

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Reaseheath College will provide a safe environment for young people by identifying individuals who are in need or likely to suffer significant harm and will take appropriate action to ensure such individuals are kept safe.

At Reaseheath College the named personnel with designated responsibility for safeguarding are:

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Safeguarding Governor
Laura Williams laura.williams@reaseheath.ac.uk	Paul Spearritt paul.spearritt@reaseheath.ac.uk Kay Murray kay.murray@reaseheath.ac.uk	Mike Gorton (Via Head of Governance) jackies@reaseheath.ac.uk

The named personnel with designated responsibility regarding allegations against staff/those working in the college are:

Designated Senior Manager	Chair of Governors (in the event of an allegation against the Principal)
Marcus Clinton Marcus.Clinton@reaseheath.ac.uk	Jane Cowell (via Head of Governance) jackies@reaseheath.ac.uk

Additional Responsibilities

Designated Lead for looked after children
Tomos Griffiths
Mental Health Lead
Laura Williams
Single Point of Contact for Prevent (SPOC)
Laura Williams

SAFEGUARDING DEFINITION:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people is defined for the purposes of this policy as providing help and support to meet the needs of children and young people as soon as problems emerge, whether this is within or outside the home and including online; preventing impairment of their mental and physical health or development; ensuring that they grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

- Protecting young people from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of a child's health or development;
- Prevent young people from being drawn into extremist activities;
- Ensuring that young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all young people to have the best outcomes.

Child Protection is a part of Safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

RATIONALE:

At Reaseheath College we recognise the responsibility we have under Section 175 of the Education and Inspections Act 2002, to have arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people. The Governing Board in our college review the S.175/157 return to the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) on a yearly basis. This policy demonstrates the College's commitment and compliance with safeguarding legislation.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with young people and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners in this college make sure their approach is child centred. This means that we consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

The term 'child' (or children) includes everyone under the age of 18.

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If young people and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. Through their day-to-day contact with learners and direct work with families, staff take notice of indicators of possible abuse or neglect and consult with Children's Services in Cheshire East (or other local authorities depending upon the child's area of residence). We recognise that we form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This responsibility also means that we are aware of the behaviour of staff in the college; we

maintain an attitude of ‘**it could happen here**’ where safeguarding is concerned. We also recognise our responsibilities under the Government’s ‘Prevent Duty Guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales’.

PURPOSE:

In our College we ensure that:

- All children, regardless of sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics) are treated equally and have equal rights to protection
- We promote an inclusive, anti-discriminatory culture where racism, and other forms of discriminatory behaviour are recognised, challenged and addressed as part of our safeguarding responsibilities.
- All staff act on concerns or disclosures that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- All staff are professionally curious and feel able to challenge decisions to ensure children receive the right support
- Learners and staff involved in safeguarding issues receive appropriate support
- Staff adhere to a Code of Conduct & Staff Handbook and understand what to do in the event of any allegations against any adult working in the setting
- All staff are aware of Early Help and ensure that relevant referral, assessments, and interventions take place
- All staff are aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label; they recognise that, in most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another
- All staff understand that children’s poor behaviour may be a sign they are suffering harm or that they have been traumatised by abuse
- Staff have received advice, support and training in regard to adverse childhood experiences and trauma informed practice

The procedures contained in this policy apply to **ALL** staff, volunteers, casual/sessional workers, learners, agency staff, contractors, governors or anyone working on behalf of Reaseheath College, whether paid or unpaid, full time or part time, and whether or not they have direct learner contact. This includes staff working in curriculum, residential, estates, farm, zoo, catering, cleaning, commercial areas, agency roles and out-of-hours services.

They have been developed in line with Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (CESCP) guidance, Cheshire East Continuum of Need / Family Help arrangements and the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 statutory guidance.

The policy is referenced, and signposted, to all staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) at induction, alongside our Staff Code of Conduct. The safeguarding induction, and annual updates, will cover online safety, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, the role of the DSL, Keeping Children Safe in Education Part One in full, the student conduct policy (including bullying), safeguarding responses for

children who go missing from education and the staff code of conduct (including whistleblowing and social media use).

In addition, all staff including those who do not directly work with children are provided with Part One of the statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* and are required to sign to indicate that they have read it in full and understood it.

College leaders and staff who work directly with children also read Annex A, which contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues.

This policy reflects the whole college approach to child-on-child abuse. Staff are aware to refer to Part 5 of KCSiE if concerns arise along with the College's Student Conduct Policy and the Learner Harassment and Bullying Procedure.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is able to support all staff in understanding their responsibilities and implementing it in their practice.

Staff in Reaseheath College take the safeguarding of each child very seriously. This means that, should they have any concerns of a safeguarding nature about a child or adult, they are expected to report, record and take the necessary steps to ensure that the child is safe and protected. This is never an easy action, nor one taken lightly. They are aware that it can lead to challenge from parents/carers, but at all times staff have the child at the heart of all their decisions and act in their best interests.

Further information on our safeguarding and related policy documents and procedures is available on request from the Assistant Principal Student Experience and Support & Designated Safeguarding Lead.

TERMINOLOGY:

Child Protection refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside of the home, including in foster care and residential care, as well as online.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy 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

- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework

Staff: refers to all those working for or on behalf of the college/education setting in either a paid or voluntary capacity, full or part time, including those who do not have direct contact with children and those who work outside the normal college day. This includes staff, governors, volunteers, contractors, agency staff and those working in curriculum, residential, estates, farm, zoo, catering, cleaning, commercial and out-of-hours roles.

Child refers to all children who have not yet reached the age of 18. On the whole, this will apply to learners from our own college; however, the policy will extend to children visiting from other establishments.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role – stepparents, foster parents, carers and adoptive parents.

Early Help / Family Help: means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. At Reaseheath, staff should discuss early help or family help concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or safeguarding team so that the appropriate single-agency, multi-agency or Cheshire East Family Help pathway can be considered.

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

CONTENTS

There are 6 main elements to the Policy:

- 1 **Prevention** – through the curriculum and pastoral support offered to learners and through the creation and maintenance of a whole college protective ethos.
- 2 **Procedures** – for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse.
- 3 **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**
- 4 **Support for a child** who may have been abused.
- 5 **Safer Recruitment and Professional Boundaries** – by following the DfE guidance in *'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026'*, together with the college's own procedures.
- 6 **Governing Body Responsibilities**

1 PREVENTION

Children feel secure in a safe environment in which they can learn and develop. We achieve this by ensuring that:

1.1 Children develop realistic attitudes to their responsibilities in adult life and are equipped with the skills needed to keep themselves safe; including understanding and recognition of healthy/unhealthy relationships and support available

1.2 Children are supported in recognising and managing risks in different situations, including online; being able to judge what kind of physical contact is acceptable and unacceptable; recognising when pressure from others, including people they know, threatens their personal safety and wellbeing; and developing effective ways of resisting pressure.

1.3 All staff are aware of college guidance for their use of mobile technology and have discussed safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies and their associated risks

1.4 Importance and prioritisation are given to equipping children with the skills needed to stay safe, including providing opportunities for personal, health and relationship development through the Career Ready programme.

1.5 Appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place; however, we are careful that “over blocking” does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regards to online teaching, remote learning and safeguarding.

1.6 All adults feel comfortable and supported to draw safeguarding issues to the attention of the Principal/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead and can pose safeguarding questions with “respectful uncertainty” as part of their shared responsibility to safeguard children.

1.7 Emerging themes are proactively addressed and fed back to the local authority and CЕСP to ensure a coherent approach so that multi-agency awareness and strategies are developed.

1.8 There is a proactive approach to substance misuse. Issues of drugs and substance misuse are recorded, there are related policies and a curriculum which is robustly delivered throughout the College.

1.9 Support and planning for children in custody and their resettlement back into the College community is undertaken, where necessary, as part of our inclusive approach.

1.10 We comply with *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026* and support the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) [Continuum of Need / Family Help arrangements](#). This framework supports professionals to access the **right help and support** for children and their families at the **right time**.

1.11 We systematically monitor learner welfare, keeping accurate records, speaking to parents and notifying appropriate agencies when necessary.

1.12 All staff are aware of children with circumstances which mean that they are more vulnerable to abuse/less able to easily access services and are proactive in recognising and identifying their needs.

1.13 All staff are aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened; this could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL (or a Deputy) if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication with children and young people whilst ensuring safer working practices.

1.14 Our college is an Operation Encompass college, which means that we are able to give proactive support to those young people and their families where domestic abuse is identified. For example, via wellbeing support or counselling.

1.15 The voice of the child is paramount; therefore, our learners are actively involved in safeguarding development. There is an established 'student reps' mechanism which works with and challenges staff in order to develop aspects of safeguarding e.g. through the curriculum, approaches and displays.

1.16 We consult with, listen and respond to learners; our college's arrangements for this are through our learner voice strategy.

1.17 There is a commitment to the continuous development of staff with regards to safeguarding training.

- All staff undertake Effective Safeguarding (previously known as Basic Awareness) training, delivered by the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children in Education Settings (SCiES) team, usually within the first term of their employment, and receive regular updates and refresher training to enable them to understand and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. The Effective Safeguarding training is refreshed every 3 years, and includes local information, priorities and safeguarding procedures for Cheshire East, aligning with the CESCP training pathway for schools and colleges.

- All staff receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, ebulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard young people effectively.
- In addition, the Safeguarding team staff receive regular training and updates on safeguarding practice and emerging concerns/themes relevant to the college context.
- The DSL and Deputy DSL Team meet weekly to discuss escalated cases and emerging themes /concerns.
- The Designated Lead and any Deputy have completed specific training such as Designated Safeguarding Lead Training to carry out the duties of the role, and attend (CESCP) multi agency Safeguarding and Child Protection training on an annual basis.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead, and/or Deputy/ies attend the Designated Safeguarding Leads Meetings held each term coordinated by the SCiES Team, therefore enabling them to remain up to date with safeguarding practices and be aware of any emerging concerns/themes within Cheshire East.
- The college acknowledges findings from local and national practice reviews and shares lessons learned with staff.

1.18 All staff understand the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) Continuum of Need and Child Protection procedures; Right Help, Right Time - Delivering effective support for children and families in Cheshire East, Multi Agency Continuum of Need Guidance – to ensure that the needs of our children are effectively assessed; decisions are based on a child's development needs, parenting capacity and family & environmental factors. We ensure that the most appropriate referrals are made. In supporting Families First, we actively support multi agency planning for these children and, in doing so, provide information from the child's point of view; bringing their lived experience to life as evidenced by observations or information provided. Staff know how to pass on any concerns no matter how trivial they seem.

Staff members always act in the interests of the child and are aware of their responsibility to take action as outlined in this policy. In our college staff are aware that they must be prepared to identify those children who may benefit from early help.

Our staff are 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 pregnant and/or is a parent themselves
- has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups and county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care

- has experienced repeated removal from learning activities, multiple suspensions, a part-time timetable, or is at risk of permanent exclusion from college
- is at risk of exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised into terrorism
- 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
- has returned home to their family from care
- is at risk of honour or faith based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a 'privately fostered child'
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the college day

If there are concerns about a child's welfare that do not meet the thresholds of child abuse the college will consider whether the Early Help approach should be considered. Staff are aware that early identification of concerns and the use of Early Help to develop a multi-agency plan for the child can reduce the risk of subsequent abuse.

The multi-agency continuum of need is a guidance tool that all agencies, professionals and volunteers can use to consider how best to meet the needs of individual children and young people. This support can be provided on a single-agency or multi-agency basis. This approach aims to reduce risk and vulnerability and meet needs at the appropriate level of support and/or intervention. Access to effective early intervention and prevention services is essential to achieving this.

2 PROCEDURES AND RECORD-KEEPING

Reaseheath College will follow Cheshire East's safeguarding procedures with reference to Cheshire East "Recording and Reporting Guidance" 2026. The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy, and all Safeguarding Leads are aware of this document.

We follow the non-statutory Information Sharing Guidance when making decisions about whether to share information: [Information sharing duty statutory guidance](#)

We ensure that we follow Cheshire East's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements Agency [Roles and Responsibilities](#) to ensure that our work, on behalf of our children, is of a consistently good standard. We use these standards to challenge other workers on behalf of children where the standards are not being met. The Principal and the DSL are aware of the Cheshire East Escalation Procedure: [Procedure for Multi-Agency Professional Challenge](#).

This Policy is updated annually, and changes are made in line with any new DfE guidance.

The college will ensure that:

2.1 Safeguarding information including Child Protection information is stored and handled in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 – data protection laws, ensuring that information is:

- Used fairly and lawfully.
- For limited, specifically stated purposes.
- Used in a way that is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
- Accurate.
- Kept for no longer than necessary.
- Handled according to people's data protection rights.
- Kept safe and secure.

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. Staff should record the rationale for information-sharing decisions, including where information is shared without consent because this is necessary, proportionate and in the best interests of the child.

2.2 Where a member of staff is concerned that a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, they must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy, or a member of the Safeguarding Leads Team without delay. A written record must be completed using the Safeguarding Concern Form and reported as soon as possible following the disclosure or concern being raised, and always on the same working day.

2.3 Conversations with a child who discloses abuse should follow the basic principles:

- Listen rather than directly question, remain calm.
- Never stop a child who is recalling significant events.
- Never ask a child if they are being abused.
- Make a record of discussion to include time, place, persons present and what was said (child's own language – do not substitute words).
- Do explain to the learner that you may have a **legal** obligation to pass this information on
- Avoid coaching/prompting.
- Never take photographs of any injury.
- Never undress a child to physically examine them.
- Allow time and provide a safe haven / quiet area for future support meetings.
- At no time promise confidentiality to a child or adult.
- All victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Nor should a victim ever be made to feel they are a problem or ashamed for making a report.

- Where abuse has occurred online or outside of college, it will be treated equally seriously.

Ultimately, all staff have the right to make a referral directly to the police or children's services and should do this if, for whatever reason, there are difficulties following the agreed protocols, e.g. they are the only adult on the college premises at the time, are unable to contact relevant staff, are on a residential trip or have serious concerns about sending a learner home. Any staff member can make a referral to Children's Social Care/consult with Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS)/contact the police. Other options could include referral to specialist services or early help services and should be made in accordance with the multi-agency continuum of need set by Cheshire East's Safeguarding Children Partnership.

All reported concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, must be ultimately stored in CPOMS where it will be kept confidential and securely stored.

The Family Hub model is now implemented across Cheshire East and will strengthen existing partnerships in each locality, making it easier for practitioners to access support for families. Family hubs support children and young people from 0–19, or up to 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

In the first instance staff should discuss 'Early Help' requirements with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If early help is appropriate the Designated Safeguarding Lead will support the staff member in liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate.

As staff may be required to support other agencies and practitioners and parents /carers and children in an extra help plan or targeted help plan, all staff are aware of the relevant assessments and appropriate support is given to them when they undertake an early help assessment. We have a suite of screening tools which may also help to identify the level of need, the best pathway of support, and the interventions you can be provided for children, young people and families. These can be found on the CЕСCP website: www.cescp.co.uk.

Where early help and or other support is appropriate, we ensure that the situation for the child is kept under constant review. If the child's situation doesn't appear to be improving, we take appropriate action.

The children in our college are made aware that there are adults whom they can approach if worried or in difficulty. There is adequate signposting to external sources of support and advice for staff, parents and learners.

Staff are aware that they should only use open questions such as TED - Tell me what you mean by that, Explain what you mean by that, Describe that.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, or Deputy, will obtain key information and agree relevant actions after making a timely assessment of the information.

- 2.4 We recognise that parents may hold key information about incidents/allegations therefore, in the majority of situations, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or Deputy, will speak to parents to gain their consent to discussing the situation with others. Staff are aware that there will be very few instances where, to speak to the parents, could further endanger the child. In those situations, they would still consult/refer but would have clearly recorded reasons as to why they had not gained parental consent.

The following situations are the instances in which parental consent would not be gained prior to a referral:

- Discussion would impede a police investigation or social work enquiry.
- Sexual abuse is suspected.
- Organised or multiple abuse is suspected.
- Fabrication or induced illness or perplexing presentations is suspected.
- Honour or faith-based abuse e.g. forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) etc., is a possibility/is suspected.

Additional consideration regarding parental consent would be needed in the following circumstances, particularly if there are concerns around parental involvement or influence:

- Extremism or radicalisation is suspected.
- County Lines activities are suspected.

Staff are also aware that, even in situations where a parent does not give consent, the best interests of the child are paramount and therefore, they would share their concerns. In addition, the referral will not be delayed if it has not been possible to contact the parents/carers.

- 2.5 Hard copies of records or reports relating to Safeguarding and Child Protection concerns will be securely scanned and stored confidentially in CPOMS, away from the main learner file. Authorisation to access these electronic records will be controlled by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. We ensure that information is transferred safely and securely when a learner with a safeguarding record moves to another institution that we are aware of. Safeguarding records will be transferred as soon as possible and, wherever practicable, within five school/college days for an in-year transfer or within the first five days of the start of a new term. We also ensure that any key workers or social workers are notified where a learner leaves the College, as appropriate.

Records pertaining to staff are stored securely and confidentially, separately to incidents relating to young people. Access to these records is held by the Director of People and Culture.

All safeguarding records must be dated. All safeguarding records, including Safeguarding Concern Forms, must be dated and identify the member of staff completing the record.

- 2.6 There is always a Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy on hand who has the necessary seniority and skills, undertakes appropriate safeguarding training, and is given the time to carry out this important role.
- 2.7 Safeguarding concerns of all levels will be reported to the Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) Integrated Front Door (0300 123 5012). The Integrated Front Door RAG rate all contacts.

Timescales

Red – Immediate safeguarding concerns identified – Where a strategy meeting is required and threshold for significant harm is met **to be progressed within 4 hours**

Amber – If deemed safeguarding but not immediate risk, there will be **one working day** for triage and decision-making.

Green - Practitioner Support Officers have **three working days** to triage referrals and make a recommendation around next steps. This includes information requests unless court ordered or required for a section 47 enquiries in another local authority.

Contacts should be sent for authorisation with sufficient time for managers to review, as this is included within the timescales.

A consultation will take place with the Integrated Front Door (IFD) and/or the police immediately.

Where a child lives in a different authority the Designated Safeguarding Lead follows the procedures for that authority.

Where possible we ensure that contacts with outside agencies are through the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputy; however staff are aware that anyone can make this contact. Where a member of staff makes contact, they ensure that they make the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or their Deputy, aware as soon as possible.

- 2.8 Staff in our college are aware of their responsibilities under section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 which says that “If a **teacher**, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 the **teacher** must report this to the police”.
- 2.9 Our Designated Safeguarding Lead ensures that staff know the children who have experienced or are experiencing welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues so that, as relevant, we know who these children are, understand their academic progress and attainment; this means that we are able to make necessary adjustments to help these

children to achieve. In this way we maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort and their educational outcomes. This includes children with a social worker and those previously known to social care; we ensure that teachers are made aware of those children in this category.

2.10 Prevent Duty Procedures in addition to the above:

- The College will maintain regular contact with the regional Prevent Co-ordinator and Channel link Co-ordinator.
- Should any member of staff have concerns regarding a child or other individual's behaviour which suggests that they are displaying extremist tendencies, the concern must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will report concerns via the relevant Prevent referral process.

2.11 Where an allegation is made against a member of staff, the concern must be taken to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will speak with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to discuss the next steps, supported by the Director of People and Culture. If the allegation is against the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Director of People and Culture, the concern must be taken to the Principal. If the allegation is against the Principal, the Chair of Governors should be contacted immediately and advice from the LADO sought. If the allegation is against both the Principal and Chair, the LADO will be contacted. No member of staff will conduct their own investigation or pass on information to the alleged perpetrator. In all allegations, the LADO will advise on the action to take. The Emergency Duty Team should be contacted outside normal working hours on 0300 123 5022. Staff are aware that this must be done on the same working day.

The college will not internally investigate until instructed by the LADO.

2.12 Where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, including volunteers, governors, contractors and agency staff, a disciplinary investigation by the College will be conducted in accordance with the existing staff disciplinary procedures and as set out in Appendix 1 to this Policy, **only when any formal police or local authority investigations have been completed.**

2.13 We make all staff aware of their duty to raise concerns as we recognise the possibility that adults working in the College, including directly employed staff, contractors, volunteers, governors, supply teachers and trainee teachers, 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.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The last bullet point above includes behaviour that may have happened outside of College, that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children, this is known as a transferable risk.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them (as outlined in the College's Whistleblowing Policy).

- 2.14 As part of our whole college approach to safeguarding, we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about adults working in or on behalf of the college (including agency staff, volunteers, contractors and trainee teachers) are dealt with promptly and appropriately. This includes allegations which do not meet the harms threshold, also known as low level concerns.

Low level concerns

We understand that the term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the college may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.
- Does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

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

- Being over friendly with young people.
- Having favourites.
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to college policy.
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.
- Humiliating children.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Low level concerns will be reported in the same way as a concern in relation to concerns and allegations that meet the harms test i.e. to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Director of People and Culture, Principal if the concern is about the DSL or Chair of Governors if the concern is about the Principal.

Records of low-level concerns 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 DSL, supported by the Director of People and Culture, will decide on a course of action (unless the concern is with the DSL or Principal as outlined above). This might be internal disciplinary procedures, or referral to the LADO if the harms threshold is met.

The DSL will support the Principal in considering if there are any wider cultural issues in college, that enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of recurrence.

2.15 Organisations or Individuals using College Premises:

If the college receives an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using the premises for the purposes of running activities for children/young people (for example community groups, sports associations, or specific external service providers), as with any safeguarding allegation, we will follow safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO.

2.16 Safer Working Practices;

The college and staff take safeguarding seriously and understand this policy is over-arching. We refer staff to the Code of Conduct, Social Media Policy and 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings May 2022'.

Reaseheath College will obtain parents' and carers' consent for photographs to be taken or publish (for example, on our website, newsletters or publications).

Where staff take college computer/digital equipment/or records in paper form off the college site, they do so with the view that they abide by the college's Data Protection Policy and Information Security Policy (along with IT acceptable use policies). Staff are reminded that information, both in paper or electronic form, is sensitive and protected under the data protection and GDPR and should be safe and securely stored off the premises and during transportation.

3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The college will ensure that every member of staff and person working on behalf of the college:

- 3.1 Knows the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and his/her role and responsibility.
- 3.2 Has an individual responsibility to refer Safeguarding (Child Protection) concerns.
- 3.3 Completes training at the point of induction (and receive child protection and safeguarding updates at least annually) so that they know:
 - Their personal responsibility / code of conduct / teaching standards.
 - Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership child protection procedures and how to access them.
 - The need to be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse at the earliest opportunity.
 - How to support and respond to a child who discloses significant harm.
- 3.4 Knows their duty concerning the observation of unsafe practices in regard to young people by a colleague.
- 3.5 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will disclose any information about a learner to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis.
- 3.6 The college will undertake appropriate discussion with parents prior to involvement with other agencies unless the circumstances preclude this.
- 3.7 The college will ensure that parents understand their obligations regarding Child Protection by intervention as and when appropriate.
- 3.8 Work to develop effective links with relevant agencies in relation to Safeguarding (Child Protection).
- 3.9 Ensure that, where there are unmet needs, support is initiated.
- 3.10 Send representatives to case conferences, core groups and Child Protection review meetings.
- 3.11 Ensure that all employees of the College understand their responsibilities in relation to the Prevent Duty via Prevent Duty Guidance 2023.
- 3.12 The College will undertake appropriate checks on staff during the recruitment process including DBS checks, online safety searches and risk assessments as appropriate.

4 SUPPORTING CHILDREN AT RISK

The college will endeavour to support vulnerable young people through:

- 4.1 Its ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment; giving children a sense of being valued.
- 4.2 Ensuring its policies and procedures protect all children.
- 4.3 Liaison with other appropriate agencies which support the learner.
- 4.4 Developing supportive relationships.
- 4.5 Recognition that children living in difficult home environments are vulnerable and are in need of support and protection.
- 4.6 Monitoring children's welfare, keeping accurate records and notifying appropriate agencies when necessary.
- 4.7 Allowing designated staff opportunity to attend face to face SCiES/ CЕСP multi-agency training. (For example, child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, drugs / alcohol substance misuse etc).
- 4.8 Notifying key workers or social workers where a child, identified as being at risk or in need, leaves the college (as appropriate).
- 4.9 The college acknowledges serious case review findings and shares lessons learned with all staff to ensure no child falls through the gap.
- 4.10 All staff have an awareness of safeguarding issues. They are aware that these safeguarding issues may not directly involve the child in our college but could be happening to their siblings or parents; this includes the importance of understanding intra-familial harms and support for siblings where there is intra-familial harm. They are also aware that some issues could be happening in the lives of staff members. Staff are supported in accessing and completing the relevant screening tools: Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership

As a college that promotes a strong culture of safeguarding and being alert to the signs and indicators of abuse and harm in children, staff would be aware of the following issues identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (Part One and Annex A) and would know how to identify and respond to them:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional
- Neglect

- Child abduction and community safety incidents
- Children and the Court System
- Children with family members in prison
- Cyber crime
- Homelessness
- Drug/substance/alcohol misuse (both pupil and parent)
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- County lines
- Serious violence
- Extremism and Radicalisation, including Prevent and Channel
- Children missing from education
- Domestic abuse
- Child-on-child relationship abuse/Teenage Relationship Abuse
- Child-on-child abuse
- Nudes and Semi Nudes including where generated by AI
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
- Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Sexual health needs
- Obesity/malnutrition
- Online grooming
- Inappropriate behaviour of staff towards children
- Bullying including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying. Breaches of the Equality Act 2010
- Prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice, and other forms of discrimination
- Mental health issues including self-harm
- Honour and faith-based abuse including - Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- Child Trafficking
- Modern Slavery and National Referral Mechanism

Staff are aware that behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, domestic abuse, deliberately missing education and making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes put children in danger.

4.11 In relation to Online Safety, on college equipment we ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place. These also cover personal devices when connected to the college wi-fi and when users are signed into their Office 365 account. We refer you to our 'Online Safety Policy' which incorporates and considers the 4Cs as detailed in KCSIE 2026 to ensure an effective online policy.

The College's policy on the use of mobile and smart technology and their use reflects the fact many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G). This access means some children, whilst at college, sexually harass, bully, and control others via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups) and view and share pornography and other harmful content. Our Online Safety Policy, IT Acceptable Use Policies and our policies, and procedures, focused on conduct, harassment and bullying outline how this is addressed and managed.

- 4.12 Staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep cared for children (Looked after children), and previously cared for children, safe as we are aware that young people often become looked after as a result of abuse and/or neglect. We have an identified designated person for our Cared for Children who is appropriately trained and has the relevant qualifications and experience; this person works closely with the Virtual School and the safeguarding team.
- 4.13 We ensure that staff are aware that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. We ensure that staff have knowledge and understanding of the additional barriers which can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in children with special needs/disabilities. These barriers can include:
- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
 - These children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children.
 - Children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by things like bullying - without outwardly showing any signs.
 - Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges, including the risk that children do not understand that what is happening to them is abuse.
 - The need for intimate care, or that these children are isolated from others.
 - That these children are likely to be dependent on adults for care.
 - That these children may have issues over cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in college, or the consequences of doing so.

We aim to build the necessary skills in staff so that they can safeguard and respond to the specific needs of this group of children.

5 SAFER RECRUITMENT AND PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

The College pays full regard to DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026' and with reference to the 'Position of Trust' offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003). We ensure that all

appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone who works in the college who is likely to be perceived by a child as a safe and trustworthy adult. We do this by:

- 5.1 Operating safer recruitment practices (as per the guidance in Section 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026); including highlighting the importance we place on safeguarding children/young people in our recruitment adverts and interview questions, appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and reference checks, verifying identity, academic and vocational qualifications, obtaining practitioner references, checking previous employment history and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews and checking the Children's List and right to work in England checks in accordance with DBS and Department for Education procedures.
- 5.2 Ensuring that staff, contractors, volunteers, and any other regular visitors to the campus, always adhere to a published code of conduct and other professional standards at all times, including out of hours activities, educational day trips and residential study tours. Staff are aware of social media/on-line conduct.
- 5.3 Ensuring any disciplinary proceedings against staff related to Child Protection matters are concluded in full in accordance with Government guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" and CE, LADO and HR Policy, procedures and guidance.
- 5.4 Ensuring that all staff and other adults on site are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationship with learners and parents, following the Code of Conduct and staff handbook.
- 5.5 Supporting staff confidence to report misconduct.
- 5.6 Requiring all staff to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children/young people (whether received before or during their employment at the setting). Disqualification under the Child Care Act 2006 (amended following the 2018 Regulations).
- 5.7 Maintaining an accurate, complete, up to date Single Central Record.

6 GOVERNING BODY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people in accordance with Government guidance. Governors receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction and an annual update so that they can provide strategic challenge and assure themselves that the college's safeguarding policies and procedures are effective, robust and support a whole-college approach to safeguarding.

The Governing Body have agreed processes which allow them to monitor and ensure that the college:

- 6.1 Has robust Safeguarding procedures in place.
- 6.2 Operates safe recruitment procedures and appropriate checks are carried out on new staff and adults working on the College site.
- 6.3 Has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against any member of staff or adult on site.
- 6.4 Has a member of the Executive Team who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with Safeguarding and Child Protection issues and has appropriate status, authority and skills and experience within the college.
- 6.5 Has a member of the Executive Team who is designated to take a lead on the coordination of the Prevent Duty compliance.
- 6.6 Takes steps to remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses regarding Safeguarding arrangements.
- 6.7 Is supported by the Governing Body nominating a member responsible for liaising with the LA and/or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse against the Principal; this is the Chair.
- 6.8 Carries out an annual review of the Safeguarding policy and procedures.
- 6.9 Receives an annual Safeguarding report to monitor compliance and to inform trends and actions.
- 6.10 Identifies a **Designated Governor** who is responsible for liaising with the Principal and the staff member with lead responsibility over matters regarding child protection, including:
 - Ensuring that the College has procedures and policies which are consistent with the Child Safeguarding procedures.
 - Ensuring that the Corporation Board considers the College policy on the safeguarding of young people each year.
 - Ensuring that, each year, the College Board is informed of how the College and its staff have complied with the policy, including but not limited to a report on the training that staff have undertaken.
 - Ensuring good communications between the Local Authority Child Protection Partnership, the Police, and the College, and to assist in all enquiries.
 - To assist in these duties, the designated Governor shall receive appropriate training.

OTHER RELATED POLICIES

The college takes safeguarding seriously and understands this policy is over-arching. The college also maintains other linked policies in line with the legislative requirements; together

these make up the suite of policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people in the college. The policies are cited below.

- Safer Recruitment and Vetting Policy and Procedure
- Learner Harassment and Bullying Procedure
- Student Charter
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Code of Conduct for College Staff
- Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Expression
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Student Substance Misuse Policy
- College Security Policy
- Offensive Weapons and Bladed Articles and Sharp Objects Policy
- Guidelines for Staff: Physical Intervention
- Student Attendance Guidance for Staff

Issue/Version	September 2026
Lead	Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality
Review Period	Annual
Next Review	September 2027
Equality Analysis Review (if applicable)	September 2026
Approved by	Executive 09/09/2026 Corporation December 2026

Appendix 1 - REPORTING AND DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF

The procedures apply to all staff, whether teaching, administrative, management or support, as well as to volunteers. The word “staff” is used for ease of description.

1. Introduction

- In rare instances, staff of education institutions have been found responsible for child abuse. Because of their frequent contact with young people, staff may have allegations of abuse made against them. The College recognises that an allegation of abuse made against a member of staff may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and that investigations are thorough and not subject to delay.
- A member of staff may also have concerns about another member of staff. These concerns must be communicated to either the Principal, or to the designated Governor if they concern the Principal, or to the member of staff responsible for safeguarding young people (DSL). Where concerns arise with regard to staff, it is vital that the Local Authority responsibility for Safeguarding Children issues is included in discussions from the outset.
- The allegation should be reported immediately to the DSL unless the DSL or Principal is the person against whom the allegation is made, in which case the report should be made to the designated Governor or Principal (if allegation is against the DSL). The DSL (or Principal if the allegation is against the DSL) shall:
 - Obtain written details of the allegation from the person who received it, that are signed and dated. The written details should be countersigned and dated by the DSL or Principal);
 - Record information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses.

2. Initial Assessment by the DSL (or Principal/Designated Governor)

- The DSL shall make an initial assessment of the allegation, consulting with the Director of People & Culture and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as appropriate. Where the allegation is considered to be either a potential criminal act or indicates that the child has suffered, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the matter should be reported immediately to the LADO.
- It is important that the DSL, or Director of People and Culture, does not investigate the allegation. The initial assessment should be on the basis of the information received and is a decision whether or not the allegation warrants further investigation.

- Other potential outcomes are:
 - The allegation represents inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by the member of staff and is neither potentially a crime nor a cause of significant harm to the child. The matter should be addressed in accordance with the College disciplinary procedures.
 - The allegation can be shown to be false because the facts alleged could not possibly be true.

3. Enquiries and Investigations

- **With the exception of suspension pending investigation, which is a neutral act, the College shall hold in abeyance its internal enquiries while the formal police or the LADO investigations proceed; to do otherwise may prejudice the investigation.** Any internal enquiries shall conform to the existing staff disciplinary procedures.
- Child protection enquiries by the LADO or the police are not to be confused with internal, disciplinary enquiries by the College. The College may be able to use the outcome of external agency enquiries as part of its own procedures. The LADO and police have no power to direct the College to act in a particular way; however, the College should assist the agencies with their enquiries.
- If there is an investigation by an external agency, for example the police, the DSL and/or Director of People & Culture should normally be involved in, and contribute to, the inter-agency strategy discussions. They are responsible for ensuring that the College gives every assistance with the agency's enquiries. They will ensure that appropriate confidentiality is maintained in connection with the enquiries, in the interests of the member of staff about whom the allegation is made. The DSL, or Director of People & Culture, will advise the member of staff that he/she should consult with a representative, for example, a trade union.
- Subject to objections from the police or other investigating agency, the DSL shall:
 - Inform the child or parent/carer making the allegation that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve;
 - Ensure that the parents/carers of the child making the allegation have been informed that the allegation has been made and what the likely process will involve; and
 - Inform the member of staff against whom the allegation was made of the fact that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.

- The DSL and Director of People & Culture shall keep a written record of the action taken in connection with the allegation.

4. Suspension of Staff

- Suspension should not be automatic. In respect of staff other than the Principal and Senior Post Holders (as defined in the College's Instrument and Articles of Government) suspension can only be carried out by the Principal or delegated to a member of Executive. In respect of the Principal and Senior Post Holders, suspension can only be carried out by the Chair of Governors (or in his/her absence, the Vice Chair of Governors).
- Suspension may be considered at any stage of the investigation and pending investigation. It is a neutral, not a disciplinary act and shall be on full pay. Consideration should be given to alternatives, e.g. paid leave of absence; agreement to refrain from attending work; change of, or withdrawal from, specified duties.
- Suspension should only occur for a good reason. For example:
 - Where a child is at risk
 - Where the allegations are potentially sufficiently serious to justify dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct.
 - Where necessary for the good and efficient conduct of the investigation

Prior to making the decision to suspend, the Principal (or Chair or Vice Chair of Governors) must not interview the member of staff concerned until there has been consultation with the Local Authority's Child Protection Services about how to proceed. To interview the member of staff concerned must meet with the approval of the appropriate agency from the Safeguarding Children Board. If the police are engaged in an investigation the officer in charge of the case should be consulted.

- The member of staff should be advised to seek the advice and/or assistance of their trade union and should be informed that they have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague in accordance with the 1999 Employment Relations Act. The member of staff should be informed that an allegation has been made and that consideration is being given to suspension. It should be made clear that if an interview is undertaken then this is not a formal disciplinary hearing, but solely for raising a serious matter which may lead to suspension and further investigation.
- During the interview, the member of staff should be given limited information as to why they may well be suspended. This will assist in not interfering with the investigation into the allegation.

- If the Principal (or Chair or Vice Chair of Governors) considers that suspension is necessary, the member of staff shall be informed that they are suspended from duty. Written confirmation of the suspension shall be despatched as soon as possible and ideally within one working day.
- Where a member of staff is suspended, the Principal (or Chair or Vice Chair of Governors) should address the following issues:-
 - The Chair of Governors (or in his/her absence, the Vice Chair of Governors) should be informed of the suspension in writing.
 - The Corporation Board should receive a report that a member of staff has been suspended pending investigation, the detail given to the Corporation Board should be minimal.
 - Where the Principal or Senior Post Holder has been suspended, the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors shall report this to the Corporation Board and the Skills Funding Agency or its successor bodies within two working days or as soon thereafter as practicable.
 - Where the Principal or a Senior Post Holder has been suspended, the Chair or Vice chair of Governors will need to take action to address the management of the College.
- The parents/carers of the child making the allegation should be informed of the suspension. They should be asked to treat the information as confidential and that suspending a member of staff is simply a neutral act in order to conduct a fair investigation into the matter; this does not mean the member of staff is necessarily guilty of what has been alleged. Consideration will be given to informing the child making the allegation of the suspension.
- Senior staff who need to know of the reason for the suspension should be informed.
- Depending on the nature of the allegation, the Principal (or Chair or Vice Chair of Governors) will consider with the nominated Governor whether a statement to the learners of the College and/or parents/carers should be made, taking due regard of the need to avoid unwelcome publicity.
- The Principal (or Chair or Vice Chair of Governors) shall consider carefully and review the decisions as to who is informed of the suspension and investigation. The Safeguarding Children Board and external investigating authorities should be consulted.
- The suspended member of staff will be given appropriate support during the period of suspension. He/she will also be provided with information on progress and developments in the case at regular intervals.

- The suspension should remain under review in accordance with the college disciplinary procedures.

5. The disciplinary investigation

The disciplinary investigation will be conducted in accordance with the existing staff disciplinary procedures **only when the formal police or local authority investigations have been completed.**

The member of staff will be informed of:

- The disciplinary charge against them
- Their entitlement to be accompanied or represented by a trade union representative or work colleague in accordance with the 1999 Employment Relations Act

Where the member of staff has been suspended and no disciplinary action is to be taken, the suspension will be lifted immediately and arrangements made for the member of staff to return to work. It may be appropriate to offer counselling.

The child making the allegation and/or their parents will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and proceedings. This will occur prior to the return to College of the member of staff (if suspended).

The Principal (or designated person) will give consideration to what information should be made available to the general population of the College.

6. Allegations without foundation

Obviously false allegations may be indicative of problems of abuse elsewhere. A record should be kept, and consideration given to a referral to the Safeguarding Children Board in order that other agencies may act upon the information.

The DSL and Director of People & Culture shall:

- Inform the member of staff against who the allegation is made orally and in writing that no further disciplinary or child protection action will be taken. Consideration should be given to offering counselling/support;
- Inform the parents/carers of the alleged victim that the allegation has been made and of the outcome;
- Where the allegation was made by a child other than the alleged victim, consideration to be given to informing the parents/carers of that child.
- Prepare a report outlining the allegation and giving reasons for the conclusion that it had no foundation and confirming that the above action had been taken.

7. Records

It is important that documents relating to an investigation are retained in a secure place, together with a written record of the outcome and, if disciplinary action is taken, details retained on the member of staff's personal and confidential file.

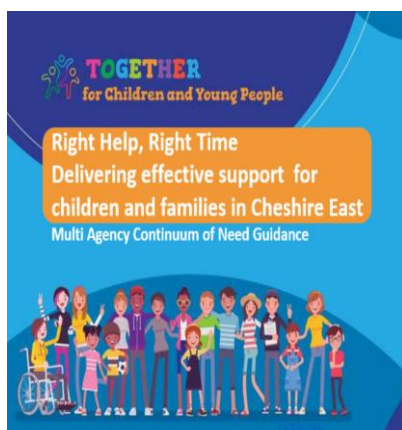
If a member of staff is dismissed or resigns before the disciplinary process is completed, they should be informed about the College's statutory duty to inform the Secretary of State for Education under the Vetting and Barring Procedures as directed by the Independent Safeguarding Authority and in accordance with the 2006 Vulnerable Groups Act.

8. Monitoring effectiveness

Where an allegation has been made against a member of staff, the staff member with lead responsibility should, at the conclusion of the investigation and any disciplinary procedures, consider whether there are any matters arising from it that could lead to the improvement of the College's procedures and/or policies and/or which should be drawn to the attention of Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership. Consideration should also be given to the training needs of staff.

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Laura Williams – Assistant Principal Student Experience and Support
Deputy Safeguarding Leads	Paul Spearritt – Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality Kay Murray – Safeguarding Manager
Operation Encompass Key Adults	Laura Williams & Kay Murray
Our local contact numbers are:	
Safeguarding of child concerns <i>(Child living in Cheshire East)</i>	<i>Integrated Front Door – Cheshire East:</i> 0300 123 5012 (option 3, option 2) <i>Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours):</i> 0300 123 5022 <i>Family Help Front Door:</i> 0300 123 5012 (option 3, option 1) Mental Health Helpline: 0300 303 3972 Adult Safeguarding: 0300 123 5010

Safeguarding of child concerns <i>(Child living in other Authorities)</i>	Cheshire West & Chester Contact and Referral Team – 01606 275099 (Emergencies outside of office hours 01244 977277) Stoke-on-Trent Children’s advice and duty service (CHAD) – 01782 235100 Staffordshire Children’s Advice and Support Service – 0300 111 8007 (option 1) - (Emergencies outside of office hours 0345 604 2886)
Allegations against an adult working with child	01270 685904/ 01606 288931 <i>Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)</i>
Police <i>(Emergency)</i> Police <i>(Non-Emergency)</i>	999 101
Regional Prevent Co-ordinator Designated Channel Co-ordinator Cheshire East Prevent Referrals Cyber Prevent Referrals	Claire Little (claire.little@education.gov.uk) Sandra Murphy – Head of Adult Safeguarding Prevent/Channel Referral Process Cyber.Prevent@nwrocu.police.uk



This document sets out our approach to keeping children safe and protected and underpins our local vision to provide the right help at the right time for children and families in Cheshire East at the earliest opportunity. The document refers to children, which includes unborn children, infants, children and young people.

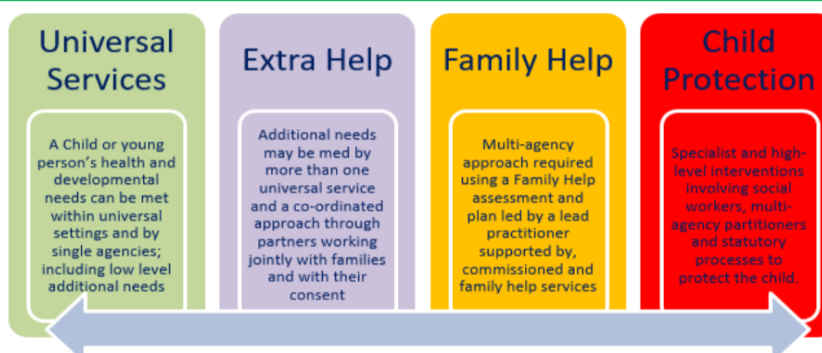
In Cheshire East we know that most children and their families can be supported through a range of universal services. These services include education, early years, health, housing, and services provided by voluntary organisations. However, some children have more complex needs and may require access to Early Support or Family Help to support them. We want to ensure that we provide the right help and support for families, led by the presenting need and not a prescribed framework. We understand the need to be flexible and have adaptable responses to how we support families.

Working Together to Safeguard Children highlights the importance of clear thresholds for taking action to safeguard children which are understood by those who work with children and adults who are parents/carers. By ensuring a shared understanding of the local continuum of need for support, children will receive the right help at the right time.

This guidance should not replace having a conversation or the use of sound professional judgement. We encourage you to use this document as guidance in combination with any prior knowledge of the family, safeguarding training, advice from your Designated Safeguarding Lead within your organisation and the voice of the child and their family.

Family Help Continuum of Need: Providing families with the right help at the right time, delivered by the right people

In Cheshire East we aim to work collaboratively with children and families and to support professionals in understanding the unique situation for each child. All professionals working with children and families will be curious, compassionate, respectful and rigorous in making judgements, while maintaining a clear focus on the safety and protection of children.



Our Extra Help offer will be delivered by partners supported by Partnership Family Help Officers and Family Advisors in our Children's Hubs.

Our Family Help offer is centred around the presenting needs of the child and family. Following a referral to the Integrated Front Door we will assess the presenting needs and decide what services and help best meet the needs of the child and family. All families that present with multiple or complex needs will be eligible for our Family Help Offer.

Right Help, Right Time

Universal Services

A child or young person's health and developmental needs can be met within universal settings and by single agencies including low level additional needs. Children make good progress and their health, education, social and emotional needs are met. Children, young people and families can access universal services as required such as Family Hubs, GP's, Early Years and Schools.

Family Advisors based in the Family Hubs will be available to signpost people to services and advice about local resources.

Extra Help

Offering Help at the right time increases the chances that positive change will happen. Without additional support from one or more agencies their needs may increase. Children, young people and families can access more than one universal service and/or coordinated extra help services. A lead professional using a team around the family approach can help identify needs and co-ordinate support before needs become more complex or acute. An extra help assessment and plan is available for professional to use alongside guidance for completion [Extra Help forms and support for professionals](#)

Partnership Family Help Officers are available to offer support and guidance for agencies wanting to offer children and families Extra support. If you wish to speak to a Partnership Family Support Officer, please use partnershipfamilyhelp@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Family Help

These are children and young people with higher level unmet needs, or where risk is identified, and where there is evidence, this is affecting their health and development. A referral into the Integrated Front Door may be needed and may meet the criteria for a multi-agency Family Help assessment to co-ordinate services and provide support to families with their consent. There will be an allocated Family Help Lead Practitioner who will co-ordinate multi-agency support, intervention and planning.

Services who may provide support at this level include Family Help, SEN services, children with disability services, youth inclusion and support panels, Youth Justice Service, drug and alcohol services, mental health services, and voluntary and community sector services.

Child Protection

These children are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm. These children are likely to have already experienced adverse effects and to be suffering from poor outcomes. Their needs may not be considered by their parents. This may include situations where immediate child protection intervention is needed to safeguard the child or where Family Help has been provided but this support has been insufficient to promote change and the child or young person is or becomes at risk of significant harm. This is likely to mean that they require a referral to the Integrated Front Door. A Family Help single assessment (S17 CA 1989) will be completed and the Family Help Team in collaboration with the Multi Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) may initiate child protection procedures under S47 (CA 1989), or issue care proceedings.

Physical Abuse

- Bruises, black eyes and broken bones.
- Unexplained or untreated injuries.
- Injuries to unusual body parts e.g. thighs, back, abdomen.
- Bruising that resembles hand/finger marks.
- Burns/scalds.
- Human bites/cigarette burns.
- Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly.
- Injuries in babies and non-mobile children

Neglect

- Excessive hunger
- Inadequate or insufficient clothing
- Poor personal or dental hygiene
- Untreated medical issues
- Changes in weight or being excessively under or overweight
- Low self-esteem, attachment issues, depression or self-harm
- Poor relationships with peers
- Self-soothing behaviours that may not be age-appropriate (e.g. rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- Changes to school performance or attendance

Symptoms of abuse

Sexual Abuse

- Bruising, particularly to the thighs, buttocks and upper arms and marks on the neck
- Bleeding, pain or itching in the genital area
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Sudden change in behaviour or school performance
- Displays of affection that are sexual or not age-appropriate
- Use of sexually explicit language that is not age-appropriate
- Alluding to having a secret that cannot be revealed
- Bedwetting or incontinence
- Reluctance to undress around others (e.g. for PE lessons)
- Infections, unexplained genital discharge, or sexually transmitted diseases
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Self-harming
- Poor concentration, withdrawal, sleep disturbance
- Reluctance to be alone with a particular person

Emotional Abuse

- Concerning interactions between parents or carers and the child (e.g. overly critical or lack of affection)
- Lack of self-confidence or self-esteem
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self-harm or eating disorders
- Lack of empathy shown to others (including cruelty to animals)
- Drug, alcohol or other substance misuse
- Change of appetite, weight loss/gain
- Signs of distress: tearfulness, anger

Behaviours

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Marked change in general behaviour | Lack of self-confidence or self-esteem |
| • Extremely passive/aggressive | Self-harm or eating disorders |
| • Sleeping difficulties | Eating disorder |
| • Lethargy/tiredness | Fear of certain adults |
| • Poor social relationships | Attendance difficulties |
| • Disclosure | Self-harm |
| • Withdrawn/withdrawn from family and friends | |



Signs of Abuse

Remember that children will respond to the trauma of abuse and neglect in their own individual ways, its about knowing the children well and knowing what is normal for them. Some children may show no signs or indicators

Neglect

- **Child cold/ inappropriately dressed**
- **Undernourished/always hungry**
- **Untreated medical problems, e.g. dental decay, headlice, etc**
- **Lethargy, tiredness or aggressive tendencies**

Sexual

- **Genital discomfort, pain, itching, bruising, injuries**
- **Public/compulsive masturbation**
- **Eating disorders**
- **Sexually explicit behaviour or language not appropriate for their age**
- **Sexually Transmitted Infection**
- **Sexually explicit drawings**

Pregnancy

Emotional

- **Physical, mental and emotional development lags**
- **Talks of excessive punishment**
- **Fear of parents being contacted**
- **Sudden speech disorders**
- **Running away**
- **Self-deprecation/ low self esteem**

Physical

- **Bruises, black eyes and broken bones**
- **Unexplained or untreated injuries**
- **Injuries to unusual body parts e.g. thighs, back, abdomen**
- **Bruising that resembles hand/finger marks**
- **Burns/scalds**
- **Human bites/cigarette burns**
- **Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly**
- **Injuries in babies and non-mobile children**

Receiving Disclosures:

Receive

- Listen, try not to look shocked or be judgmental
- Believe what they say 'take it seriously'.
- Accept what the child says.
- Don't make them feel bad by saying "you should have told me earlier"
- Don't 'interrogate' them – let them tell you, try not to interrupt
- Note the date and time, what was done, who did it, and where it took place
- Use the child's own words
- Don't criticise the perpetrator
- Don't ask leading questions – use 'open' questions to clarify only (T.E.D)

Tell me what you mean by that?

Explain that to me

Describe that....



Reassure

- Stay calm, tell the child they've done the right thing in telling you
- Reassure them they are not to blame
- Empathise – don't tell them how they should be feeling
- Don't promise confidentiality, explain who needs to know
- Explain what you'll do next
- Be honest about what you can do

Report and Record

- Make a Brief, accurate, timely and factual record
- **Safeguarding concerns must be recorded using the College's Safeguarding Concern Form and escalated without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of the Safeguarding Leads Team. Records must be dated, factual, accurate, securely stored and handled in accordance with data protection requirements.**
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess the situation and decide on the next steps ***Things to include:***
 - Time and full date of disclosure/incident and the time and full date the record was made
 - An accurate record of what was said or seen
 - Whether it is 1st or 2nd hand information
 - Whether the child was seen/spoken to
 - Whether information is fact/ professional judgement
 - Full names and roles/status of anyone identified in the report
 - Avoid acronyms/jargon/abbreviations
 - Sign the record with a legible signature.
 - Record actions agreed with/by the Designated Lead (SMART)

Records should be reviewed regularly and any new concerns should be added and responded to immediately.

DO NOT PHOTOGRAPH INJURIES OR MARKS EVEN IF REQUESTED TO DO SO

Specific Forms of Abuse

The information provided below is an abridged version of Annexe A of KCSiE. However, there are details below as to how our college responds to these concerns and more. Some specific concerns are detailed within the main body of this policy.

Harm Outside the Home

Including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and County Lines

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

This can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group.

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.

We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation. In some cases, the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or in groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child causing the harm is also recognised as a victim.

It is not possible for a child to consent to be exploited, abused or trafficked, and they may not recognise that it is happening to them.

Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including,

- sexual identity
- cognitive ability
- having a physical or learning need
- being neurodivergent
- learning difficulties
- communication ability
- physical strength
- status
- access to economic or other resources

Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

- appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions which 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 and sexual exploitation
- associate with other children involved in exploitation
- suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- misuse alcohol and other drugs
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education

Children who have been exploited will need additional support to help maintain them in education.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Some specific forms of CCE can include children

- being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines,
- working in cannabis factories,
- shoplifting or pickpocketing.
- they can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime
- or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

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.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or penetration with an object) or nonpenetrative 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.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) 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.

Some additional specific indicators that may be present in CSE are children who:

- have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- suffer from sexually transmitted infections
- display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development
- become pregnant

As with CCE, victims are not always recognised and can be criminalised for actions they take whilst under coercion. This remains a significant concern, as professionals continue to

encounter cases where children are manipulated, groomed, and exploited without fully understanding the abuse they are experiencing.

County Lines

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation and is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including any type of schools (including special schools), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children’s homes and care homes. Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media.

Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for CSE and CCE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- go missing (from college, care or home) and are subsequently found in areas away from their home
- have been the victim, perpetrator, or alleged perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
- are exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a ‘trap house or cuckooing’ or hotel room where there is drug activity
- owe a ‘debt bond’ to their exploiters
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing

Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-witness-booklet-for-5-to-11-year-olds> and 12-17 year olds <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-witness-booklet-for-12-to-17-year-olds> . The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures

that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained. Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children.

The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool [Making child arrangements if you divorce or separate: Make a child arrangements plan - GOV.UK](#) with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers. Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a college can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation. As children get older and are granted more independence, it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Further information is available at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org.

Child-on-child abuse including Harassment and Violence

Children can abuse other children and this is often referred to as child-on-child abuse. This can occur both inside and outside of college. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- discriminatory behaviour, including racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other prejudice based incidents
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon
- harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment – which may include misogyny/misandry. Part 5 of KCSiE sets out how schools and colleges should respond to reports of this nature
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse. Sexual harassment refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which can occur both

online and offline and inside and outside of college. In this context it specifically relates to child-on-child sexual harassment.

- 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 including those generated by AI
- ‘Upskirting’ is where someone takes a picture under a person’s clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

Harmful Sexual Behaviour: HSB can occur between two or more children of any age and sex, from primary through to secondary stage and into college. It can occur also through a group of children towards a single child or towards another group of children. HSB exists on a continuum and may escalate into sexual harassment or sexual violence.

We refer to the ERASE Tool to support us in deciding the level of concern in relation to HSB.

All staff are aware that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator.

As well as knowing how to respond to concerns, all staff know that child-on-child abuse is preventable. As well as knowing how to recognise behaviours and indicators of risk early, staff know that timely, evidence-based support can be key to preventing children from going on to commit abuse or violence.

Staff recognise that racism, faith-targeted abuse, and other forms of discriminatory behaviour may have a significant impact on a child’s welfare, wellbeing and sense of safety and should be considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate.

Staff are clear on our procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse and do not take it any less serious than adult to child abuse; they are aware that it should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, misogyny and an unsafe environment for children. We ensure that we apply the same thresholds.

In our college our Career Ready Personal Development Programme teaches children in an age/developmentally appropriate way about topics which include healthy relationships, consent, staying safe online and positive friendships.

We have the systems in place (*e.g., see it, say it*) which are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible) for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously.

Allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with using our normal college's child protection procedures and in line with Part 5 of KCSiE 2026.

We have clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported.

We recognise 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.

We recognise that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators, but that all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

In our college we have referred to the [Respectful School Communities toolkit](#) for advice on creating a culture in which sexual harassment of all kinds is treated as unacceptable.

Where sexual violence or sexual harassment between children is alleged then the college follows the guidance issued by the DfE in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

Where making or sharing nudes or semi nudes (youth produced sexual images) are part of the abuse then the college follows the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings](#)

Children Missing from Home or Care

Children who run away from home or from care can provide a clear behavioural indication that they are either unhappy or do not feel safe in the place that they are living. Research shows that children run away from conflict or problems at home or in education, neglect or abuse, or because they are being groomed by predatory individuals who seek to exploit them. Many run away on numerous occasions.

The association of chief police officers has provided the following definition a missing person *is*: 'Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed'.

Within any case of children who are missing both push and pull factors need to be considered.

Push factors include:

- conflict with parents/carers
- feeling powerless
- being bullied/abused
- being unhappy/not being listened to

- the Trio of Vulnerabilities

Pull factors include:

- wanting to be with family/friends
- drugs, money and any exchangeable item
- peer pressure
- for those who have been trafficked into the United Kingdom as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children there will be pressure to make contact with their trafficker

As a college we will inform all parents of children who are absent (unless the parent has informed us).

If the parent is also unaware of the location of their child, and the definition of missing is met, we will either support the parent to contact the police to inform them, or we will take the relevant action.

Cyberbullying

Central to our college's learner harassment and bullying procedure is the principle that '*bullying is always unacceptable*' and that '*all learners have a right not to be bullied*'.

The college recognises that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside college which spills over into the college and so we will respond to any bullying including cyber-bullying that we become aware of carried out by learners when they are away from the site.

Cyber-bullying is defined as "an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself."

By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

- bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones
- the use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation
- posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites
- using e-mail to message others
- hijacking/cloning e-mail accounts
- making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in on-line forums
- Cyber-bullying may be at a level where it is criminal.

If we become aware of any incidents of cyberbullying, we will consider each case individually as to any criminal act that may have been committed. The college will pass on information to the police if it feels that it is appropriate, or we are required to do so.

Domestic Abuse/Violence

Reaseheath College believes that all our learners have the right to be safe at college and also in their own homes. We are aware that all children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse.

As an Operation Encompass college, we are alert to the indicators of abuse, and we have a planned approach to supporting children in a proactive way. We do this by providing education to our learners, increasing awareness of domestic abuse and its harms to our community, and providing appropriate support to learners involved in domestic abuse.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. We understand that the term domestic abuse captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour and stalking. Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be “personally connected.” (Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Section 2).

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

Domestic abuse can affect anybody; it occurs across all of society, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. Domestic abuse affects significant numbers of children and their families causing immediate harm as well as damaging future life chances. 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’.

Domestic abuse negatively affects children. We know that they are often more aware of what is happening than parents think. How they respond depends on their age, personality and support network; but they recover best when they are helped to understand and to process what is happening/has happened to them. Their experiences will shape their self-worth, identity, and ability to relate to others in childhood and adulthood; making it much more difficult to succeed at college and develop friendships.

To support our children, we:

- have an ethos which puts children’s wellbeing at the heart of all that we do
- create a predictable college life with set routines

- ensure that rules and expectations are clearly stated and understood by all
- understand that oppositional and manipulative behaviours are not attempts to 'provoke us', but may be attempts by these children to control their world when so much feels out of control for them
- model respectful and caring behaviour, positive conflict resolution and respectful interactions, helping children learn not only what not to do, but what to do instead
- use the language of choice, making clear the benefits and negative consequences of their choices ensuring that we follow through with any consequences or sanctions
- support children to put feelings into words. We build up a vocabulary of emotional words with them so that they can begin to express their feelings more appropriately/accurately (*A child exposed to domestic abuse may have seen a lot of behaviours that express strong feelings, but may not have heard words to appropriately express/ describe these feelings*)
- understand that the child may experience conflicting and confusing emotions when thinking of or talking about their parents
- create opportunities for children to feel successful. We let the child know that they matter, taking an active interest in them
- accept that they may not be willing or able to talk about it right away (if ever)
- provide effective, non-verbal, systems for children to access support
- provide reassurance that only people who need to know about the incident will know
- allow the child, where necessary, to safely store work in college or shred it after completion when providing interventions
- have visible and accessible worry boxes/internal support systems /information regarding external sources of support e.g. Childline etc.
- provide opportunities to teach about and discuss healthy and unhealthy relationships

[Children, Young People and Domestic Abuse](#)

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. Our designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) are aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16- and 17-year-olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Local authority children's social care will be the lead agency for these children and our designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) ensures appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 places a new duty on local housing authorities in England to notify educational institutions, health visiting services and general medical practices, when a child is placed in temporary accommodation. This notification should be made when consent has been given from the parent, those with parental responsibility or care of the child, or the child themselves in cases of 16–17-year-olds living independently from their parents.

The notification will enable college staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of these children at the earliest opportunity and support them to improve their outcomes. Whilst any discussion with the local housing authority should be progressed as appropriate, this notification does not, and should not, replace existing safeguarding and welfare duties nor a referral into local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Emotional Abuse

Staff are all aware that emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child which can cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

We understand that it may involve the following:

- conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- verbal abuse such as persistent criticism, belittling, or name calling as well as not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction
- seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- 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.

Honour or Faith- Based Abuse including Breast ironing, FGM and Forced Marriage

Staff are aware of Honour or Faith-Based Abuse (HBA) So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA" (KCSIE 2026).

Awareness raising has taken place around HBA; staff are alert to possible indicators. They are aware that forced marriage is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage; that it is a human rights abuse and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence and that HBV and forced marriage can affect both young men and women.

As a college we would never attempt to intervene directly; where this is suspected we would speak to the Integrated Front Door before sharing our concerns with the family.

Breast Ironing also known as Breast Flattening

Staff have been made aware of an act of abuse performed on girls (from around the age of 9 years old) in which their breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded, burned with heated objects or covered with an elastic belt to prevent or delay the development of their breasts; the intention being to protect the child from rape, forced marriage, sexual harassment or removal from education. It is a practice in Cameroon, Nigeria and South Africa. It is often carried out by the girl's mother.

Staff are clear that they would follow our usual procedure for recording and reporting this abuse where it is suspected.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Staff are aware of Female Genital Mutilation (also known as female circumcision, cutting or Sunna) and that it is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.

Staff are also aware that FGM

- is child abuse; it's dangerous and it is a criminal offence. Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM however there is no valid reason for it.
- is illegal in the UK. It's also illegal to take a British national or permanent resident abroad for FGM or to help someone trying to do this.

Indications that FGM may be about to take place:

- when a female family elder is around, particularly when she is visiting from a country of origin.
- reference to FGM in conversation e.g. a girl may tell other children about it.
- a girl may confide that she is to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a special occasion to 'become a woman'.
- a girl may request help from a teacher or another adult if she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk.
- parents state that they or a relative will take the child out of the country for a prolonged period.
- a girl may talk about a long holiday to her country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent.
- a girl being withdrawn from PSHE or from learning about FGM (parents may wish to keep her uninformed about her body and rights)

Indications that FGM has taken place:

- difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet possibly with bladder or menstrual problems
- unusual/a noticeable change in behaviour after a lengthy absence
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations
- asking for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear
- prolonged absences/ persistent unexplained absence from school/college
- seek to be excused from physical exercise without the support of their GP
- child not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities
- close supervision of child by family/carers

Teachers in our college are aware of their responsibilities under section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 which says that "If a **teacher**, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 the **teacher** must report this to the police".

Members of our college community are alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM or already having suffered FGM. They have been made aware that FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old. Potential indicators that a child may be at risk of FGM have been shared and the next steps have been identified, in that we take the same course of action as we would with any form of abuse; the Designated Safeguarding Lead plays a full part in the process of identification recording and reporting. We are mindful that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity is always shown when approaching the subject.

Forced Marriage

Since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages. Staff are aware of Forced Marriage and that it 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.

Children, especially girls who are forced to marry, or those who fear they may be forced to marry, are frequently withdrawn from education, restricting their educational and personal development.

[Forced marriage resource pack - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/forced-marriage-resource-pack)

Indications that a Child is at risk of Forced Marriage:

Staff are aware that they need to be aware of significant changes in the child's presentation emotional and physical, in dress and behaviour.

- appearing anxious, depressed and emotionally withdrawn with low self-esteem
- self-harming, self-cutting or anorexia
- criminal activity e.g. shoplifting or taking drugs or alcohol
- declining performance, aspirations or motivation
- not allowed to attend any extra-curricular or after college activities
- girls and young women may be accompanied to and from school/college
- attending college but absenting themselves from lessons
- stopping attendance at school/college
- a family history of older siblings leaving education early and marrying early

Modern Day Slavery including Trafficking and the National Referral Mechanism

The Modern Slavery Act came into Force in 2015. Modern slavery encompasses exploitation including sexual exploitation, criminal, financial exploitation human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs
Staff are aware that:

- a person commits an offence if they knowingly hold another person in slavery or servitude or if they knowingly require another person to perform forced or compulsory labour

- it is an offence to arrange or facilitate the travel of a person with a view to them being exploited. These are serious offences carrying a penalty of up to life imprisonment
- any consent victims have given to their treatment will be irrelevant where they have been coerced, deceived or provided with payment or benefit to achieve that consent
- children (under 18 years) are considered victims of trafficking, whether or not they have been coerced, deceived or paid to secure their compliance. They need only to have been recruited, transported or harboured for the purpose of exploitation

Trafficked Children

Human trafficking is defined by the United Nations, in respect of children, as "the recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person by such means as threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud or deception for the purpose of exploitation."

Any child transported for exploitative reasons is considered to be a trafficking victim.

As a college we are alert to the signs both for our children and for their families and are aware that this may be if they:

- show signs of physical or sexual abuse, and/or has contracted a sexually transmitted infection or has an unwanted pregnancy
- have a history with missing links and unexplained moves
- are required to earn a minimum amount of money every day
- work in various locations
- have limited freedom of movement
- appear to be missing for periods
- are known to beg for money
- are being cared for by adult/s who are not their parents and the quality of the relationship between the child and their adult carers is not good
- are one among a number of unrelated children found at one address
- have not been registered with or attended a GP practice
- are excessively afraid of being deported
- look malnourished or unkempt
- are withdrawn, anxious and unwilling to interact
- are under the control and influence of others
- live in cramped, dirty, overcrowded accommodation
- have no access or control of their passport or identity documents
- appear scared, avoid eye contact, and can be untrusting
- show signs of abuse and/or has health issues

For those children who are internally trafficked within the UK indicators include:

- physical symptoms (bruising indicating either physical or sexual assault)
- prevalence of a sexually transmitted infection or unwanted pregnancy
- reports from reliable sources suggesting the likelihood of involvement in sexual exploitation / the child has been seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation
- evidence of drug, alcohol or substance misuse
- being in the community in clothing unusual for a child i.e. inappropriate for age/ borrowing clothing from older people
- relationship with a significantly older partner
- accounts of social activities, expensive clothes, mobile phones etc. with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding
- persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation
- returning after having been missing, looking well cared for despite having not been at home
- having keys to premises other than those known about
- low self- image, low self-esteem, self-harming behaviour including cutting, overdosing, eating disorder
- truancy / disengagement with education
- entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults
- going missing and being found in areas where the child has no known links
- possible inappropriate use of the internet and forming on-line relationships, particularly with adults.

These behaviours themselves do not indicate that a child is being trafficked but should be considered as indicators that this may be the case.

If staff believe that a child is being trafficked, this will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and will be reported as potential abuse.

Neglect

Staff are aware that 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
- may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse
- once a child is born, 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

- may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs
- may potentially be fatal
- causes great distress to children and leads to poor outcomes in the short and long-term
- has possible consequences which may include an array of health and mental health problems, difficulties in forming attachment and relationships, lower educational achievements, an increased risk of substance misuse, higher risk of experiencing abuse as well as difficulties in assuming parenting responsibilities later in life. The degree to which children are affected during their childhood and later in adulthood depends on the type, severity and frequency of the maltreatment and on what support mechanisms and coping strategies were available to the child

We are also mindful of the effects of adolescent neglect as this is as damaging as other forms of maltreatment - increasing the risk of arrest, offending and violent crime in late adolescence, and the risk of arrest and drug use in early adulthood.

If we suspect neglect, we will use the [final_combined_neglect_tool.docx](#)

Online Safety

With the current speed of on-line change, some practitioners, parents and carers have only a limited understanding of online risks and issues. Parents may underestimate how often their children come across potentially harmful and inappropriate material on the internet and may be unsure about how to respond.

Some of the risks could be:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this; for example: peer to peer at risk, 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:** online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images, including those generated using AI and online bullying.
- **commerce** - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, learners or staff are at risk.

The Department has published guidance to support schools to use generative artificial intelligence safely and explains how filtering and monitoring requirements apply to the use of generative AI in education. [Generative AI: product safety expectations - GOV.UK](#)

The college therefore seeks to provide information and awareness to staff, learners and their parents through:

- acceptable use agreements for children, teachers, parents/carers and governors
- curriculum activities involving raising awareness around staying safe online
- information included in letters, newsletters, web site
- parents evenings / sessions
- high profile events / campaigns e.g. Safer Internet Day
- building awareness around information that is held on relevant web sites and or publications
- social media policy

Cyber crime: Preventing young people from getting involved

Children are getting involved in cybercrime, many do it for fun without realising the consequences of their actions – but the penalties can be severe. Cybercrime is a serious criminal offence under the Computer Misuse Act. If we become aware of any incidents of cyber crimes, we will consider each case individually as to any criminal act that may have been committed. The college will pass on information to the police if it feels that it is appropriate, or we are required to do so.

Risks associated with Gaming

Online gaming is an activity that the majority of children and many adults get involved in.

The college raise awareness by:

- talking to parents and carers about the games their children play and help them identify whether they are appropriate
- supporting parents in identifying the most effective way of safeguarding their children by using parental controls and child safety mode
- talking to parents about setting boundaries and time limits when games are played
- highlighting relevant resources
- making our children aware of the dangers including of online grooming and how to keep themselves safe
- making our children aware of how to report concerns

Physical abuse

Staff are aware of the signs of potential physical abuse and that it might involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

They are also aware that physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Prevent, Radicalisation and Extremism

We recognise that children may be susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Reaseheath adheres to the Prevent Duty Guidance, December 2023 and seeks to protect children against the messages of all violent extremism and to prevent them being drawn into terrorism; including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Extreme Right Wing Terrorism which includes Cultural Nationalism, White Nationalism, White Supremacism ideology. Prevent also tackles other ideologies and concerns that may pose a terrorist threat. Established terrorist narratives exhibit common themes such as antisemitism, misogyny, anti-establishment, anti-LGBT grievances and religious or ethnic superiority.

Children may be susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a college's safeguarding approach.

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.

The college community has been made aware of the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism; they are also aware that the normalisation of extreme views may make children vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation.

In order to raise awareness and reduce risks we ensure that our preventative work is specifically considered, outlined and highlighted in all relevant policies and procedures.

Our taught curriculum includes educating children of how people with extreme views share these with others; we are committed to ensuring that our learners are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching the College's core PRIDE values alongside the fundamental British Values supports quality teaching and learning, whilst making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society.

All staff have received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism. This training is reinforced by regular updating as and when appropriate, sharing of scenarios and other training.

Our college has a Prevent risk register/assessment in place which all staff are aware of.

Reaseheath College is clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern; therefore, concerns need to be recorded and discussed with the DSL; with timely, appropriate action then being taken.

The **Prevent Duty** requires that all staff are aware of the signs that a child may be susceptible to radicalisation. The risks will need to be considered for political; environmental; animal rights; or faith-based extremism that may lead to a child becoming radicalised.

There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home).

However, it is possible to protect vulnerable people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being radicalised. As with other safeguarding risks, staff are alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may need help or protection. Staff use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) / SPOC (Single Point of Contact) making a [Prevent referral](#) on the Cheshire East stopadultabuse.org.uk website (this could be about an adult and/or a child).

If we suspect a child to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, including being radicalised we would also contact:

Cheshire East Integrated Front Door: 0300 123 5012 and complete a Prevent referral on the stopadultabuse.org.uk website.

Where necessary individuals may be discussed at Channel:

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism.

Prevent referrals are first assessed by police and may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are at risk of being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required.

Whilst the referral is being assessed, should any further or new information come to light, this should also be passed to police.

A representative from the school or college may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment.

An individual will be required to provide their consent before any support delivered through the programme is provided.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) should consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse, incidents that may indicate concerns about serious violence or harmful behaviours and/or details of those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

[Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting people susceptible to radicalisation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

In Cheshire East the Channel Co-ordinator is Sandra Murphy – Head of Adult Safeguarding.

The CE Channel Panel meets monthly. Attendees sign a Confidentiality Agreement and share case information. Discussion covers the vulnerabilities of individuals and their families, current support, and risks for the individual and community. Attendees agree if the case is appropriate for Channel and the support plan which is needed. Consent is then sought from the adult / parent with parental responsibility.

For those already open to Panel support plans are tailored, building on existing support, and may consist of help with family problems, mental health support, religious education, mentoring etc.

For those who are not Channel appropriate: a safe exit from Channel or a referral elsewhere is discussed.

This means that colleges may be invited to attend the meeting.

Serious Violence

Serious violence is a continuing safeguarding concern. It may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with, or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying, and it can also be associated with criminal exploitation. Staff should report any concerns about a child carrying or using a weapon (or expressing intent to do so) to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

All staff are aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from college, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in education 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.

All staff should be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or suspended, spent time in Alternative Provision or permanently excluded from school/college, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery, having used drugs or alcohol in early adolescence and having previously been a victim or previously perpetrated violence. Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.

Nudes and semi-nudes, including where generated by AI

For the purposes of this guidance, the term 'making or sharing nudes and semi nudes' refers to the creation, sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images by young people under the age of 18. The term 'images' includes all visual content, such as photographs, videos and livestreams. We use the term 'nudes' because it is the most widely understood by young people and best captures the full range of image-sharing behaviours.

Images may be taken by the child themselves (sometimes referred to as 'self-generated imagery') or taken or created by another person. They may also be digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including what are sometimes described as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes.' It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline.

Producing and sharing nudes and semi-nudes of under 18s is illegal, which causes considerable concern in education settings working with children and young people, and amongst parents and carers.

Although the production of such images will likely take place outside of education settings, sharing can take place and the impacts of an incident are often identified or reported here. Our college will respond swiftly and confidently to make sure children and young people are safeguarded, supported, and educated. We will follow the guidance set out in the following document: [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people \(updated March 2024\) - GOV.UK](#)

We take a safeguarding approach in response to all incidents involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, regardless of whether they are consensual or non-consensual. All such incidents require a safeguarding response, with a proportionate approach that considers the age, development, and circumstances of the children involved, as well as any elements of coercion, exploitation or vulnerability.

This form of abuse means the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos, or live streams by young people under the age of 18 online. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline.

Sexual Abuse

Staff are aware of sexual abuse and that:

- Involves forcing, causing or inciting a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- The activities may involve physical contact, such as acts of penetration, whether that is with part of a person's body or an object (e.g. rape or assault by penetration), and non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching over clothing.
- Sexual abuse 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.
- Sexual abuse can take place online as well as offline, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.
- It is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- Children can be sexually abused within the family, an institution or a community setting, and are more likely to know their abuser than not.
- The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff are aware of it and of the policy and procedures for dealing with it.
- There are specific offences for children under 13, who can never provide valid consent to sexual activity and there are specific offences which make clear that sexual activity with a child under 16 is an offence, regardless of whether they agreed to that activity.
- The Crime and Policing Act 2026 introduced the Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse.

Private Fostering

Private Fostering is a type of 'Kinship Care'. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 provides further examples of this type of care and information and guidance around supporting children living in these arrangements. To support kinship carers, the role of virtual heads has been extended to supporting every child in the care of friends or family.

We recognise that our college has a mandatory duty to report to the local authority when we become aware of, or suspect that, a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. To aid our awareness we ensure that we establish parental responsibility for every child; we take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child when we register them.

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and stepparents (by marriage or where a legal order has been made, such as a Child Arrangement Order); it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence.

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, we recognise that they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases, privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or are involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

Where a member of staff becomes aware of private fostering arrangements, they are aware that they need to notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform Cheshire East. The college would also inform Cheshire East of the private fostering arrangements.

Young Carers

We are aware of the needs of young carers recognising that caring responsibilities can impact on their attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing. Early identification is essential to ensure young carers receive support at the right time and by the appropriate services including additional support from external partners, or local authority and health services.

Children who are absent from education

Under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 we have a duty to investigate any unexplained absences especially as a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

Even though it is not compulsory for a child to attend Further Education, at the very least, good attendance practice promotes good outcomes for children and can lead to the early identification of more serious concerns for a child.

Our setting has an absence management process that we share with parents and/or carers and we set clear expectations in relation to expected levels of attendance.

At Reaseheath College we follow Cheshire East's procedures for dealing with children that are absent or who go missing from lessons and/or college. All staff are aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly or prolonged, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation, including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called 'honour' or faith-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. We will refer to: [Working together to improve school attendance - updated July 2026](#).

If children do not attend college, we have a duty of care to ensure they are safe. The college will always endeavour that parents / carers and the child/ren themselves are involved in this process. If we are unable to be assured of the child's safety, we will, through our Designated Safeguarding Lead, seek advice from other agencies such as the police or the Integrated Front Door, if deemed necessary.

Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse and/or neglect and/or exploitation and/or 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.

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads will be aware of the fact a child has a social worker and will use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

Where children need a social worker, this 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).

Children requiring mental health support

We recognise that colleges have an important role to play in supporting the mental health, wellbeing and resilience of their learners.

All staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. This could include self-harm, signs of an eating disorder, suicidal ideation or suicide. We acknowledge 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 will attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Our staff, however, still have an important role to play.

Specifically, they can support the fulfilment of 4 key roles:

- promoting good mental wellbeing and preventing the onset of mental illness,
- observing pupils and identifying early those who may be experiencing mental health problems or being at risk of developing one,
- ensuring early targeted support is provided, and
- liaison with/referral to specialist services where needed.

Where support is needed, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should consider whether to inform parents or carers to support the child's wellbeing, where doing so would not place the child at additional risk.

Whilst all staff are able to observe and support the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils and learners, Reaseheath has a mental health lead in place. Mental health leads support settings to embed a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Our staff will consider the range of locally available support to meet the needs of children and young people. We will also consider other support available outside of college that might be suitable, for example family hubs, commissioned services etc.

In our college we have a wellbeing team who can be a point of contact and support within college, along with a learner assistance app that provides support in this area and is available 24/7. We ensure we have specific training and clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.

The use of 'reasonable force'

There are limited circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in colleges to use reasonable force to safeguard children. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can

range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is necessary for the least amount of time', the application of which will depend on the circumstances.

We have a key emphasis on de-escalation and only use physical touch to prevent a child or others being harmed. If we do this, we ensure that it is for the shortest time necessary.

Where it has been necessary to use physical intervention, we ensure the following:

- the child's wellbeing after the event is monitored and supported
- parents are fully briefed
- the incident is fully recorded including antecedents, de-escalation attempted, and holds used.
- an individual plan is agreed and recorded so that it is clear what will happen should a similar situation arise in the future
- any incident involving the restraint of a child is always reported to an identified senior member of staff

Acronyms

The policy contains a number of acronyms used in the safeguarding. These acronyms are listed below alongside their descriptions.

Acronym	Long form	Description
CCE	Child criminal exploitation	A form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, for the financial advantage or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.
CSC	Children's Social Care	The branch of the local authority that deals with children's social care.
CSE	Child sexual exploitation	A form of sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, for the financial advantage, increased status or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.
DBS	Disclosure and barring service	The service that performs the statutory check of criminal records for anyone working or volunteering in a college.
DfE	Department for Education	The national government body with responsibility for children's services, policy and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.
DPO	Data protection officer	The appointed person in college with responsibility for overseeing data protection strategy and implementation to ensure compliance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act.
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead	A member of the senior leadership team who has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection throughout the college.
EHC plan	Education, Health and Care Plan	A funded intervention plan which coordinates the educational, health and care needs for learners who have significant needs that impact on their learning and access to education. The plan identifies any additional support needs or interventions and the intended impact they will have for the learner.

FGM	Female genital mutilation	All procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.
UK GDPR	UK General Data Protection Regulation	Legislative provision designed to strengthen the safety and security of all data held within an organisation and ensure that procedures relating to personal data are fair and consistent.
HBA	'Honour-based' abuse	So-called 'honour or faith-based' abuse involves crimes that have been committed to defend the honour of the family and/or community.
KCSIE	Keeping children safe in education	Statutory guidance setting out schools and colleges' duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
LA	Local authority	A local government agency responsible for the provision of a range of services in a specified local area, including education.
LAC in CE Cared For Children	Looked-after children	Children who have been placed in local authority care or where children's services have looked after children for more than a period of 24 hours. In Cheshire East these children are referred to as Cared for Children.
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer plus	Term relating to a community of people, protected by the Equality Act 2010, who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, or other protected sexual or gender identities.
NPCC	The National Police Chiefs' Council	The National Police Chiefs' Council is a national coordination body for law enforcement in the United Kingdom and the representative body for British police chief officers.
PLAC/PC4C	Previously looked-after children / cared for	Children who were previously in local authority care or were looked after by children's services for more than a period of 24 hours. PLAC are also known as care leavers.
PHE	Public Health England	An executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care which aims to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing.
SCR	Single central record	A statutory secure record of recruitment and identity checks for all permanent and temporary staff, proprietors, contractors, external coaches and instructors, and volunteers who attend the college in a non-visitor capacity.
SPOC	Single Point of Contact	This is the person, usually, the Designated Safeguarding Lead who is the named lead for Prevent in college.

SLT	Senior leadership team	Staff members who have been delegated leadership responsibilities in a college.
TRA	Teaching Regulation Agency	An executive agency of the DfE with responsibility for the regulation of the teaching profession.
TRA	Teenage Relationship Abuse	Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children known as teenage relationship abuse
VSH	Virtual school head	Virtual school heads are in charge of promoting the educational achievement of all the children looked after by the local authority they work for, and all children who currently have, or previously had, a social worker.

Safeguarding Disclosure Form

Step 1 – Whilst safeguarding concerns should be reported via the College’s safeguarding concern form, it is recognised that it may not be possible to immediately input information into the form during a disclosure.

It may not even be appropriate to get this form in front of you; however this will give you a guide of what should be collected. Explain that you will need to share your concerns with the College’s Safeguarding Team. Take the time to read the guidance on the form, then complete as fully as possible and report via the reporting form. It is also vital that the learner understands what happens next.

Learner’s Name:			
Learners’ mobile numbers:		Course & Tutor:	
Date and time of disclosure:		D.of.B	
Name and role of person raising concern:			
Name of any other witness to the disclosure:			
Names/ages of any other children that may be at risk (e.g. siblings, friends)			
Name of Parent/s/Guardian:			

Step 2 – Please record all conversations regarding the disclosure or concerns on this sheet only. PLEASE DO NOT ASK ANY QUESTIONS other than to clarify facts. NEVER ASK WHY. Please just write down what the learner says word for word (this may include slang, swearing and potentially graphic content) along with any responses you make. Please use the body map, where appropriate, to illustrate the location of any injuries. This sheet must be signed and dated in two places by the learner and you. One at the bottom of the second page and one immediately after the last written word in the ‘details of concern’ box. This is done so that no other information may be added after your conversation has finished.

Please do not take any photocopies of your notes or put any notes about this on our systems. This disclosure form and all other notes must be handed to a member of the Safeguarding Team immediately.

Details of Concern	
Where? When? What? Who (names ages of victim/perpetrator/parents/other children that may be at risk)? Behaviours? Injuries? Remember to use the learner's words and facts only.	
Sign after the last written word, use another form if necessary.	

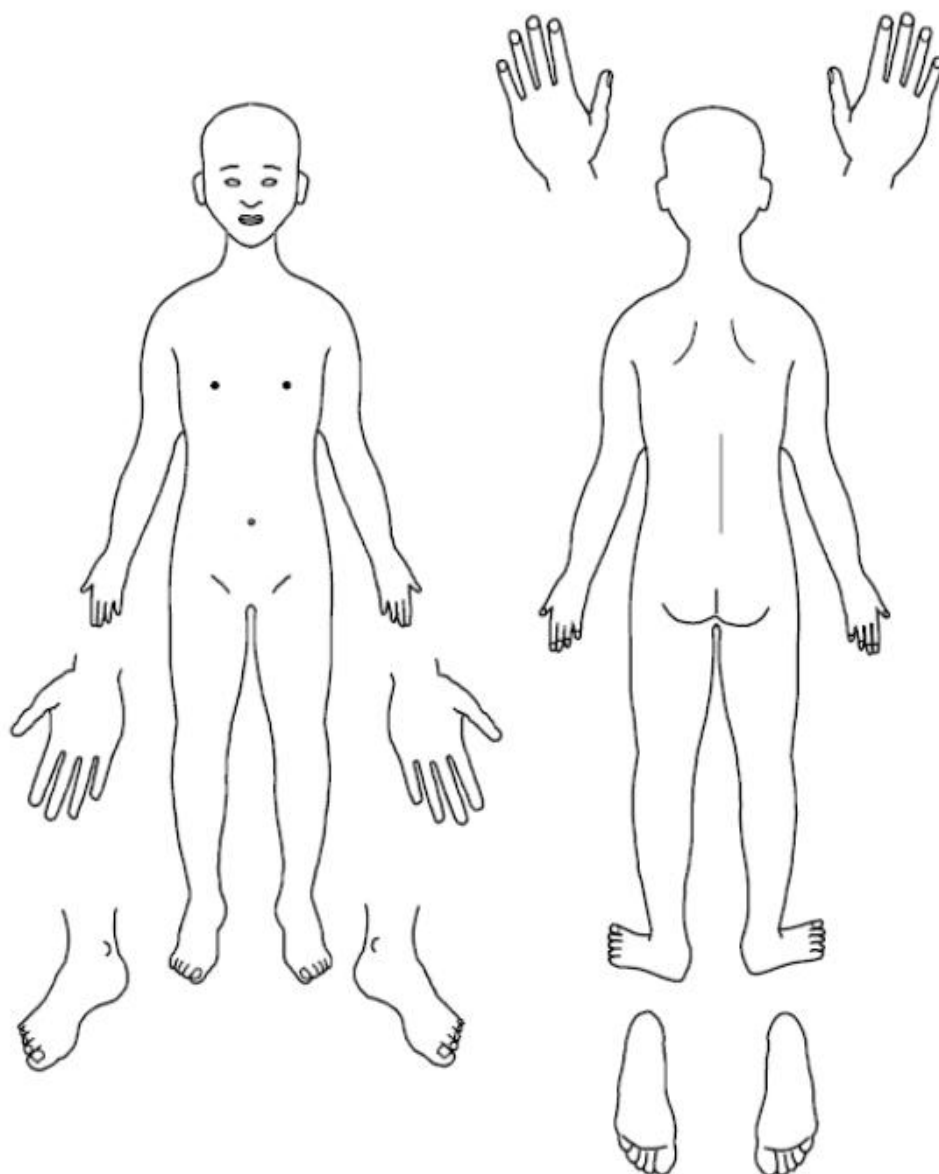
Step 3 – Please explain to the learner that you will need to share this form with the Safeguarding Team and they will probably need to discuss these concerns further with parents and possibly make a referral to Children’s Services or the Police. Where possible they will discuss this decision with the learner in advance and keep them informed of any decisions. The Wellbeing Team will be able to offer ongoing support to the learner. Please ask the learner to sign to confirm their understanding and that that the record is accurate.

Staff Name:	Signature:
Learner Name:	Signature:

Please return the form to a member of the Safeguarding Team IMMEDIATELY.

Actions Taken			
Date	Person taking action	Action taken	Outcome of action

Name and Designation of Safeguarding Staff receiving the disclosure:	
Signature	



Skin Map

Name of learner:_____

Date of birth:_____ **Date of recording**_____

Reporting 2026-27...

