children Act 1989 (including when a child is a young carer and or subject to a private fostering arrangement).
- Or if the child needs protection under s.47 of the Children Act 1989 where they are experiencing significant harm, or likely to experience significant harm.

Referrals in these cases should be made by the DSL (or Deputy DSL) to Children's Social Care in the Local Authority in which that child resides.

Where the child already has a social worker, the request for service should go immediately to the social worker involved or, in their absence, to their team manager. If the child is a child in care, notification should also be made to Somerset's Virtual School.

Meare Village Primary School will co-operate with any statutory safeguarding assessments conducted by children's social care: this includes providing written reports and ensuring representation at inter-agency meetings such as integrated support plan meetings, initial and review child protection conferences and core group meetings.

2.4.1 Additional considerations:

- Where a learner and/or their family is subject to an inter-agency child protection plan or a multiagency risk assessment conference (MARAC) meeting, the setting will contribute to the preparation, implementation, and review of the plan as appropriate.

- In situations where a child in care may be put on to part time timetable, the school will consult with relevant agencies and the virtual school.

- If a crime has been suspected or committed that involved the bringing of an offensive weapon on to the school site, the setting will liaise with the Police who will consider a proportionate response.

- If there is a risk of harm, the police should be called via 999. For other concerns of criminality, the non-statutory guidance when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf (npcc.police.uk) can be helpful or contact the local PCSO/School Police Beat Officer/Neighbourhood Team.

- In the rare event that a child death occurs, or a child is seriously harmed, Meare Village Primary School will notify the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership as soon as is reasonably possible.

2.5 Suspensions, permanent exclusions, and commissioning of Alternative Provisions.

(To be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy.)

When the setting is considering suspending or permanently excluding a child where an additional vulnerability is identified it is important that the child's welfare is a paramount consideration. The Head Teacher will consider their legal duty of care when sending a learner home.

Meare Village Primary School will exercise their legal duties in relation to their interventions. This includes:

- whether a statutory assessment should be considered in line with the principles of Children Act 1989,
- that decisions are made in an anti-discriminatory manner in line with the Equality Act 2010 (including having regard to the SEND Code of Practice)
- and takes into consideration the learner's rights under the Human Rights Act 1998.
- Interventions will be consistent with statutory guidance School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

2.5.1 - Actions to take

- An assessment of need should be undertaken with multi-agency partners with a view to mitigate any identified risk of harm this is in line with 2.3 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners.
- If the child is subject to a child protection plan or where there is an existing child protection file, we will call a multiagency risk-assessment meeting prior to making the decision to exclude.
- In the event of a one-off serious incident resulting in an immediate decision to exclude, we *must* complete a risk assessment prior to convening a meeting of the governing body.

2.5.2 - Commissioning Alternative Provisions

When commissioning Alternative Provision Meare Village Primary School will have regard to statutory guidance:

Alternative provision - GOV.UK

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

We will ensure there is a clear agreement of roles and responsibilities to maintain safeguarding and daily monitoring of attendance arrangements for learners who are not taught on site.

Meare Village Primary School will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that learner and will make necessary checks on the provider to ensure they are meeting the needs of the learner. Written confirmation from the Alternative Provision provider will be obtained to confirm that safer recruitment checks on staff have been completed, are satisfactory and compliant with relevant statutory guidance.

2.6 Children Missing or Absent from Education

(To be read in conjunction with the Attendance Policy.)

A learner missing or absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, or maybe an indicator of need for early help support. Staff should follow procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing or are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions. These should be reported to the DSL and reviewed in line with 2.3 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners.

Meare Village Primary School will follow the guidance detailed in Children Missing Education (2016), Working together to improve school attendance 2024 and Somerset Education Engagement Policy for Children Missing Education. We will comply with submitting attendance returns to the Local Authority within the agreed timescales.

This will include notifying the local authority in which the child lives:

- of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly,
- or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more,

- or who has been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

2.6.1 - Elective Home Education

Meare Village Primary School will notify the Local Authority of every learner where a parent has exercised their right to educate their child at home. Safeguarding concerns should be shared with the Attendance Monitoring Service and consideration of whether additional support from children's services should be made in line with the Children Act 1989.

2.7 Responding to incidents of child-on-child abuse

2.7.1 Child-on-child abuse

All children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. In addition, we have a zero-tolerance approach and will respond to all reports and concerns of child-on-child abuse and child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school, and/or online.

Child-on-child abuse is not tolerated, passed off as "banter" or seen as "part of growing up". The different forms of child-on-child abuse is likely to include, but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyber bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm
- 'upskirting' or any picture taken under a person's clothing without their permission or them knowing to obtain sexual gratification or cause humiliation, distress or alarm.
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting)
- sexual violence and sexual harassment between children, as defined by Sexual offences act 2003 which considers rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault, all types of sexual violence. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can be between two children, or a group of children and can occur online and offline.

Consequently, child-on-child abuse is dealt with as a safeguarding issue and recorded as such, not managed through the systems set out in the behaviour policy.

- Any child who may have been victimised and/or displayed such harmful behaviours, along with any other child affected by child-on-child abuse, will be supported

through the school's safeguarding team and pastoral system and the support will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

- We will address inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) as this can be an important intervention that may help prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.
- We acknowledge that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported. Staff maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

We minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by providing:

- a relevant, effective curriculum, that helps children to develop their understanding of acceptable behaviours, healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe. The curriculum is updated to reflect changes in legislation, and the mandatory teaching of Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education,
- established/publicised systems for children to raise concerns with staff, knowing they will be listened to, supported and valued, and that the issues they raise will be taken seriously,
- training to all staff so they understand that child-on-child abuse can and does happen and are trained to be alert to any behaviours that could cause concern,
- a clear procedure for all staff to report all incidents as a safeguarding concern to the school DSL/ Deputy DSL.
-

2.7.2 Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

The DSL will follow local and national guidance when there has been a report of sexual violence and harassment between children, including referring to Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. This will include liaising with other professionals to develop robust risk and needs assessments and multi-agency safety planning with appropriate specialist targeted work for children who are identified as posing a potential risk to other children. The Somerset Harmful Sexual Behaviour Protocol - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership should be utilised to inform assessment of risk and what actions to subsequently take. Any assessments need to take a Contextual Safeguarding approach to consider risks posed by any wider environmental factors present in a child's life. The DSL will record specifically the time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer.

- The NSPCC has a dedicated helpline 0800 136 663 to provide children who are victims of sexual abuse in schools with appropriate support and advice. The helpline also provides support to parents and professionals.
- The Lucy Faithful Foundation's, Shore Space, offers a confidential chat service for teenagers worried about sexual behaviour. Home - Shore

- Where the report includes an online element, the setting will follow Searching, screening and confiscation at school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child. The highlighted advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable.
- It is important that schools consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.
- When an incident involves an act of **sexual violence** (rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault) the starting point is that this should be passed on to police **regardless** of the age of criminal responsibility (10 years old). This must be reported directly via 101 for recording purposes and accountability. A concurrent referral to social care must also be made.

2.7.3 Serious violence

We recognise that success in learning is one of the most powerful indicators in the prevention of youth crime.

All staff are 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 educational 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.

2.7.4 - Contextual safeguarding approach to child-on-child abuse:

Meare Village Primary School will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by taking a contextual approach to safeguarding by increasing safety in the contexts of which harm can occur – this can include the school environment itself, peer groups and the neighbourhood.

Following any incidents of child-on-child abuse, the DSL will review and consider whether any practice or environmental changes can be made in relation to any lessons learned. This can include making changes to staffing and supervision, making changes to the physical environment and considering the utilisation and delivery of safeguarding topics in the curriculum.

2.8 Responding to allegations of abuse made against adults working in the setting.

Staff must report any concerns or allegations about a professional's behaviour (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors and those from organisations or individuals using the school premises) where they may have:

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

2.8.1 - Immediate action must be taken:

- Do not speak to the individual it concerns.
- Allegations or concerns about colleagues and visitors must be reported directly to the Head Teacher who will follow guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025, Part four: Allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff).
- If the concern relates to Head Teacher it should be reported to the Chair of Governors, who will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and they will decide on any action required.
- If there is a conflict of interest which inhibits this process of reporting, staff can report directly to the LADO.
- If allegations are regarding a member of supply staff, the school will take the lead and progress enquiries with the LADO, whilst continuing to engage and work with the employment agency.
- Allegations regarding foster carers or anyone in a position of trust working or volunteering with children should be referred to the LADO on the day that the allegation is reported. The allocated social worker should also be informed on the day. The school should not undertake any investigation unless the LADO advises this.

2.8.2 - Low level concerns

This should be read in conjunction with the staff code of conduct and Keeping children Safe in Education (DfE 2025). A low-level concern is not insignificant. This process should be used in events where a concern about professional conduct does not meet the threshold set out at the beginning of this section.

The setting provides a clear procedure for sharing low level concerns. Microsoft Word - Low level Concern These will be shared with the DSL or Head Teacher.

- Reports should be made to the DSL (or the head teacher if it is regarding the DSL). Meare Village Primary School creates an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation.

- The DSL will address unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct it at an early stage providing a responsive, sensitive, and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised.
- Review and correct any deficits in the setting's safeguarding system.

2.9 Mental health and wellbeing.

(A flow diagram is available in Appendix B to illustrate this section)

Schools and colleges have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their learners. 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, and or may require early help support.

Meare Village Primary School will commit to undertake the following.

- The appointment of a senior mental health lead who can support the development of knowledge and act as a point of expertise to promote the wellbeing and mental health of learners. This colleague will have sufficient training in mental health **and** safeguarding for them to carry out their role effectively.
- Early identification of vulnerability to mental health problems by reviewing attendance, behaviour, attainment, and safeguarding records at least on a termly basis.
- Ensure that learners can report and share concerns in line with section 2.1 Reporting a concern of this policy.
- Staff will follow a safeguarding process in terms of reporting concerns outlined in Appendix B so the DSL (and wider members of the safeguarding team such as the SENDCo) can assess whether there are any other vulnerabilities can be identified and proportionate support considered.
- Staff will ensure the immediate health and safety of a learner who is displaying acute mental health distress. This may require support from emergency services via 999 if the leaner is at risk of immediate harm.
- The DSL will consider whether a case can be managed internally, through early help, or should involve other agencies as required in line with section 2.4 - Multi-Agency Working.
- The setting will communicate and work with the learner and parents/carers to ensure that interventions are in the best interests of the child.
- DSL will liaise with staff to ensure reasonable adjustments are made and develop ways to support achieving positive educational outcomes.
- Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem – DSLs and the senior leadership team should be able to access specialist advice through targeted services.

2.9.1 - Contextual safeguarding approach to mental health

Meare Village Primary School will ensure that preventative measures in terms of providing safeguarding on the curriculum will provide opportunities for learners to identify when they may need help, and to develop resilience.

The setting will take a 'whole school approach' to:

- deliver high quality teaching around mental health and wellbeing on the curriculum.
- having a culture that promotes mental health and wellbeing;
- having an environment that promotes mental health and wellbeing;
- making sure children and staff are aware of and able to access a range of mental health services;
- supporting staff wellbeing
- And being committed to child and parent participation

2.10 Online Safety

Online safety is an integrated and interwoven theme with other safeguarding considerations. It is essential that the DSL takes a lead on ensuring that interventions are effective. This means coordinating support and engaging with other colleagues in the setting who may have more technological expertise such as the IT manager.

Meare Village Primary School is committed to addressing online safety issues around content, contact, conduct and commerce. This includes:

- Ensuring that online safety is included in relevant policies and procedures.
- Online safety is interwoven in safeguarding training for staff and safeguarding on the curriculum for learners.
- Acknowledging that child on child abuse can happen via mobile and smart technology between individuals and groups. This should be approached in the same process outlined in section 2.7 Responding to incidents of child on child harm **and read in conjunction** with Meare Village Primary School's policy on the use of mobile smart technology Mobile-Phone-Smart-Watch-Device.pdf
- Provision of education via remote learning will comply with governmental advice Safeguarding and remote education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- The effectiveness of the setting's ability to safeguarding learners in respect to filtering and monitoring, information security and access management alongside the above will be reviewed annually.
- Preparing children with information for any online challenges and hoaxes, sharing information with parents and where to get help.

Somerset Council

Safeguarding Response to Mental Health and Child on Child Abuse

All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation **(KCSIE, 2025)**

All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. All staff should be clear about their settings's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse **(KCSIE, 2025)**

There is a concern about a learner's mental health

You are made aware of an incident or pattern of child-on-child abuse

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. **(KCSIE, 2024)**

Secure the safety of the learner(s) involved and source support for any other young people affected

Record the concern/incident in line with your setting's safeguarding and child protection policy, DSL and deputies are notified

The concern is reviewed by the DSL and safeguarding team. Information should be cross-referenced with attendance, behaviour records, attainment and any safeguarding and child protection concerns.

Possible examples of peer on peer abuse

- **Bullying (and cyberbullying)**
- **Physical abuse**
- **Sexual violence and sexual harassment**
- **Upskirting**
- **Sexting (youth produced sexual imagery)**
- **Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals**

Additional guidance used to respond to the concern:

- ***Mental health and behaviour in schools*** **(link)**
- ***Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing*** **(link)**

Concern and need reviewed alongside learner and family

Concern can be managed internally through setting-based early help, support and signposting.

Concern requires additional support from a targeted agency or Primary Mental Health Specialist.

Child protection concern that requires a referral to social care for an assessment under s.17 or s.47 of the Children's Act 1989. School may also refer directly to CAMHs.

Outcomes

Outcomes

Additional guidance used to respond to the concern

- ***Advice for Schools and Colleges on Responding to Sexting Incidents*** **(link)**
- ***Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool*** **(link)**
- ***GIFT work***
- ***Preventing and Tackling Bullying*** **(link)**
- ***NPCC: When to call the police*** **(link)**

Concerns managed internally through pastoral support, contextual safeguarding, restorative approaches, RSE/PSHE. Setting informs parents/carers of incident and actions.

Repeat incidents or that of moderate concern – Setting liaises with parents/carers. Consider seeking consent and advice for targeted/specialist services to support all learners involved in the incident(s).

Clear child protection concerns/criminal issue. Make a referral to social care and/or the police for consideration of a statutory assessment.

All actions, risk assessments and responses should be recorded on the Safeguarding/Child Protection file. Plans/risk assessments should be reviewed every 2 months or on any occasion another concern is raised.

Appendix **B**

Multi-Agency Contacts for Safeguarding in Education.

If you have concerns about a child/young person in Somerset:

If a child is at immediate risk call the POLICE	**POLICE** 999
To make an URGENT referral to Children's Social Care	i.e., a child is likely to suffer or is suffering significant harm, call Somerset Direct. **Somerset Direct 0300 122 2224**
To make a NON-URGENT referral to Children's Social Care.	Complete an Early Help Assessment and send to **SD Inputters SDinputters@somerset.gov.uk**
To raise concerns and ask for advice about radicalisation (also contact Somerset Direct).	**Police Prevent Team -** 01278 647466 PreventSW@avonandsomerset.police.uk **Local Authority Prevent Lead** prevent@somerset.gov.uk
To liaise with the specialist Safeguarding Police Unit	**Lighthouse Safeguarding Unit – Avon and Somerset Police 01278 649228**

DSL Consultation Line	**Inclusion Advice Line**	**Critical Incident Support**
0300 123 3078	0300 123 2224	EPS 01823 357000

If you have concerns about a professional working with a child:

To raise concerns and ask for guidance in relation to the conduct of someone who works with children.	**Local Authority Designated Officer - (LADO)** Allegations Management - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

For information, advice, and guidance in relation to safeguarding policy and procedures: **Education Safeguarding Leads** Educationsafeguardinglead@somerset.gov.uk Katherine Hollinghurst (East) Katherine.hollinghurst@somerset.gov.uk Beth Ollive (West) Beth.ollive@somerset.gov.uk
For advice and support in relation to attendance, SEND, Children Looked After: Inclusion Advice Line

Child sexual exploitation & child criminal exploitation	**Operation Topaz (Avon and Somerset Police)** https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/vul

Child Missing from Education	Notify us of a Child Missing from Education (CME) - Somerset Council
Children affected by Forced Marriage	**Forced Marriage Unit** 020 7008 0151 fmu@fco.gov.uk
Online Safety Advice	**Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline** T: 0344 381 4772 E: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Reporting online sexual abuse and grooming	**Child Exploitation and Online Protection command** https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/
FGM advice	**NSPCC FGM Helpline** 0800 028 3550 fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk
Domestic Abuse Helpline	0808 2000 247
Young Carers – advice and support.	0300 123 2224 YoungCarersmailbox@somerset.gov.uk
CAMHS	**Single Point of Access** CAMHS Single Point of Access (SPA) - CAMHS (somersetft.nhs.uk) 0300 1245 012 camhsspa@somersetft.nhs.uk
Whistleblowing professional policy	**NSPCC Whistleblowing hotline** 0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk
Advice around harmful sexualised behaviour.	DSL consultation line 0300 123 3078 Somerset Harmful Sexual Behaviour Protocol - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

Appendix C: Dealing with a disclosure of abuse.

When a child tells me about abuse they have suffered, what must I remember?

- Stay calm.
- Do not communicate shock, anger or embarrassment.
- Reassure the child. Tell them you are pleased that they are speaking to you.
- Never promise confidentiality. Assure them that you will try to help but let the child know that you may have to tell other people in order to do this. State who this will be and why.
- Do not ask "leading questions" or press for information. Use 'Tell Me, Explain to me, Describe to me' (TED) questioning.
- Listen and remember.
- Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you, using their own language.
- Praise the child for telling you. Communicate that they have a right to be safe and protected.
- It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender.
- Be aware that the child may retract what they have told you. It is essential to record all you have heard.
- At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know.
- As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations.
- Remember that records may be used as evidence in court proceedings and need to be factual and accurate.

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

- "The 5 R's" are helpful in understanding what professional's duties are in relation to responding to an incident.

Recognise – Respond – Reassure – Refer – Record

Appendix D: Types of abuse and neglect

The NSPCC has produced a series of Expert Insight videos, Expert insight videos | NSPCC Learning where experts talk about key child protection topics and share learning from their safeguarding experiences.

Abuse and neglect are defined as the maltreatment of a child or young person whereby someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

All school staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another. For children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) additional barriers can exist when identifying abuse and neglect, these include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- being more prone to peer group isolation than other children.
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

To address these additional challenges, schools and colleges should consider extra pastoral support for children with SEND (KCSIE, 2025).

The following are the definition of abuse and neglect as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, however, the ultimate responsibility to assess and define the type of abuse a child or young person may be subject to is that of the Police and Children's Services – our responsibility is to understand what each category of abuse is and how this can impact on the welfare and development of our children and where we have concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of abuse and neglect (one or more categories can apply) to take appropriate action as early as possible.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can 12 take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

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

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

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

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

The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse has useful resources and training Home | CSA Centre.

Appendix E: Specific actions to take on topical safeguarding issues.

General or national guidance will not be included here. A summary of specific duties are in Keeping children safe in education 2025 **Annex B**. It is recommended that school and college leaders and those staff who work directly with children should read this Annex. Access to local guidance can be found here: Policies and Procedures - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

In recognition that the threshold of child protection is 'likely to suffer' significant harm, Meare Village Primary School may need to make a referral to children's social care. Where possible, this will involve notifying the parent/carer if it does not place the learner at further risk of harm. In all other circumstances information will be shared in line with section 2.2 Information Sharing.

It is also important to recognise the importance of liaising with other education settings who may have siblings attending. It is likely that they may hold additional information which will support early identification of harm and in turn develop your assessment of need.

Child Exploitation – both Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Meare Village Primary School will ensure that early help intervention is provided as soon as a concern of exploitation is identified. Discussion and advice will be sought from targeted services to consider what support may be available. The learner and their families will be part of any planning and interventions.

- If the learner is at risk of CSE or there is intelligence which indicates that the learner or peer group are at risk of CSE, Meare Village Primary School will share information with Operation Topaz (the police). This information will support proactive activity to disrupt criminal activity in relation to sexual exploitation.
- If the learner is at risk of CCE information should be shared with Somerset's Violence Reduction Partnership - The VRP can advise and support settings to manage risk. Targeted support maybe available to disrupt learners from getting involved with criminality.
- Agencies will share 'Missing persons' notifications (when a learner is reported missing from home or care) with education settings with a view to support them to take proactive action and reasonable adjustments in relation to behaviour management and achieving positive educational outcomes. These should be stored securely on the learner's Safeguarding/Child Protection file.

Further support and information can be found here: Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation | The Children's Society

Domestic Abuse

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may

blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

Operation Encompass is a national operation where local police forces notify education settings when the police are called to an incident to domestic abuse. Education Settings will be notified when the police have responded to a domestic abuse incident. This will enable the education setting to take proactive action and reasonable adjustments in relation to behaviour management and achieving positive educational outcomes. When a setting is concerned about the amount of police notifications they receive or disclosures of domestic abuse they should consider seeking further advise and completing an Early Help Assessment or DASH to support the family.

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Homepage - National Domestic Abuse Helpline provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked.

Additional advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

- How to Protect Children From Domestic Abuse | NSPCC
- What is domestic abuse? - Refuge
- Safe Young Lives | Young people & domestic abuse - SafeLives
- Domestic abuse: specialist sources of support - GOV.UK
- Home : Operation Encompass

Female Genital Mutilation

Mandatory reporting duty: Click here for government guidance
There is a legal duty for all professionals undertaking teaching work to report known cases of FGM to the police via 101. This is when they:

1. are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
2. observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on.

These cases must be referred to the DSL who will support them to carry out their duty. It is also advised any referrals made to the police under the mandatory reporting duty is followed up with children's social care, so an assessment of need and support is concurrently considered.

Online Safety

- **Paragraph 134 to 143 of Keeping Children Safe in Education highlights additional actions schools should take to keep learners safe online.**
- For concerns around individual cases where a child has been harmed through online mediums, advice and guidance can be made through the **Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline**, T: 0344 381 4772, E: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
- Where there have been established cases of online abuse or grooming, the school settings should alert - **Child Exploitation and Online Protection command (CEOPS)** https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/

Mental health – linked to section within main body of this policy

Child on Child Abuse - linked to section within main body of this policy.

Serious Youth Violence

To be read in conjunction with the above section around Child Criminal Exploitation

It is important to note that should a weapon be used or there is threat of use, the police should be called immediately.

- The same day a weapon is found the school should call for a multi-disciplinary assessment of risk.
- Whilst it is acknowledged that the decision to exclude remains with the Head Teacher it is recommended that consultation with other agencies to ensure there is no further risks
- Alternatives to exclusions should be considered first in recognition that by doing so a learner it may be at further risk of harm out in the community.
- Police must be notified

Further information including support for young people and families and practitioner resources can be found here Serious Youth Violence - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

Preventing Radicalisation - The Prevent Duty.

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard109 to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".110 This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 57-76, which are specifically concerned with schools (and also covers childcare).

The guidance is set out in terms of four general themes:

- risk assessment,
- working in partnership,
- staff training,
- IT policies.

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child:

- under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled)
- by someone other than a parent or close relative (*Close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.)
- with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

Cases of private fostering arrangements must be reported to children's social care to ensure that needs are adequately made.

Statutory guidance states that this should be done at least 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to start or as soon as you are made aware of the arrangements. Not to do so is a criminal offence.

Further support and reasonable adjustments should be made by the education setting to promote achievement of positive educational outcomes.

Young Carers

A young carer is a person under 18 who regularly provides emotional and/or practical support and assistance for a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally unwell or who misuses substances. Support for Young Carers can be accessed by completing an EHA.