Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Date Policy due to be reviewed: September 2027

Committee Responsible for Policy: Full Trust Board

WORK HARD | BE KIND | AIM HIGH

This policy has been personalised and adapted following the Birmingham model safeguarding and child protection policy for schools, educational settings and providers of education services

Original Author (of this model policy): Education Safeguarding Service, Children & Families Directorate, Birmingham City Council. Personalised by Damon Gariff (DSL) at Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre.

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1. Safeguarding Policy Approach

A whole-school, child-centred approach is fundamental to all aspects of everyday life at our school. At Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre we strive to create a culture which enables children to express their wishes and feelings and talk about anything that is important to them. We believe that every child deserves to receive an education within an environment where they feel safe to learn and develop. We want our pupils, staff, parents and carers to have confidence and trust in our goals and know that collaborative working is fundamental to create and maintain a child-centred approach to safeguarding.

In practice this means we endorse the key principle that the welfare of a child is paramount, keeping them at the centre of all decision making in our partnership working with them, their families, and those supporting them.

In line with our duties set out in the Children Act 1989 and 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, we are committed to providing help and support as soon as problems emerge, protecting children from maltreatment whether within or outside the home including online, preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development, ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

We recognise that support may be provided through universal services, community-based Early Help, targeted early help delivered through Family Help and, where thresholds are met, statutory services under sections 17, 20, 31 and 47 of the Children Act 1989.

This policy outlines our legal duties to safeguard children, the responsibilities for all staff, and the specific roles and responsibilities for our Designated Safeguarding Leads and Governance.

2. Important Safeguarding Contacts

School's In-House Contacts

Organisation / Role	Name	Contact details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	**Damon Gariff**	dgariff@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk safeguarding@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk 0121 464 3172
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	**Claire McGettrick**	cmcgettrick@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk safeguarding@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk 0121 464 3172
Designated Teacher for Children in Care (DT for Children in Care)	**Damon Gariff**	dgariff@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk safeguarding@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk
Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)	**Natasha Birmingham**	nbirmingham@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk
Mental Health Lead	**Claire McGettrick**	cmcgettrick@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk safeguarding@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk
DSL Prevent Lead	**Damon Gariff**	dgariff@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk safeguarding@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	**Dee Mcilmurray**	
Link Safeguarding Governor	**Louise Macarthur-Clare**	

Non School Contacts

Organisation / Role	Name	Contact details
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Duty LADO	Tel: 0121 675 1669 Email:ladoteam@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk
Birmingham Children's Trust	Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS)	**Monday to Thursday: 8:45am to 5:15pm:** • Friday: 8:45am to 4:15pm • Telephone: 0121 303 1888 **CASS emergency out-of-hours:** • Telephone: 0121 675 4806
Early Help		Early Help Support Team: Telephone: 0121 303 8117 or contact your Early Help District teams
NSPCC Helpline	N/A	Call: 0808 800 5000 Email help@NSPCC.org.uk.
Police	N/A	Emergency 999. Non-emergency 101

3. **Legislation and Guidance**

- This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, which replaces the September 2025 version and comes into force on 1 September 2026.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, including Part One, which all school and college staff should now read in full. References to the previous condensed Annex A have been removed because KCSIE 2026 expects staff who do not work directly with children to read Part One.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance, which should be read alongside KCSIE.
- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners, including the seven golden rules for sharing information.
- Data protection laws, meaning the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.
- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015 and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.
- The Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Human Rights Act 1998.
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and revised Prevent duty guidance.
- The Crime and Policing Act 2026 changes to regulated activity, including the removal of the supervision exemption for certain volunteers.
- The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act duties referenced in KCSIE 2026, including temporary accommodation notification duties.

4. Definitions: Safeguarding and Child Protection

All staff at Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre are expected to be familiar with the wide range of policies and procedures we have to keep children safe and promote their wellbeing at all times.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, means: 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 children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Family Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. KCSIE 2026 distinguishes between universal services and community-based Early Help, and the targeted early help level of Family Help. (Early Help Assessment and Our Family Plan - Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership).

The Right Help, Right Time guidance document advises what support is available whatever the needs are of children young people and their families. It is the framework and practice guide on how all individuals, agencies, partners and practitioners work together in Birmingham.

Child Protection: under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, it must make enquiries. Such enquiries should be initiated where there are concerns about all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, whether taking place in person or online, inside or outside the child's home.

Nudes and semi-nudes: KCSIE 2026 uses this term to refer to the creation, sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images by young people under 18. Images include photographs, videos and livestreams, and may be taken by the child, taken or created by another person, digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including deepfakes or deep nudes.

Victim, alleged perpetrator and perpetrator are recognised terms in KCSIE; however, the school will be conscious that children may prefer different language and will use appropriate terminology on a case-by-case basis.

5. Equality Statement, Children with Protected Characteristics

Some children are at greater risk of harm, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and to ensuring that all children are provided with appropriate protection regardless of additional needs, barriers or protected characteristics.

KCSIE 2026 strengthens the expectation that schools consider disproportionate vulnerabilities linked to protected characteristics and ensure safeguarding policies, procedures, record keeping and monitoring help identify and respond to sexual violence, sexual harassment, misogyny/misandry, racism, faith-based prejudice, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying and other forms of harm.

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Children who may benefit from additional support before statutory intervention:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs, whether or not they have an 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 county lines
- is frequently missing or goes missing from education, home or care
- has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, is at risk of permanent exclusion, is in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
- is at risk of exploitation, modern slavery, trafficking, including criminal or sexual exploitation
- is at risk of radicalisation into terrorism
- has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending
- is in family circumstances presenting challenges such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues or domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol or other drugs
- is at risk of honour or faith-based abuse such as FGM or forced marriage
- is privately fostered

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), health conditions and medical needs

Children with SEND, certain medical conditions or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. Additional barriers may include assumptions that indicators of possible abuse relate to the child's condition, peer isolation or prejudice-based bullying, communication barriers, difficulties understanding or reporting abuse, greater dependence on adults for care, intimate care needs and cognitive understanding of online content.

Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will require close liaison between the DSL or deputy and the SENCO or named person with oversight for SEND. The school will consider extra pastoral support, attention and communication support for these children.

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

A child being lesbian, gay or bisexual is not in itself a risk factor for harm, but children can be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying. Children perceived by others to be lesbian, gay or bisexual can be just as vulnerable. The school will address these vulnerabilities through its anti-bullying, behaviour and safeguarding arrangements.

Where a child or parent/carer requests support relating to social transition, the school will not initiate action itself. Any request will be considered taking account of safeguarding duties, the welfare and best interests of the child and other children, parental involvement unless this would create greater risk, equality and human rights obligations, educational context, and the need to document decisions and keep them under review. Staff should not adopt any changes relating to social transition unless a school decision has been made and parents or carers have been involved as set out in KCSIE 2026.

Schools must not allow pupils into toilets, changing rooms, showers, boarding or residential accommodation designated for the opposite biological sex. Alternative arrangements may be considered where appropriate, provided they do not compromise the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of the child or other children. Schools must record and review such arrangements.

6. Roles and Responsibilities of Staff including Leadership and Management

Role and Responsibility of the Whole School

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility at Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre. This policy applies to all staff including permanent, temporary and supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, governors and contractors.

Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school approach which prepares pupils for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, racism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, sexual violence/harassment, derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence and conflict.

- healthy and respectful relationships
- boundaries, consent and kindness in relationships
- stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- body confidence and self-esteem
- how to recognise and report concerns about abusive relationships, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- the concepts of, and laws relating to, all forms of sexual harassment and abuse and how to access support
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it
- online harms such as sharing images, deepfakes, pornography, misogynistic influencers and when and where to seek help

Role and Responsibility of all staff

All staff will be required to read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the reviewed version of this guidance at least annually. Staff who work directly with children and school and college leaders should also read Annex A.

All staff will receive safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety and an understanding of expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, at induction. Training will be regularly updated, and all staff will receive safeguarding updates as required and at least annually.

All staff will be aware of the process for community-based Family Help assessments, targeted early help delivered through Family Help, and the criteria for referral to local authority children's social care for statutory services under sections 17, 20, 31 and 47 of the Children Act 1989:

- staff should act immediately if they have concerns about a child's welfare
- staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action
- early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of support
- data protection laws do not prevent sharing information to keep children safe and promote their welfare
- if in doubt, staff should speak to the DSL or deputy

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and understanding filtering and monitoring systems and processes. The DSL is a senior member of staff from the school leadership team and has the status, authority, time, funding, training, resources and support required to carry out the role effectively.

To ensure continuity of safeguarding responsibilities, the school has a robust cover arrangement for periods when the DSL is unavailable due to illness, leave or other circumstances. This includes a confidential shared mailbox along with the use of CPOMS software monitored by an extended safeguarding team so safeguarding concerns are received, monitored and acted upon without delay.

The DSL will liaise with staff including teachers, pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT technicians, senior mental health leads, SENCOs and the mental health support team where available, so that children's needs are considered holistically.

The DSL will take lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by understanding welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues experienced by children who need or have needed a social worker, and by supporting teaching staff to provide academic support or reasonable adjustments where needed.

Role and Responsibilities of Governance

The Governing Body has strategic leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements and ensures policies, procedures and training are effective and comply with the law at all times.

Governors and will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, at induction. This training should equip them to provide strategic challenge and to test and assure themselves that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective. Training should be updated regularly.

Governors read Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 in full and sign a declaration annually that they have reviewed the guidance.

The Governing Body will ensure that the child protection policy reflects the whole-school approach to child-on-child abuse, online safety, SEND, children who are absent from education, use of premises, alternative provision, mobile phones, filtering and monitoring, and local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Role and Responsibilities of the Headteacher/Principal

The Headteacher will implement this policy and ensure all staff understand and follow systems which support safeguarding, including the child protection policy, behaviour policy, staff behaviour/code of conduct, safeguarding response to children absent from education, online safety arrangements, and the identity and role of the DSL and deputies.

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher promotes the educational achievement of looked after and previously looked after children and works closely with the Virtual School Head. KCSIE 2026 also highlights the extended non-statutory role of Virtual School Heads for children with a social worker and children in kinship care, including the importance of attendance as a safeguarding factor.

7. Safer Recruitment and Ongoing Suitability

Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre is committed to safer recruitment and to maintaining a culture of vigilance throughout each person's employment or engagement. The Governing Body ensures that recruitment and selection arrangements comply with Part Three of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and any requirements applying to the type of setting.

The school will ensure that:

- job descriptions, person specifications, advertisements and application information clearly set out the safeguarding responsibilities of the role and the school's commitment to safeguarding;
- at least one person conducting an interview has completed appropriate safer recruitment training where this is a statutory requirement, and those involved in recruitment have the knowledge needed to apply safer recruitment practice;
- application forms, employment history, reasons for leaving, gaps or inconsistencies, references and self-declarations from shortlisted candidates are scrutinised and any concerns are explored and resolved before appointment;
- online searches are considered for shortlisted candidates as part of due diligence; candidates are informed that such searches may be undertaken, and only information relevant to suitability to work with children is considered;
- all offers remain conditional until the school is satisfied that the required identity, right to work, DBS and barred list, prohibition, qualification, overseas and any other role-specific checks have been completed;
- required checks and dates are recorded accurately on the Single Central Record, and written assurance is obtained for agency, third-party and fee-funded trainee teacher checks where applicable;
- volunteer, governor, contractor, visitor and third-party arrangements are risk assessed and the correct level of checking and supervision is determined before the person begins the activity;
- no unchecked person is permitted to work unsupervised or undertake regulated activity where the required checks have not been completed;
- induction, probation, supervision, training, appraisal, professional conduct arrangements and the management of low-level concerns support ongoing suitability after appointment; and
- statutory referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service and, where applicable, the Teaching Regulation Agency are made when the relevant criteria are met.

8. Whistleblowing and Raising Concerns about Safeguarding Practice

All staff and volunteers must be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe safeguarding practice, wrongdoing or failures in the school's safeguarding arrangements without fear of victimisation or disadvantage. Concerns must be taken seriously, recorded appropriately and addressed promptly in accordance with the school's whistleblowing arrangements.

Staff should normally raise concerns with the Headteacher. Concerns about the Headteacher should be raised with the Chair of Governors. Where there is a conflict of interest, or the concern relates to the person who would normally receive it, staff should use the alternative reporting route identified by the school which is to raise through the LADO on 0121 675 1669 or through ladoteam@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk.

A member of staff who feels unable to raise a concern internally or believes that a genuine safeguarding concern is not being addressed, may use the school's external whistleblowing route or seek independent advice from the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285. Whistleblowing does not replace the duty to act immediately where a child may be at risk of harm. In an emergency, contact the police on 999; safeguarding referrals should be made through the appropriate local procedures.

All staff will be told at induction, and reminded through safeguarding updates, how to access the Whistleblowing Policy, who concerns should be reported to, the alternative route where the concern involves a senior leader, and how to escalate concerns which are not being acted upon located here - Hillcrest School & Sixth Form Centre - Our Policies

9. Children Absent from Education and Children Missing Education

Absence from education can be an indicator of abuse, neglect, exploitation, criminal or sexual exploitation, mental health concerns, risk of radicalisation, or other unmet need. The school will respond to unexplained, repeated and/or prolonged absence as a potential safeguarding concern and will not treat attendance and safeguarding as separate processes.

The school will have clear attendance and safeguarding procedures which identify who is responsible for first-day contact, follow-up, home visits or welfare checks, information sharing, escalation to the DSL, and referral to the local authority or children's social care.

The school will:

- monitor attendance and admissions information daily and follow up unexplained absence promptly using more than one contact method where necessary;
- consider the child's known vulnerabilities, family circumstances, social care involvement, SEND, health needs, transport arrangements, patterns of absence and any previous safeguarding concerns when deciding the level and urgency of response;
- ensure attendance staff alert the DSL or deputy without delay where absence is unexplained, repeated, prolonged, linked to a known risk, or where attempts to establish the child's welfare and whereabouts are unsuccessful;

- make reasonable enquiries, record each contact attempt, information obtained, decisions, actions and reasons for escalation or non-escalation, and keep the situation under review;
- work with parents or carers, the child, the local authority and relevant agencies to understand and address barriers to attendance, unless doing so would increase risk to the child;
- refer concerns to local authority children's social care and/or the police immediately where there is reason to believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, is in immediate danger, or their whereabouts cannot be established and risk is significant;
- comply with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and statutory guidance before adding or deleting a pupil from the admission register, including making required returns and notifications to the local authority; and
- notify and work with the local authority Children Missing Education service where a child of compulsory school age is not registered at a school and is not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school, or where the school's enquiries indicate that a pupil may become missing education.

A pupil who remains registered at the school is not, solely because of persistent or severe absence, a Child Missing Education. However, their absence may still present a serious safeguarding risk and must be addressed through the school's attendance and safeguarding procedures. The school must not remove a pupil from roll unless a lawful ground is met and the required enquiries and notifications have been completed.

These arrangements should be read alongside the school's Attendance Policy, Children Missing Education procedures and Birmingham local processes.

10. Working with Families

Alongside KCSIE 2026, Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre is committed to a child-centred approach that recognises the importance of working in partnership with parents, carers and wider family networks, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children.

This approach reflects the principles set out in the Government's strategy Stable Homes, Built on Love , which responded to the recommendations of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. The strategy emphasises the importance of ensuring children grow up in safe, stable and loving relationships and, wherever possible, within their own families. It also highlights the value of providing support at the earliest opportunity and strengthening the role of family and community networks in helping children to thrive.

Where it is safe and appropriate to do so, the school will work openly and collaboratively with parents and carers to support a child's welfare and wellbeing. This may include consideration by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy DSL as to whether parents or carers should be informed when additional pastoral or wellbeing support is being provided. Parents or carers will not be informed where doing so may place a child at increased risk of harm.

The school will seek to understand the child's family circumstances, identity, culture, faith, lived experiences and any barriers that may affect access to support or services. Staff will remain professionally curious and alert to situations where children may be experiencing abuse, neglect, exploitation or other forms of harm, including circumstances where a parent, carer or other adult may not be acting in the child's best interests.

11. Confidentiality and Sharing Information

Trusted relationships are at the heart of working with children and their families at Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre. We strive to uphold good practice and work in partnership with children and families.

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

When deciding what information to share, staff should consider whether the information is relevant to current safeguarding risk, necessary for the receiving setting or agency to know, clearly presented and appropriately contextualised. Professional judgement should be used so information shared is focused and proportionate. Care must be taken not to omit information where it may be relevant to understanding or managing safeguarding risk.

Data protection laws means the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. These laws do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare.

If staff need to share special category personal data, the safeguarding of children and individuals at risk processing condition can allow information sharing without consent where there is good reason to do so and sharing information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner.

12. Recognise and Respond to Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

All staff are aware of what abuse, neglect and exploitation are and understand the indicators which may suggest a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm.

All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery, recognising that children can be at risk inside and outside school, inside and outside the home and online. Abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues rarely occur as standalone events and multiple issues often overlap.

Specific updates to definitions and indicators:

- Abuse may include harm caused by a child to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or caregiver abuse.
- Emotional abuse can include verbal abuse such as persistent criticism, belittling or name-calling.
- Sexual abuse includes assault by penetration, penetration with an object, and non-contact abuse such as involving children in production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, or grooming including online.
- Exploitation and modern slavery are forms of abuse. Children who are criminally exploited must have their vulnerabilities recognised and should be treated as victims; it is not possible for a child to consent to being exploited, abused or trafficked.
- CSE and CCE may be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and a

victim may identify as being part of this group; this may constitute modern slavery and require relevant child protection and modern slavery referrals.

Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence):

At Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre we know that children can abuse other children, including online. Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator. It is preventable and timely, evidence-based support can be key to preventing children from going on to commit abuse or violence.

- serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon
- harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment, which may include misogyny/misandry
- consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including those generated using AI online abuse through abusive, harassing and misogynistic/misandrist messages, non-consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes, and sharing abusive images or pornography with those who do not want to receive such content

Domestic abuse and Operation Encompass

Domestic abuse can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse. Children can be victims of domestic abuse where they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships, including teenage relationship abuse.

Operation Encompass is an information-sharing scheme between the police and education settings. KCSIE 2026 notes a statutory duty on police to notify a child's education setting, and where relevant local authorities, where they have reasonable grounds to believe a child may be a victim of domestic abuse. The DSL the Key Adult and may use the central safeguarding inbox to oversee notifications. Notifications do not replace statutory safeguarding procedures or referrals.

Mental health

Mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns. This could include self-harm, eating disorder signs, suicidal ideation or risk of suicide, and may also be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Education staff are not expected to diagnose mental health problems but are well placed to observe behaviour and identify children who may be struggling. If a child is in danger, staff should call 999 or arrange for them to be taken to A&E immediately by a parent/carer or other suitable person. If urgent mental health help is needed but it is not an emergency, staff can use NHS 111 online or call 111 and select the mental health option.

Serious violence

Serious violence may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying, and can be associated with criminal exploitation. Staff should report concerns about a child carrying or using a weapon, or expressing intent to do so, to the DSL or deputy.

The DSL should assess risk to the individual pupil and others, consider wider information, and take appropriate action. Depending on the risk, this may include a safety and support plan and consideration of action to de-escalate peer conflict. Schools should be alert to higher risks for children with disrupted education, including suspensions, permanent exclusions, time in alternative provision or a history of offending.

Responding when children disclose or staff have concerns

Staff should act immediately, follow the child protection policy and speak to the DSL or deputy. If the DSL or deputy is unavailable in exceptional circumstances, this must not delay action; staff should speak to a senior member of staff and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. Any action taken should be shared with the DSL or deputy as soon as practically possible.

When responding to reports of HSB, sexual harassment or sexual violence, staff should listen carefully, avoid judgement, use the child's language, ask open questions, not promise confidentiality, record only what the child says without interpretation or personal opinion, and inform the DSL as soon as practically possible.

Harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence

KCSIE 2026 substantially strengthens this area. Harmful sexual behaviour can occur between children of any age and sex, online or face-to-face, and may escalate into sexual harassment or sexual violence. HSB should always be considered within a child protection context.

All incidents involving the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes require a safeguarding response, regardless of whether they are consensual or non-consensual. The response should be proportionate and consider age, development, circumstances, coercion, exploitation and vulnerability.

Following a report of sexual violence, the DSL or deputy should carry out an immediate risk and needs assessment. For sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered case-by-case. Assessments should be recorded, regularly reviewed and used to inform safeguarding decisions.

For reports of rape or assault by penetration, while facts are established and agencies are consulted, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any shared classes with the victim and the school should consider reasonable separation across premises and transport. These actions are in the best interests of all children and should not be treated as a judgement on guilt.

Prevent and concerns about extremism

Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre is aware of our duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of our functions, to have "*due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism*" (known as the Prevent duty).

The Prevent duty is one of our wider safeguarding obligations. Our DSLs and senior leaders are aware of the revised Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023) for England and

Wales, especially paragraphs 141-210, which focus on education and childcare. The guidance covers 3 general themes: leadership and partnership, capabilities, and reducing permissive environments.

Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, which aims to:

- negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
- undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
- intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in (1) or (2)

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

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

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to Children's Services or Channel, the Government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

The DfE also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which all staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism for a pupil. In non-emergency situations DSLs can also email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk. In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321.

13. Online Safety and Filtering

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

The breadth of online safety issues is considerable and ever evolving. KCSIE 2026 continues to use the 4Cs but updates them as follows:

- Content: exposure to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, including pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, extreme sexual or physical violence, misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories.
- Contact: harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this, including peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults to groom or exploit them sexually, criminally, financially or otherwise.
- Conduct: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, including making, sending and receiving explicit images, including those generated using AI, and online bullying.
- Commerce: online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and financial scams.

Online safety must be a running and interrelated theme across safeguarding, related policies, curriculum planning, staff training, DSL responsibilities and parental engagement.

Guidance to support schools to understand safety considerations and legal responsibilities when using generative AI, whether teacher-facing or pupil-facing, should be considered. Schools should also consider the DfE resources to help staff use AI safely and effectively, including safeguarding, ethics, data protection and intellectual property risks.

The DfE expects schools to operate as mobile phone-free environments by default. The school will implement a policy whereby pupils do not have access to mobile phones throughout the school day, including lessons, movement between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes, unless an exception has been agreed by the Headteacher.

Filtering and monitoring systems will be reviewed at least once every academic year. Reviews should be carried out by the SLT member responsible for filtering and monitoring, with support from the DSL and IT support, and should include checks that filtering works appropriately on all internet-connected devices in all relevant locations. A record of these checks should be kept.

The school will have measures to protect personal information and appropriate cyber security systems, approached as part of wider safeguarding responsibilities. The school will consider the Cyber Security Standards for Schools and Colleges.

14. Managing Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors

All staff based within our school will be considered to be in either a position of trust or working with children. Staff must immediately report any level of concern about the behaviour or conduct of an adult working or volunteering with children, including supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers, contractors and adults using or hiring the school premises.

KCSIE 2026 adds explicit reference to trainee teachers throughout the allegations framework. Where concerns or allegations relate to a trainee teacher placed within the school, the expectations set out for schools and colleges apply and teacher training providers are expected to follow the same procedures as supply agencies.

If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation that another member of staff, including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers or contractors, has harmed or poses a risk of harm to children, this should be referred to the Headteacher, who will consider whether onward referral to the LADO is required. If the concern/allegation is about the Headteacher, it should be referred to the Chair of Governors or equivalent. Where there is a conflict of interest, it should be reported directly to the LADO.

Before contacting the LADO, the school may conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish facts without jeopardising any future police investigation. This may include whether the individual was in school, whether contact with the child could have occurred, whether there were witnesses and whether there is CCTV footage.

Suspension should not be automatic. Alternatives should be considered, including redeployment, supervision, alternative duties, or moving the child to a different class only where this is in the child's best interests, is not a punishment and parents have been consulted. Immediate suspension must be justified and recorded, including alternatives considered and why they were rejected.

Where an allegation is substantiated and a person is dismissed, resigns or ceases to provide services, the school must consider statutory duties to refer to the DBS where criteria are met, and for teaching staff consider referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency. These duties also apply to volunteers where they were engaged in regulated activity.

Low-level concerns

A low-level concern does not mean the concern is insignificant. It is any concern, however small, including a sense of unease or nagging doubt, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside work, and does not meet the harm threshold or is not serious enough to consider referral to the LADO.

Low-level concerns must be shared responsibly, recorded in writing, kept confidential and reviewed so that patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Concerns about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers so potential patterns can be identified.

Use of school premises for non-school activities

Where the school hires or rents out facilities to organisations or individuals, safeguarding requirements will be included in lease or hire agreements as a condition of use. Failure to comply will lead to termination of the agreement. Where an allegation arises from an activity on school premises, the school will follow its safeguarding policies and procedures, including informing the LADO where appropriate.

15. Record Keeping

Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre will hold records confidentially, safely, securely and in line with our records retention schedule.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions must be recorded in writing. Records should be clear, factual and distinguish between observed concerns, professional opinion and historic information.

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- the rationale for decisions, including where referrals were or were not made to local authority children's social care, Prevent or other agencies

The child protection file should be transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file. Where files are transferred, the exporting school should include a clear, structured summary identifying current safeguarding concerns, relevant context and ongoing support

needs. Historic information should be appropriately contextualised so safeguarding information supports rather than disadvantages the child.

Where information indicates a risk to others and/or the individual child, for example previous carrying, threatening with or using a knife or weapon, the receiving school should assess risk and, accordingly, put in place a safety and support plan when the child arrives.

Receiving in and transferring pupil records to other education provision

If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their safeguarding information file is forwarded as soon as possible, securely, and separately from the main pupil file.

To allow the new school/college to have support in place when the child arrives, this should be within:

- **5 days** for an in-year transfer, or
- **the first 5 days** of the start of a new term.

In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the wellbeing and safety of the child.

Retention, archiving and destruction of records

For records that are not transferred to another school, for example the child leaves the country or is going to be home educated, we have:

- a clear retention policy
- secure and appropriate system to archive with restricted access
- we have a written assurance from our providers of our electronic recording systems that all records are maintained securely which includes any archived records.

Storage, retention, and destruction of our child protection files is also made clear in our data management policy.

Appendix: Links to useful information

Local

- Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Right Help, Right Time - Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Early Help Assessment and Our Family Plan - Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Having those difficult conversations: The Importance of the Resolution and Escalation Protocol - Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Birmingham Children's Trust
- Birmingham City Council - Children, Young People & Families
- BCC School Safety Plan re children who pose a risk to others
- BCC Corporate Safeguarding Policy
- No platform policy | Birmingham City Council
- Suicide postvention support package for education establishments | Birmingham City Council

National and statutory guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026: Part One
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Information Sharing Advice for Safeguarding Practitioners
- Data Protection Toolkit for Schools
- Prevent Duty Guidance
- Channel Guidance
- DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards
- Cyber Security Standards for Schools and Colleges
- Mobile Phones in Schools
- Use of Reasonable Force in Schools
- Alternative Provision Guidance
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions
- Allergy Safety in Schools
- Operation Encompass
- UKCIS Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes Guidance

- Generative AI in Education
- Generative AI Product Safety Expectations
- Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit
- Children Missing Education
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance
- Staffing and employment: advice for schools (DfE)