The British Muslim School

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

THE BRITISH MUSLIM SCHOOL
AN INDEPENDENT SECONDARY BOYS SCHOOL
DAY & BOARDING

The British Muslim School

Lodge Road, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B70 8DY

You are the best nation raised up for humankind. You enjoin righteousness, forbid corruption and you believe in Allah. Al- Quran , Surah Al-Imran, ayah 110

Title:	Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
Responsible person:	Principal / DSL / Governing Body
Subject:	Safeguarding
Updated:	September 2025
Approved by:	Board of Governors
Review Date:	September 2026 (or earlier if there is a change in the applicable law)

PREFACE

The British Muslim School aims to provide opportunities for children and young people to identify and fulfil their academic, moral and spiritual potential. The aims of the school are to use education as a tool for harmony, social inclusion and peace in diversity; to create opportunities for all individuals to benefit from this and, in particular, to inspire and enlighten future generations.

Our Safeguarding Policy puts the best interests of the child at the heart of everything we do. The policy will be regularly reviewed, revised and updated as appropriate to statutory requirements and the school's needs.

Application
This policy is applicable to all students, including those in the Main School and Boarding. Whenever the word "staff" is used, it refers to all members of staff, governors, self-employed staff, third-party employed staff, supply staff, contractors, volunteers, students, and those on work experience. The policy is posted on the school website, and all policies and procedures are also available from the Administration office.

Legislation and Guidance
This policy reflects current legislation, accepted best practice, and complies with statutory guidance as outlined below (along with other advisory documents). The school is located in Sandwell and therefore follows the local procedures of the **Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (Sandwell CSP)**.

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), September 2025**
- **The Children Act 1989 and 2004**
- **The Education Act 2002**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (WT), 2023**
- **Sandwell Safeguarding Partnership Threshold Document** (multi-agency thresholds guidance)
- **National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools** (DfE)
- **Independent School Standards Regulations (2014)**
- **DfE Guidance: Independent School Standards (2019)**
- **The Prevent Duty Guidance** (2015, updated 2021)
- **DfE statutory guidance: "Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006" (September 2018)**
- **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018**
- Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 (legislation.gov.uk) – The legal age of marriage in England and Wales is 18 years Old

- Child and Social Work Act 2017

  Requires all schools to ensure:

  (a)relationships education be provided to pupils of compulsory school age receiving primary education at schools in England

  (b)relationships and sex education to be provided (instead of sex education) to pupils receiving secondary education at schools in England.

  (c)that pupils learn about—

  (i)safety in forming and maintaining relationships,

  (ii)the characteristics of healthy relationships, and

  (iii)how relationships may affect physical and mental health and well-being, an

  (d)the education is appropriate having regard to the age and the religious background of the pupils

(A full list of relevant guidance documents is provided in Section 32 of this policy.)

Other British Muslim School policies which form part of the overarching safeguarding approach, and should be read in conjunction with this policy, include: **Anti-Bullying; Equal Opportunities; Registration and Attendance; PSHE; Behaviour; Health and Safety; Recruitment, Selection and Disclosures; Restraint; E-Safety; Code of Conduct; Whistleblowing; Missing Child; Children Missing Education; Visitors Procedure**, etc.

Key Contacts

School – Safeguarding Team:
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Mr. Toqir Islam – (Email: t.islam@thebritishmuslimschool.co.uk, Tel: 0121 516 2264) – Responsible for all safeguarding and child protection matters. Curriculum, Mental health, Designated teacher for Looked after children, also PREVENT Lead
- **Deputy DSL / Principal:** Mr. M. A. Kadir Al-Hasan – (Email: principal@thebritishmuslimschool.co.uk, Tel: 0121 516 2264) – The Principal is the Deputy DSL and holds ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding across the entire school (including Boarding). Curriculum, Mental health, Designated teacher for Looked after children, also PREVENT Lead
- **Chair of Governors:** Mr. Mohammed Misbhaur Rahman – (Email: Misba70@yahoo.com, Tel: 0121 516 2264)
- **Independent Listener (for boarding students):** Mr. Emdad Hussain –

(Email: emdadhussain@gmail.com, Tel: 0121 516 2264)
- **Pastoral Care Lead:** Mr. Mirza Hussain – (Tel: via school office)
- **Behaviour Management Officer:** Mr. Muhammad Mahbub Kamal – (Tel: via school office)
-Online safety Lead: Usama Shazlee & Mahood Ali

External Contact Details:
- **Sandwell Children's Trust (MASH – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub):** First Point of Contact (FPOC) – **0121 569 3100**.
- (For concerns about children living or boarding in Sandwell. Professionals must follow up any telephone referral in writing using the Multi-Agency Request Form within 24 hours.)
- **Emergency Social Work Duty Team (out of hours): 0121 569 2266** (After 5pm and weekends).
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – Sandwell:** Michelle Pinnock-Ouma – (Email: sandwell_lado@sandwellchildrenstrust.org, Tel: 0121 569 4770). For reporting concerns about the conduct of adults.

Emergency: If you believe a child is in immediate risk of harm, call **999** (Police).
Non-Emergency: If a child is at risk of significant harm but not in immediate danger, complete a Multi-Agency Request Form (MARF) as soon as possible (within 24 hours) and send securely to **access_team@sandwellchildrenstrust.org**.

Early Help: Early Help support and consultation in West Bromwich is available via the Strengthening Families Team – **0121 569 7293**. Early Help Advisors (including CAMHS advisors) can check if an Early Help Assessment (EHAF) already exists and provide guidance. Early Help aims to provide the right support at the right time to address additional vulnerabilities before they escalate to require statutory intervention.

Prevent Duty (Sandwell): Prevent is part of the national counter-terrorism strategy and aims to stop people from being drawn into or supporting terrorism. In Sandwell, inquiries can be directed to the Sandwell Prevent team (Email: prevent_inbox@sandwell.gov.uk). If there is immediate danger due to radicalisation concerns, call **999**. Suspected terrorism can be reported online or via the confidential Anti-Terrorism Hotline **0800 789 321**. More information on local Prevent support and referrals can be found on Sandwell Council's Prevent website.

Out-of-Borough: Safeguarding concerns about students who reside outside Sandwell should be referred to the children's services in the local authority of their principal residence.

Other Useful Contacts:
- **Ofsted General Helpline:** 0300 123 1231
- **Ofsted Whistleblower Hotline:** 0300 123 3155
- **NSPCC 24-hour Helpline:** 0808 800 5000 (help@nspcc.org.uk)

- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line:** 0800 028 0285
- **Police – Public Protection Unit (non-emergency advice):** 101 or 0300 333 3000
- **Police – Emergency:** 999
- **DfE Safeguarding Advice Line:** 0207 340 7264
- **Childline:** 0800 1111
- **Counter-Extremism (DfE mailbox):** counter.extremism@education.gov.uk
- **RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences):** Report online at **www.hse.gov.uk/riddor** or Tel: **0345 300 9923** (fatal/major incidents only)
- **Office of the Children's Commissioner (Advice for Children in Care/Boarding):** 0800 528 0731 – www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Policy Statement
Safeguarding is the action taken to promote the welfare of all children and to protect them from harm. **Safeguarding** means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of safeguarding. It focuses on protecting individual children who have been identified as suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This policy includes child protection procedures detailing how to respond to concerns about a child.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's responsibility**. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfill this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centered. This means considering, at all times, what is in the **best interests of the child** (KCSIE 2025).

The governors and staff fully recognize their statutory responsibilities for safeguarding children and understand that the safeguarding and overall welfare of students is of paramount importance. It is our objective and duty to safeguard students from harm and to actively promote each child's welfare. We recognize that all members of the school community – including staff, parents and volunteers – have a full and active part to play in protecting children and promoting their well-being.

The British Muslim School prides itself on being an "open" school in which children and adults feel secure, concerns are raised and listened to, and support services and other agencies are readily involved.

Safeguarding provision reflects significant characteristics of the school. As a Muslim faith school, it is our paramount duty to ensure everyone is safe, secure, and flourishing in our school community. As such, the school pays particular regard to the age range of the

children in its care and the particular demands of the boarding environment – including the potential for abuse by peers and the less formal relationships between children and staff that are created by the boarding environment. *(For example, staff are mindful of maintaining professional boundaries given the close and communal living aspects of boarding.)*

As Abdullah ibn Amr reported, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *"The true Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand others are safe."* (Bukhari) – This ethos underpins our approach: everyone in our school community should feel safe from harm caused by others.

We recognize the significant role that technology plays in safeguarding today. Online safety is a crucial part of our duty to safeguard children's wellbeing. The school is alert to the risks of **online abuse**, including exposure to harmful content or contact, and the dangers of misinformation, disinformation and online radicalisation. We are committed to ensuring appropriate filters and monitoring are in place and that children are educated about safe and responsible use of technology.

We believe the school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes children's social, physical, emotional and moral development. Safeguarding includes looking after mental health as well as physical health. We strive to create a safeguarding ethos and culture embedded in all aspects of school life. Strong pastoral care supports each child's development, fostering self-esteem, security, confidence and independence. Safeguarding is central to the well-being of each individual and is an intrinsic part of our curriculum and wider school life.

AIMS:

- To establish and maintain an environment where both staff and children feel safe and secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- To ensure that all children – regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity – have equal rights to protection and feel safe, valued and respected.
- To ensure there are a variety of mechanisms for students to report concerns, and that students know there are adults in the school they can talk to if they are worried.
- To provide time, space and opportunities within the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognize and stay safe from abuse, including safe use of technology and the internet (see the school's PSHE, RSE and IT curriculum for details).
- To provide early help to students and families, either from within the school and/or from external agencies, as soon as problems emerge.
- To ensure that all staff are familiar with the definitions, signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect as stated in KCSIE and in this policy (see Appendix 1), and that they understand their responsibilities in safeguarding children.

- To establish and maintain effective procedures so that all staff know how to act if they have **any** concern about a child or about the conduct of an adult.
- To support those children who are at risk or who have suffered harm or neglect.
- To identify, monitor and support students who may need additional support from other agencies (even if they do not require intervention from Children's Social Care), for example referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- To ensure that children of compulsory school age do not miss parts of their education through continuous or repeated absenteeism. (The school will work with the local authority and follow statutory guidance on children missing education.)
- To work closely with other agencies to identify, assess and support those children who are in need and/or suffering significant harm, or who may suffer harm without appropriate intervention.
- To practice safer recruitment and ensure that all staff are recruited in accordance with the school's Recruitment Policy and **Part 3 of KCSIE**.
- To work closely with parents, and ensure they understand the responsibility placed on the school for child protection and safeguarding.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL
Mr. Toqir Islam is the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**. He has ultimate responsibility for all safeguarding and child protection matters across the entire school, including matters arising in the Boarding provision. Mr. M. A. Kadir Al-Hasan (the Principal) serves as a **Deputy DSL**. The DSL (and Deputy) are members of the Senior Leadership Team. They are trained to an advanced level in inter-agency working and have the status and authority to carry out the duties of the role. Their roles are explicitly defined in their job descriptions. They are given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

The DSL or Deputy DSL is available during normal school hours – in school or via telephone – for staff, students or parents to discuss any safeguarding concerns. During out-of-term periods or school holidays, the DSL (or Deputy) can be contacted if necessary (contact details for the DSL/DDSL are provided at the start of this policy).

The role of the DSL: The full responsibilities of the DSL are outlined in Annex C of KCSIE 2025. In summary, the DSL's role encompasses the following key areas: **Raising awareness; Working with others; Managing referrals/requests; Information sharing and record-keeping; Training, knowledge and skills; Providing support to staff; Understanding the views of children;** and **Overseeing online safety (including filtering and monitoring systems).**

This includes (but is not limited to):

- **Promoting a culture of safeguarding** so that the safety and welfare of children is embedded in all the school's processes and procedures.
- Being the **first point of contact** for parents, students, staff and external agencies on any safeguarding issue.
- The school will robustly monitor the attendance of children on roll in the school in line with the Attendance Policy and Working together to improve school attendance; Statutory Guidance (August 2024). When a safeguarding/child protection concern is raised, attendance concerns will be shared with partner agencies in accordance with local information sharing protocols.
- Providing support, advice and guidance to other staff on an ongoing basis and for specific safeguarding issues as needed.
- Ensuring all members of staff have access to and understand the School's Safeguarding Policy and procedures.
- Ensuring that systems are in place, and are easily understood and accessible, for students to report concerns or worries.
- Ensuring appropriate and timely action is taken when a concern is raised, including making referrals to or liaising with other agencies when required.
- Being familiar with and understanding the local **procedures and thresholds of Sandwell CSP** (Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership), including the "Right Help, Right Time" multi-agency threshold guidance.
- Understanding child protection processes, including Section 17 (Child in Need) and Section 47 (Child Protection) assessments under the Children Act 1989, as well as Early Help processes.
- Ensuring detailed, accurate written records are kept of all concerns, with a clear chronology of events, including records of decisions made and the reasons for those decisions. (This includes retaining records even in cases where no referral to another service is made. Records are kept securely, e.g., in a protected electronic system or a locked file.)
- Attending (or ensuring appropriate representation at) case conferences, strategy meetings or other multi-agency planning meetings; contributing to assessments and reports; and supporting staff who may be required to attend such meetings.
- Ensuring that an appropriate adult is present to support a child during police interviews or in other instances as required by guidance.
- Ensuring that all staff receive regular safeguarding training – **at least annually** – in line with Sandwell CSP requirements and KCSIE, so that they understand and discharge their safeguarding roles effectively.
- Ensuring that the school's policies and practices related to online safety are up to date and effective, so that children are safeguarded when online (including oversight of the school's internet filtering and monitoring systems).

- Overseeing and coordinating the school's implementation of the **Prevent Duty** – including attending relevant training and cascading training to other staff – to protect children from the risk of radicalisation.
- Promoting the educational achievement and care of any children at the school who are looked after by the local authority (the DSL acts as or liaises with the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children).
- Ensuring that safeguarding records for students are promptly transferred to their next school or college when they leave The British Muslim School. Conversely, for new students, ensuring that safeguarding records are requested from the previous school within five days of the student joining us.
- Ensuring the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy is reviewed at least annually (and more frequently if needed) in conjunction with school governors, to evaluate its effectiveness in practice and ensure it reflects the latest statutory guidance.
- Reviewing and updating the policy at any time in response to new legislation, if procedures are found to be ineffective, or to incorporate lessons learned from any incidents.
- Ensuring the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy is available publicly (e.g., on the school's website).
- Liaising and reporting to the Governing Body on safeguarding matters as appropriate (for instance, through termly safeguarding reports or updates).

The role of all members of staff: (teaching and non-teaching staff, volunteers and supply staff) includes, but is not limited to, the following responsibilities:

- **Providing a safe environment** in which all children can learn.
- **Reading and understanding Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025** (and for those working directly with children, also Annex B of KCSIE which details specific safeguarding issues). *Staff who do not work directly with children may, at the discretion of senior leadership, read the condensed version of Part 1 found in KCSIE 2025 Annex A.*
- Reading and understanding the school's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and related safeguarding procedures.
- Knowing the identity of the DSL and Deputy DSL(s) and understanding their specific roles.
- Attending/undertaking safeguarding and child protection training regularly – at least annually – and additional updates or refreshers as required.
- Being aware of the school's online filtering and monitoring systems and understanding their role in keeping children safe online.
- Helping to teach and reinforce safe behaviours online and offline, in line with their role (for example, through the curriculum and daily interactions).

- Being aware of the signs of abuse and neglect (including signs of **child-on-child abuse**) and maintaining an attitude of "it could happen here."
- Understanding that the absence of reported cases does not mean abuse (of any form) is not happening; being vigilant and reporting any concern regardless of whether it is a "one-off" or seemingly minor, as even small signs could be part of a larger picture of abuse.
- **Reporting to the DSL** (or Deputy) **any and all concerns** about a student's welfare, however minor those concerns may appear. Concerns must be reported as soon as possible (and within the same working day).
- Knowing how to respond to a child who discloses harm or abuse of any kind (see "Dealing with Disclosures" section below).
- Through curriculum activities and all aspects of school life, helping students understand how to keep themselves safe and manage risk (appropriate to their age and stage of development).
- Being alert to patterns of repeated absenteeism or other signs that could indicate safeguarding issues, and informing the DSL of any such concerns regarding attendance or unexplained absences.
- Following the school's Staff Code of Conduct at all times, including guidance on appropriate boundaries and the use of technology, to model safe practice and prevent allegations.
- **Reporting to the Principal** any concerns whatsoever about the conduct of adults (colleagues, volunteers, contractors, or anyone working with children). This includes concerns about a person's behavior outside of school that might indicate they are unsuitable to work with children. (See Section on "Allegations against Staff" for further details, including how to handle low-level concerns.)

The role of the Governors

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- **Strategic leadership** in safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding is given the highest priority at all times in the school.
- Actively promoting a culture of safeguarding so that the safety and welfare of children is embedded in all the school's processes and procedures.
- Appointing a trained **Link Governor for Safeguarding**. This Safeguarding Governor takes a lead on safeguarding matters on behalf of the governing body, but the ultimate responsibility remains with the entire Governing Body.
- Ensuring there is an effective Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy in place, which is consistent with KCSIE and meets the requirements of the local safeguarding partnership (Sandwell CSP).
- Ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are transparent, clear, and easy to understand for staff, students, parents, and carers. The Governing Body should ensure that systems are in place – and are well-promoted and easily accessible –

for children to confidently report any form of abuse or neglect, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously and that they can safely express their views.

- Ensuring the school has a **Designated Safeguarding Lead** (and sufficient Deputy DSLs) who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has received appropriate inter-agency training (updated at least every two years).
- Ensuring that all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection training as part of their induction, that this training is regularly updated (in line with advice from Sandwell CSP), and that all staff receive child protection updates at least annually.
- Ensuring that all Governors themselves receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training upon appointment, with regular updates thereafter, so that they can discharge their responsibilities effectively. (This training may be provided face-to-face or online via an accredited provider.)
- **Reviewing this policy at least annually** at a full Governing Board meeting and formally approving it (the Chair of Governors signs off the policy). Additionally, ensuring that the policy is updated promptly in response to new legislation or if any deficiencies or weaknesses in safeguarding practice are identified. The annual review should include an assessment of the effectiveness of procedures and their implementation. It should also ensure that the school contributes to inter-agency working in line with **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023**.
- Ensuring that child protection files are maintained with a clear chronology and record of decisions and actions taken.
- Ensuring that other policies and procedures (such as Anti-Bullying, Behaviour, Health & Safety, Online Safety, Personal Social Health & Economic education (PSHE) including Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), etc.) are in place and effectively implemented to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- Ensuring there is a comprehensive and effective Staff Code of Conduct (including expectations for online conduct) that is implemented throughout the school.
- Ensuring that the school holds at least two emergency contact numbers for each child (in case of welfare concerns arising from inability to contact families).
- Ensuring safer recruitment procedures are followed in accordance with **Part 3 of KCSIE**, and that all required pre-employment checks (including DBS checks, Barred List, prohibition checks, etc.) are carried out on all staff and volunteers before they begin work.
- Ensuring that procedures for dealing with **allegations against staff and volunteers** are in accordance with KCSIE and local authority guidance, and that all such allegations are handled appropriately (including referral to the LADO when threshold is met).
- Recognising that neither the Governing Body nor individual governors should be directly involved in individual cases (or have access to details of cases) except when fulfilling specific disciplinary functions in respect of allegations against staff.

- Ensuring that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. Children should be taught how to keep themselves and others safe, appropriate to their age and needs (recognizing that effective education will be tailored to the specific needs of individual children, including those who are victims of abuse or who have special educational needs or disabilities).
- Ensuring that **online safety** is a running theme in the school's approach to safeguarding. This includes ensuring the IT systems have appropriate filters and monitoring to guard against harmful content, without unreasonably limiting what children can learn. There should also be policies about children's use of personal devices (e.g., accessing the internet on phones at school) and clear rules around the use of cameras or personal technology on school premises.
- Ensuring that any external providers using the school premises (for activities involving children) have suitable safeguarding protocols in place. If the school facilities are let out or a third-party operates on site, safeguarding requirements must be included as conditions of any lease or hire agreement.
- Ensuring that this Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy is published on the school website.

Family (Early) Help

Family/ help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life (from early years through the teenage years). Providing family help is more effective than reacting later, as it can prevent further problems from arising or escalating. Effective early help relies on local agencies working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from family help.
- Undertake an assessment of the need for family help.
- Provide targeted family help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family, focusing on activities to significantly improve the child's outcomes.

All staff have a responsibility to raise concerns and suggest early help interventions for children who might benefit. Staff should be particularly alert to children who, for example:

- Are disabled or have specific additional needs.
- Have special educational needs (whether or not they have an EHCP).
- Are young carers.
- Show signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour.
- Live in family circumstances presenting challenges (such as substance abuse, adult mental health issues, domestic abuse).
- Have returned home to their family from care.
- Are showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.
- Have certain health conditions.

- Have mental health needs.
- Are at risk of exploitation through association with gangs or **County Lines**.
- Are persistently absent from education.

If a staff member has any concern that a child might benefit from early/family help, they should report it to the DSL as soon as possible. The DSL will discuss the situation with the staff member and decide on appropriate action. This may include:

- Monitoring the child's situation closely within school.
- Involving other professionals in school (e.g., SEND coordinator, pastoral staff) to provide support.
- Speaking with the parents and/or the child (with consent) to undertake an Early Help Assessment (EHA) led by the school, possibly involving external agencies as needed. (Written parental consent is usually sought for an early help assessment; if a child is of sufficient age and understanding, their verbal consent would also be sought. *If consent is refused but the DSL judges that the child's needs will escalate without help, the DSL will consider making a referral to Children's Social Care regardless, in line with local procedures*.)

If an Early Help Assessment is initiated, a **Lead Professional** will be designated to coordinate the response. The lead professional provides support to the child and family, acts as an advocate on their behalf, and coordinates the delivery of support services. The school's DSL or another appropriate staff member may act as the lead professional, or another agency may take this role depending on the child's needs.

School staff involved with a child receiving early help should remain vigilant and report any changes in the child's situation or behavior to the lead professional or DSL immediately, so the support plan can be reviewed and adjusted as necessary.

For an early help intervention to be effective:
- It should be undertaken with the agreement of the child and their parents/carers. It should involve the child and family fully, as well as all the professionals working with them.
- Local authority children's social care should have clear procedures for how practitioners can discuss concerns and get advice. (In Sandwell, the Community Operating Groups and MASH Education team are available for consultation.)
- If the parents and/or child do not consent to an early help assessment, the DSL or lead professional should make a judgment as to whether, without help, the child's needs will escalate. If so, a referral to Children's Social Care for statutory assessment (under Section 17 or 47 of the Children Act) may be necessary despite the lack of consent.

Key steps if you suspect abuse or if a pupil discloses abuse:
All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready, or know how, to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected. They might not recognize their experiences as abuse. Children might feel embarrassed, humiliated, or be threatened by

their abuser, and this could be exacerbated by factors like their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation, or language barriers. This must not prevent staff from being professionally curious and acting on any concerns. Building trusted relationships with children is key to helping them share information. If a child reports a concern or if you initiate a conversation that leads to a disclosure about their safety/well-being, **the following advice must be followed**:

- **Listen carefully** to the pupil, keeping an open mind, and take what they say seriously. Do not assume or decide for yourself whether or not abuse has occurred.
- **Reassure the pupil** that they have done the right thing by speaking up and that they will be supported and kept safe. Make it clear that reporting the abuse is not creating a problem and that they are brave to tell someone. Do **not** make the child feel ashamed or that they are burdening you.
- Stay **calm** and do not show shock or upset – if you react strongly, the child may stop talking.
- **Do not interrupt** if the child is freely recalling significant events. The first account a child gives is often very important. You can use gentle encouragement like nodding or brief affirmations ("You're doing the right thing by telling me.").
- Do not **interrogate or ask leading questions**. When you must clarify, ask open questions like "Tell me more about that" or "What happened next?" rather than suggesting an answer. (Avoid questions that name a person or imply blame, such as "Did **X** do this to you?") The child should be allowed to tell their story in their own words. Too many questions can cause stress, confuse the child or potentially jeopardize later investigations.
- Be comfortable with **silence** – do not fill pauses; let the child take their time.
- **Do not promise confidentiality**. Explain at an appropriate time (ideally early on, but as compassionately as possible) that you will need to share what they tell you with specific people who can help keep them safe, **but** assure them that only those who need to know will be told.
- **Do not criticize or admonish the child for not telling sooner**. Avoid saying things like "Why didn't you tell me earlier?" or "You should have told someone before." The child might interpret that as your being upset with them.
- **Do not examine the child's injuries** or ask them to remove clothing to view injuries. Never take photographs of injuries. These actions must only be done by medical or police personnel during an official investigation.
- **Document the disclosure** as soon as possible (see "Reporting and recording" below). Use the child's own words as closely as you can. Include the date, time, location, and people present during the disclosure. Sign and date your notes. These notes may be needed in court, so accuracy is vital. (It is generally best *not* to take notes while the child is speaking, unless necessary to remember key facts, because writing can distract you and the child. Instead, listen actively and write everything down immediately afterwards.)

- If the disclosure involves any form of **online abuse or images**, **do not view or forward any images/videos**. Note the fact of their existence and inform the DSL. Follow the school's specific guidance (see Section 15.3 below regarding concerns involving technology).
- Be prepared that the child might **tell a friend or another trusted young person** first. If information comes via a third party (another student, sibling, etc.), listen to them as well and record what they report.
- **Do not share information** about the disclosure with anyone other than the DSL (or Deputy) and any relevant professionals as directed by the DSL. Do not discuss it with the child's parents or any other staff unless instructed; doing so could place the child or an investigation at risk.
- **Report the disclosure to the DSL immediately** (or Deputy DSL if DSL is unavailable) – certainly by the end of the same day. If the DSL is not available, ensure the information reaches their deputy or the Principal.
- Discuss with the DSL whether any immediate protective measures are needed for the child (e.g., removing alleged abuser from school if another student, extra supervision, medical attention, etc.).
- After dealing with any disclosure, seek support for yourself if needed. Hearing such information can be distressing – speak to the DSL, a senior colleague, or use confidential counseling support if offered, to process your feelings.

Reporting and Recording Safeguarding Concerns

- **Written records:** All safeguarding concerns must be recorded in writing. Staff should use the school's **Safeguarding Concern Report Form** (see Appendix 2) or enter the information into the designated safeguarding record system (e.g., our electronic system "School Companion") as directed by school policy.
- **Factual recording:** Records should contain **facts and observations**, not opinions or assumptions. Describe exactly what was seen, heard, or said. Avoid using vague terms (e.g., instead of "acted inappropriately," specify the behavior or words observed). If quoting a child or another person, use their exact words where possible (in quotation marks).
- If a conversation with or disclosure from a pupil is being recorded, include **names (not just initials)** of all individuals mentioned or involved, and the date, time, and setting of the conversation. If other people were present, note who they were.
- Records should be made **as soon as possible** after an incident or disclosure (on the same day), while memories are fresh. Do not delay writing up notes until the next day. However, during the conversation with a child, do not distract the child by writing; focus on them and write afterwards.
- **Process after reporting:** Once a staff member submits a written concern or report, the DSL will decide on a course of action and record this decision and the rationale. Depending on the nature of the concern, actions may include one or more of the

following: monitoring the situation internally, discussing with the parents/carers, initiating an Early Help intervention, making a referral to Children's Social Care, contacting the LADO (if the concern is about an adult), or reporting to the police.

- The DSL will inform the reporting staff member of the action taken (on a need-to-know basis). If the staff member who raised the concern is not satisfied with the DSL's decision or feels the concern is not being addressed, they **must** escalate the concern – they can ask the DSL to reconsider, consult with the Principal or another senior leader, or contact Children's Social Care directly themselves. **Remember, anyone can make a referral** to children's services if they believe a child is at immediate risk and action is not being taken.
- If a concern involves an allegation against the DSL themselves, staff should bypass the DSL and report it directly to the Principal (if the DSL is not the Principal) or to the Chair of Governors. In such cases, do not inform the DSL that an allegation has been made against them.

All safeguarding records are stored securely. Electronic records are kept in the secure School system (or equivalent), accessible only to those who need to know. Any paper records are kept in a locked confidential file separate from the child's academic file. Records will be retained in line with data protection and safeguarding record retention policies.

Responding to Concerns About a Child – Summary Flowchart

(The following outlines our general process; see Appendix C for a visual flowchart of referrals):

1. **Cause for Concern:** If any member of staff or volunteer has a concern about a child's welfare or suspects abuse/neglect, they must record the reasons for concern and report it to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** (or Deputy) without delay. This should happen on the same day and as early as possible. Direct communication (in person or via phone) should be made if the situation is urgent, followed by a written report.

2. **Initial Discussion:** The DSL (and where appropriate, the Principal) will discuss the concern with the reporting staff member and consider any immediate actions. In general, the DSL will also consider whether it's appropriate to discuss the concern with the child and/or parents at this stage, *unless* doing so might put the child at further risk, or in the case of potential serious harm or sexual abuse (where guidance often is not to alert parents immediately).

3. **Assessing Need for External Referral:** The DSL will refer to Sandwell's **Right Help, Right Time** (threshold document) to decide whether the concern meets the threshold for additional support or intervention:

4. If the child's needs can be met by **Early Help** services (with parental consent), the DSL may suggest a referral to the local Early Help team or begin an early help assessment (Team Around Family/CAF process).
5. If the child is at risk of significant harm or in need of protection (meeting the **Child Protection** threshold), the DSL will make an immediate referral to Children's Social Care (MASH).
6. If unsure, the DSL may seek **advice** from Sandwell MASH Education Team or consult with the Children's Social Care duty team on a no-names basis initially.
7. In cases of emergency (e.g., immediate risk to life or safety), the DSL (or any staff member in an emergency) will contact the **Police (999)** straight away, before or alongside Children's Social Care.

8. **Making a Referral:** When making a referral to Children's Social Care (MASH) or reporting to the Police:

9. For a **Section 17 (Child in Need)** or **Section 47 (Child Protection)** assessment request, the DSL will complete the Multi-Agency Request Form (MARF) and submit it to Sandwell MASH. This should be done promptly and ideally within 24 hours of identifying the concern.
10. The referral will include all relevant information, including any other known family or household members, and whether there are concerns for other children (siblings, peers) related to this matter.
11. The DSL (or referring staff) will follow up if no response is received from social care within the expected timeframe, and escalate if necessary.

12. **After Referral:**

13. If Children's Social Care accept the referral, they may initiate their own assessment or investigation. The DSL or other school staff may be asked to attend a **Strategy Meeting** or provide further information. The school will cooperate fully.
14. If the referral does not meet their threshold, the DSL will record this outcome. The school may then continue or initiate Early Help support, monitor the situation, or take other action as appropriate. The reasons for not meeting the threshold will be recorded.
15. If at any point the DSL (or staff) are not satisfied with the response from Children's Social Care, they will consider using the local **Escalation Procedures** to ensure the child's needs are addressed.

16. **Ongoing Support and Monitoring:**

17. If no external referral is made (because the concern did not meet thresholds), the school will monitor the child closely. The concern will be recorded, and the staff member who raised it will be informed of what action will be taken (e.g., added to a watch list, informal discussions with parents, etc.).

18. The DSL will ensure any agreed actions (either from internal decisions or from multi-agency plans) are carried out and that the situation is reviewed to see if things are improving for the child.
19. The DSL and Principal will hold oversight of all safeguarding concerns and ensure appropriate strategies (either single-agency or multi-agency) are in place to support the child.

(At this point in the original document, a detailed flowchart diagram is provided to illustrate the referral process, including pathways for Early Help, referral to MASH, or taking no further action. All staff are given training on this process.)

Confidentiality and Information Sharing
Effective sharing of information between professionals and local agencies is essential for early identification of need, assessment, and service provision to keep children safe. The school recognises that all matters relating to child protection are **confidential**. The Principal or DSL will disclose personal information about a student to staff on a need-to-know basis only.

- Staff are **required to keep all safeguarding and child protection information secure and confidential**. They should not discuss cases with anyone outside of the appropriate professional contexts.
- If a child is subject to a child protection investigation or care proceedings, staff should not speak about the issue with other parents or outsiders.
- When a child leaves this school, the DSL ensures their safeguarding file is transferred securely and separately from the academic file to the new school/college (with confirmation of receipt). We will also obtain confirmation that the new school will continue any ongoing support (such as counseling) as needed.

Parents and carers will be informed of the school's duties regarding safeguarding and that we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare. **Information will be shared with other agencies in line with GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018 and the guidance "Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners" (DfE, 2018)** – i.e., if it is to safeguard a child or prevent a crime, necessary information can be shared without consent if obtaining consent might place the child at risk. The school's approach is not to let fears about sharing information stand in the way of protecting children.

In cases of allegations against staff (see below), the school makes every effort to maintain **confidentiality** and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. The Education Act 2011 imposes reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that could identify a teacher who is the subject of an allegation, by any member of the public (including parents or students), until the point of charge or until the Secretary of State publishes certain decision outcomes. These restrictions will be conveyed to all parties as needed.

Communication with Parents
We recognise that good communication with parents is crucial in safeguarding children. We will always aim to maintain a positive and open relationship with parents. The school will generally discuss any concerns about a child with their parents or carers. The DSL will normally seek to discuss any referral to Children's Social Care with the parents **before** making the referral, unless:

- **Informing the parent might put the child at additional risk** (for example, in cases of suspected sexual abuse, fabricated illness, or if the parent or a close associate is the alleged perpetrator). In such cases, advice will be sought from Children's Social Care or the police about whether to inform parents and at what stage.
- The child is an **older adolescent** who has disclosed and expressly requested that their parent not be informed yet, and the school judges the child to be competent to make that decision (Gillick competence/Fraser guidelines may be considered, though ultimately in most cases parents will need to be informed by Children's Social Care if a referral is made).

When the school decides not to inform a parent or carer of a referral or concern, we will document the reason, guided by advice from social care or police.

If a referral is made about a child, the parents will usually be informed that the school has made a referral, and of the rationale, as soon as possible *after* discussion with the receiving agency. We ensure that parents know the school has a duty to make referrals if we suspect a child is at risk of harm, and we do this through information in our Parent Handbook/website and at safeguarding briefings. We also provide information to parents about sources of support for families, like early help services, when appropriate.

Allegations Involving School Staff or Volunteers

(This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current teacher, member of staff, or volunteer has harmed or posed a risk of harm to a child, or may have committed a criminal offense against or related to a child, or behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk to children. It covers allegations both in school and outside of school that may affect suitability to work with children.)

Our first priority is the welfare of the child(ren) involved. If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff or volunteer, the school will ensure the allegation is dealt with quickly, fairly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

Immediate actions:
- If there is an immediate risk to a child or if an emergency response is needed (e.g. a crime may have been committed), the school will contact Children's Social Care and/or the Police immediately.
- The Head of School/Principal (or Chair of Governors, if the allegation is against the

Principal) will act as the **Case Manager** to oversee the handling of the allegation. They will not investigate the allegation themselves before consulting with the Local Authority.
- **All allegations** about staff or volunteers must be reported to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** at Sandwell Children's Trust. The case manager will inform the LADO within **one working day** of any allegation that comes to the school's attention or that is made directly to the police.
- No internal investigation or interviewing of the subject of the allegation or other witnesses will occur before contacting the LADO, so as not to jeopardize statutory investigations. However, the Principal can gather and record basic information (who, what, when, where) to establish facts, as long as this does not interfere with any future investigation.

Notifying external agencies:
- If the allegation meets any of the criteria for referral (as stated above), the LADO will advise on the next steps. **Borderline cases** may be discussed with the LADO without naming the individual initially. The LADO will then advise whether further details are needed and what steps should be taken.
- The Principal/Case Manager will record all discussions with the LADO, including any decisions made. If the LADO advises that the case meets threshold, a multi-agency **Position of Trust (Strategy) Meeting** will likely be convened, usually within 5 working days. In that meeting (which typically includes the police, Children's Social Care, the school, and other agencies as appropriate), participants will consider: any immediate risk to children, actions needed to safeguard all children (including the possibility of suspension of the staff member), and what next steps (investigation, etc.) are required. An action plan with timescales will be agreed, and a review meeting will be set if needed.
- If the allegation does **not** meet the LADO threshold for external investigation (e.g., clearly falls into the category of a misunderstanding or a concern classed as "low-level"), the case manager will address it through the school's internal processes (see Low-Level Concerns section below). The LADO may still provide guidance on appropriate next steps.

Support for those involved:
- The person against whom the allegation is made (the "respondent") will be informed of the allegation as soon as possible after the LADO and, if applicable, the police/Children's Social Care have been consulted. They will be told what the next steps will be. The school has a duty of care to employees; individuals will be advised to contact their professional association or trade union, and will be offered support. They will be reminded about the importance of confidentiality. If the person is suspended (see below), we will also provide them with a named contact for communication and staff welfare support.
- Parents or carers of the child(ren) involved will be informed of the allegation **as soon as possible** if they are not already aware. They will be kept informed of progress and outcomes (in relation to their child) while maintaining confidentiality of staff disciplinary processes where appropriate. The school will also inform parents about the requirement for confidentiality (i.e., they should not share information that could identify the staff member in the community or on social media due to potential legal restrictions).

Confidentiality and press handling:
The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and avoid unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. The Case Manager will take advice from the LADO, police and Children's Social Care to agree:
- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared;
- How to manage speculation or leaks within the school and community;
- What information, if any, can be shared publicly to reduce speculation;
- How to manage any media interest if it arises.

The Education Act 2011 prohibits the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation, until the point that they are charged with an offense or until any restrictions are lifted by the authorities. This applies to parents and students as well, not just the press. The school will take steps to ensure this is communicated and adhered to, seeking legal advice if needed.

Suspension:
Suspension of the staff member is **not** an automatic response to an allegation. All options will be considered before resorting to suspension. Suspension will only be used if there is no reasonable alternative – for example, if a child or other children would be at risk, or the allegation is so serious that immediate removal is required to facilitate the investigation. If the staff member resides on-site (boarding staff), alternative accommodation off-site will be arranged if suspension is deemed necessary.

If the decision is made to suspend, the school will record the reasons and justification for suspension and inform the individual of these reasons. The decision to suspend can only be made by the Principal (or Chair of Governors if the allegation is against the Principal), and we will consult with the LADO regarding this decision. During suspension, the person will be kept informed of progress by a school contact and offered support.

Outcomes of Allegations:
Following investigation (by police, social care, and/or the school), the outcomes for allegations are defined as:
- **Substantiated:** Sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.
- **Unsubstantiated:** Insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. (It does not imply guilt or innocence.)
- **False:** Sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
- **Malicious:** Clear evidence that the allegation was made with the deliberate intention to deceive or cause harm.
- **Unfounded:** The allegation is proven to be without basis in fact (false or misconceived).

The school will take appropriate action based on the outcome:
- If substantiated: possible disciplinary action up to dismissal and referral to DBS/Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as required.
- If unsubstantiated or unfounded: consider if further training or support for staff is needed, or if the incident highlights any issues to address.

- If false or malicious: the school will determine whether the child may need support (having made a false allegation might signal other issues) or whether disciplinary action is appropriate against someone who made a malicious claim (for example, a student making a deliberately false allegation may be sanctioned, bearing in mind their age and understanding).

We understand the duty not to cease our investigations if the accused person leaves the school before a resolution – every effort will be made to reach a conclusion in all cases, even if the person does not cooperate or is no longer employed, and we will still refer to DBS/TRA if required by the outcome. If an allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or resigns, the school **must** refer the case to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration of barring, and, if the person is a teacher, to the TRA. This is a legal duty.

If an allegation is determined to be **false or malicious**, it will be removed from the personnel records of the accused. For all other allegations, regardless of outcome, the school keeps a record on the person's confidential personnel file of the allegation, how it was followed up and resolved, and any actions taken, including a note of the outcome (substantiated, etc.). We provide a copy to the person concerned (if agreed by social care or police). This record will be retained at least until the person reaches normal pension age or for 10 years if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for future safeguarding checks (e.g., if allegations surface later via police or DBS). Any references provided by the school for the person in future will **not** include information about allegations found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious. But if an allegation was substantiated and led to disciplinary action, that may be referenced in a factual reference if applicable.

Low-Level Concerns about Staff Conduct

A **low-level concern** is any concern, no matter how small, 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, but does **not** meet the threshold of serious harm or a formal allegation. This can include behavior that is not overtly harmful but might be inappropriate or could be misinterpreted. Examples might include being overly friendly with students, having "favorites", using personal email or social media to communicate with a student in ways not authorized, or any incident where a staff member feels their actions might have been misconstrued.

The British Muslim School fosters a culture of openness, trust and transparency. All staff are encouraged to self-report or share any low-level concerns they have, whether about a colleague or about themselves, to the Principal (or directly to the Chair of Governors if it concerns the Principal). **Reporting low-level concerns** helps the school identify patterns of behavior early and address them proactively – protecting students and also helping staff to correct and learn from minor mistakes before they become serious.

When a low-level concern is reported:
- The Principal (or appropriate senior staff) will collect as much detail as possible about what happened, speaking with the person who raised the concern, any witnesses, and the individual involved. We will respect any request for anonymity as far as possible.
- All low-level concerns are recorded in writing, kept confidential and secure. The record will include details of the concern, how it was handled, the outcome, and the name of the individual raising the concern (unless they wished to remain anonymous). These records are reviewed periodically by the Principal and DSL to detect any potential patterns of concerning behavior.
- If a pattern of low-level concerns appears to be developing or if a concern raises more serious questions on closer examination, the Principal will consult the LADO to determine if it meets the harm threshold after all. Repeated low-level concerns may collectively amount to a higher-level concern.
- Low-level concerns will **not** be included in employment references, except where they relate to issues that would normally be referenced (e.g., misconduct or disciplinary action) or unless they have become more serious and substantiated over time.
- Staff who report low-level concerns in good faith will not be penalized for doing so. The school's Whistleblowing Policy protects staff who have genuine concerns. (The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available as an external option: 0800 028 0285.)

Guidance is provided to all staff about maintaining appropriate professional boundaries and conduct to minimize the risk of allegations. Key points include: avoiding being alone with a student in a closed room without visibility to others, not transporting students in personal vehicles without authorization, using only professional communication channels with students, etc. Staff are reminded of these expectations regularly (see the Staff Code of Conduct for full details).

Supporting Children and School Staff

Support for Children:
The school recognizes that a child who is abused or who witnesses violence or abuse may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth or to view the world in a positive way. We will provide support by:
- Encouraging the development of self-esteem and resilience in every aspect of school life, including through the curriculum.
- Promoting a safe and secure environment where students feel trusted and able to talk openly.
- Ensuring children know that some behaviors towards them are wrong and unacceptable (through PSHE/RSE and other curriculum activities).
- Liaising with other agencies that support the child (e.g., Children's Mental Health Services, Social Workers, Educational Psychologists).
- Providing continued support to a child about whom there have been concerns, by ensuring that the child's school experience is positive and that the child receives help for educational progress as needed. If a child in our school is subject to a Child Protection

Plan or is a Child in Need, the school will contribute to whatever actions and services are planned to support the child and family, and we will attend all relevant meetings.
- Notifying the relevant social worker immediately if there is an unexplained absence of a child who is subject to a Child Protection Plan (or in care), or any deterioration in their well-being or circumstances.

Support for Staff:
Dealing with a disclosure or an allegation can be extremely stressful. The school will support staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSL or a member of the senior team, and to seek further support (e.g., counseling) if needed. The leadership will ensure that staff are not asked to participate in tasks beyond their competence and will arrange for debriefings after particularly challenging cases.

Staff (including those subject to allegations) who are experiencing stress or anxiety are encouraged to seek support from the Principal or DSL, who can put them in touch with confidential counseling or support services as appropriate. We have an ethos where safeguarding is a collective responsibility, and supporting each other is an integral part of that.

Child-on-Child Abuse (formerly known as Peer-on-Peer Abuse)
(Also see the school's Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy for related strategies.)

The British Muslim School is alert to the fact that children are capable of abusing their peers. Child-on-child abuse can manifest in various forms: physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and can occur both in school and outside of school (including online). Examples include bullying (including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying), physical assaults, sexual violence and harassment, **upskirting** (which is a criminal offense), "sexting" (youth-produced sexual imagery), initiation/hazing rituals, or teenage relationship abuse. Such behavior will not be dismissed as "banter" or "part of growing up." **We have a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse.** If there is any suspicion that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm due to the actions of a peer, it will be treated as a child protection matter for both the victim and the perpetrator.

All staff understand that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, it does not mean it is not happening – it may simply not be reported. Staff are trained to be vigilant for signs and to report any concerns about child-on-child abuse to the DSL immediately. We also educate students about mutual respect, consent, and what to do if they experience or witness inappropriate behavior.

It is recognized that child-on-child abuse often has a **gendered nature** (e.g., girls are statistically more likely to be victims of sexual harassment and boys more likely to be perpetrators), but all such abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously regardless of the genders of those involved. We will always challenge inappropriate language or behavior among peers. We promote an ethos of mutual respect and equality.

When an incident of child-on-child abuse is reported or suspected:
- The DSL (or Deputy) will assess the situation and decide on next steps, which may include obtaining statements from those involved, contacting parents, and seeking advice from Social Care or the police if the behavior is serious enough to be a potential crime or poses a serious safety risk.
- The needs of **both** the victim and the alleged perpetrator will be considered. Both may be "at risk" and in need of support. We avoid labeling children as "bullies" or "abusers" – instead focusing on the behavior, while ensuring both receive appropriate support and education. We will use terms like "alleged perpetrator" and "victim" carefully, recognizing that in some cases children can be both victim and perpetrator (e.g., a child who has been abused may then abuse another).
- If the incident involves potential sexual violence or harassment, we will refer to Part 5 of KCSIE and follow guidance, including immediate risk assessment and possible involvement of the police and social care. Victims will never be made to feel that they are causing a problem by reporting abuse, and we will reassure them that their safety is our priority.
- Disciplinary action will be taken against perpetrators as appropriate, in line with the school's Behaviour Policy, but this will be done in conjunction with support and education to address the behavior and its causes. The school recognizes that sanctions alone are likely to be insufficient; therapeutic, restorative, or educational interventions may be necessary.

Factors that might increase a child's vulnerability to being abused by peers include: social isolation, differences (real or perceived) such as LGBTQ+ status or disability, certain home or family situations, or having images shared (which can then lead to targeting). **Sharing a boarding environment (overnight accommodation) is an identified risk factor** – our staff are particularly vigilant about the increased opportunities for inappropriate conduct in residential settings. Extra supervision and clear rules are in place in the boarding house to mitigate these risks.

When child-on-child abuse occurs, we will consider the **wider context** (also known as Contextual Safeguarding) – i.e., whether there are factors in the community, peer group, or school environment that enabled the behavior and what can be done to change that context (such as additional education on consent, increased supervision in certain areas, etc.).

We also have specific procedures for certain types of child-on-child abuse:
- **Bullying:** Addressed through our Anti-Bullying Policy, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying. Repeated, targeted bullying can be a safeguarding issue if it causes significant harm.
- **Child-on-child sexual violence and harassment:** We handle these according to Part 5 of KCSIE. We will separate the victim and alleged perpetrator (if both are in school) as appropriate, provide the victim with support and reassurance, and engage with specialist services if needed. We understand that even a one-off incident can have far-reaching

consequences for the victim. If the behavior involves criminal offenses (rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, upskirting, etc.), we will involve the police and children's social care immediately. Parents of all parties will be informed at the earliest appropriate time (with respect for any police guidance on disclosures).
- **"Sexting" (Youth-Produced Sexual Imagery):** Staff are instructed never to view or forward youth-produced sexual images. If such an incident is reported, we will follow UKCIS guidance *Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: Advice for education settings working with children and young people*. The DSL will hold an initial review meeting to decide if the incident can be managed internally (e.g., if it was consensual image-sharing between peers of similar age and there's no further risk) or if it must be referred to external agencies (e.g., if it involves coercion, adults, extreme content, or children at risk). In all cases, the images will be confiscated (device secured) and handed to police if required; attempts will be made (without viewing images) to delete content if appropriate, only after advice.
- **Hazing/Initiation:** Any practices that involve students being humiliated, abused or assaulted as part of initiation into a group are strictly forbidden. Any such incidents will be treated as abuse.

We ensure that both victims and perpetrators of child-on-child abuse receive appropriate support. Victims will be monitored and offered counseling or mentoring as needed. Perpetrators will also receive education and support to address their behavior, as well as appropriate disciplinary consequences. We recognize that a child who has harmed another child may be responding to their own trauma or challenges, so they too will be considered "at risk".

If at any point it is decided that the child-on-child incident does not meet the threshold for a safeguarding referral (e.g., it was low-level and isolated), the school will address it through behavior management and keep a record. However, even then, the situation will be monitored to ensure it does not escalate. Local safeguarding guidance and professional judgment will determine the threshold between managed internally vs. referred externally.

Dealing with Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children:
Sexual violence (rape, assault by penetration, etc.) and sexual harassment (unwanted sexual comments, touching, etc.) are serious and under no circumstances tolerated. We have a detailed procedure aligned with government guidance to handle such incidents, which includes:
- Responding immediately to separate the individuals (if on-site), care for the victim, and preserve evidence (if any).
- A risk and needs assessment for the victim and, separately, for the alleged perpetrator, considering how to keep them safe and apart (especially if in the same classes or activities).
- Contacting the Police in cases of alleged rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault – these are crimes. Also making a referral to Children's Social Care, as the victim may require services and the perpetrator may require intervention.
- Notifying parents of both victim and alleged perpetrator (unless there's a compelling

reason not to in consultation with agencies).
- Implementing safeguards at school (supervision, timetable changes, etc.) to protect the victim from further harm or retaliation, and to ensure a fair process for the alleged perpetrator.
- Providing ongoing support: This might include counseling, pastoral support, and academic accommodations for the victim. The alleged perpetrator may also need support such as counseling or anger management, alongside disciplinary action.
- Throughout, the child's wishes and feelings will be taken into account. Victims will be allowed to continue their normal routine as much as possible if they wish, but alternative arrangements (like different classes) will be made if they prefer.

All these steps are done with sensitivity and confidentiality, informing only those who need to know (teachers of the children involved may need to be alerted to monitor the situation).

Additional Safeguarding Arrangements in Boarding
Boarding pupils at The British Muslim School are subject to the same safeguarding expectations as day pupils, but the 24-hour residential context can create additional vulnerabilities. Our boarding provision complies with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding. Key additional measures include:
- An **Independent Listener** is appointed (see Key Contacts) whom boarders can contact directly about any personal problems or concerns at any time, independently of the school staff structure.
- Boarding staff receive specialized safeguarding training focusing on the unique setting (e.g., issues of privacy, appropriate boundaries when staff live on site, heightened risk of peer abuse in dormitories).
- There are clear guidelines on staff interaction with boarders: e.g., no staff member should be alone with a student in a bedroom with the door closed; boarding staff of opposite gender to students do not enter sleeping or bathroom areas unless in an emergency, etc.
- Boarders are educated about how to keep safe in the boarding environment, including respecting each other's personal space and privacy.
- Any concern about a member of boarding staff is treated with the same rigor as for other staff, and if a boarding staff member is suspended pending an investigation, alternative living arrangements away from children will be made immediately.
- The school has plans in place for **lodgings and host families** if applicable, ensuring they are assessed and monitored under safeguarding requirements (Note: at present, the school does not arrange host family accommodation, but if it did, those would be regarded as regulated activities and subject to necessary checks).
- The physical security of boarding premises is maintained (secure locks, staff on duty at night, signing in/out procedures for boarders) to prevent unauthorized access or boarders going missing. In the event a boarder is missing, procedures for **missing child** will be followed immediately, and if a child goes missing overnight or repeatedly, it will trigger a safeguarding review and possibly external referrals.
- We recognize that "group living" in boarding can sometimes blur professional

boundaries; therefore, we enforce a **two-staff rule** for certain sensitive situations (e.g., if a boarder is ill and needs assistance in their room, two staff will attend where feasible).

Overall, all the same principles of safeguarding apply equally to boarders, with additional care to ensure there is no environment in the boarding house that allows bullying, initiation, or abusive behavior to be concealed. The boarding staff works closely with the DSL to address any concerns swiftly.

Children Requiring Mental Health Support
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. Equally, adverse experiences such as abuse or domestic violence can have a lasting impact on a child's mental health, behavior and educational attainment. All staff are made aware that mental health concerns about a child should be treated as a safeguarding concern if the child is at risk of harm.

The school's role in supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing includes:
- Creating a whole-school environment that encourages resilience and emotional literacy. Through our curriculum (in subjects like PSHE) and assemblies, we teach students about mental wellbeing, coping strategies, and how to seek help.
- Training staff to recognize warning signs of mental health issues (e.g., sudden changes in behavior, signs of anxiety or depression, self-harm indicators, eating disorders, excessive risk-taking, or talk of suicide).
- Having a clear **pastoral support system**: form tutors, the Pastoral Care lead, and the School Counselor (if available) provide tiers of support. Students know they can approach any trusted adult if they're struggling.
- If a staff member has a **mental health concern about a child** that is also a safeguarding concern (e.g., a child expressing suicidal thoughts due to abuse at home), they must take immediate action – following child protection procedures and informing the DSL.

When the school suspects a pupil is having mental health difficulties, we take a graduated response:
1. **Initial interventions** might include conversations with the student, adjustments in school (like workload reduction, a buddy system), and involving parents to discuss a joint approach.
2. If issues persist or are serious, with parental consent, we can refer to or consult external services: e.g., the school might refer to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), the family's GP, or counseling services. In some cases, an Early Help referral is made for mental health support.
3. For urgent cases (e.g., a student self-harming at school or expressing intent to harm themselves), we act immediately to ensure safety: this could involve a risk assessment, constant supervision, contacting emergency medical services, and informing parents and CAMHS crisis team as appropriate.

We also keep in mind that some groups are at higher risk of mental health issues (e.g., looked-after children, those with SEND, those who have experienced trauma). The DSL works closely with the school's Mental Health Lead (if assigned) or SENCO to coordinate support for these students.

Teachers are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions – but they are well-placed to observe children day-to-day and pick up on behavior that might indicate a problem. We ensure there is good communication between pastoral staff and the DSL, so that patterns (like frequent visits to the nurse, withdrawal in class, aggressive outbursts, etc.) can be seen in context and addressed.

If medication or formal therapy is part of a student's support plan, the school will liaise with the professionals involved and accommodate any necessary adjustments (like allowing time-out for counseling sessions or safe storage of medication as per our medical policy).

Finally, we recognize that **stigma** around mental health can be a barrier. Our school strives to be a safe space to talk about mental wellbeing. We include mental health in our health education, celebrate initiatives like Children's Mental Health Week, and encourage open conversations. This proactive approach, we believe, ultimately supports safeguarding by ensuring issues are brought to light rather than hidden.

Specific Safeguarding Issues
In addition to the broad areas of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect) detailed above, staff are trained to be aware of specific safeguarding issues that children may face. Further information on many of these issues is provided in **KCSIE 2025 Annex B**, and brief definitions or school approaches are included in **Appendix A** of this policy. These specific issues include, but are not limited to:

- **Child abduction and community safety incidents:** Unauthorised removal of a child from their parent or guardian (could be by a family member or stranger). We educate children on safety (for example, "Clever Never Goes" instead of "Stranger Danger", focusing on staying safe rather than fearing all strangers).
- **Children missing from education:** A child missing school, particularly repeatedly and without explanation, can indicate abuse, neglect or exploitation (e.g., being taken abroad for forced marriage or FGM, or involved in county lines). We strictly monitor attendance and will inform the local authority of any pupil who is withdrawn, goes missing or is absent for significant periods without good reason. We also adhere to legal requirements to inform the LA of any student who is removed from our register or who fails to attend regularly.
- **Children with family members in prison:** These children may be at risk of emotional difficulties and stigma. The school can direct families to the NICCO (National Information Centre on Children of Offenders) resources and will be sensitive to bullying or behavioral changes that might result from this situation.

- **Domestic Abuse:** Domestic abuse in the home environment is damaging to children, even if they are not directly harmed. Exposure to domestic abuse is itself a form of emotional abuse. This can also overlap with teenage relationship abuse in peer relationships. The school is part of the Operation Encompass scheme – meaning we receive notifications from the police if there have been domestic incidents in a child's home. This allows us to understand and provide appropriate pastoral support in confidence. We also educate students (age-appropriately) on healthy relationships and the unacceptability of domestic violence.
- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE):** These are forms of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce or manipulate a child into sexual or criminal activity, often in exchange for something (gifts, money, affection, status). Both CSE and CCE can involve children being trafficked or moved (e.g., county lines drug trafficking). They can occur online or in person, and victims may not recognize themselves as such. Staff are vigilant for signs such as unexplained gifts, changes in behavior, associations with older friends, frequent missing episodes, or physical signs like STIs or injuries. If we suspect CSE or CCE, we will refer immediately to Children's Social Care and police. The school also teaches about these dangers in an age-appropriate way (e.g., through PSHE, assemblies on exploitation and consent).
- **Cybercrime:** Some children or young people with particular skill in computing might engage in hacking, "swatting", or other cyber-dependent crimes. If we have concerns a student is at risk of this, we will consider a referral to the **Cyber Choices** program (a preventative initiative by the National Crime Agency to divert young people from cybercrime). We also involve police when appropriate.
- **Modern Slavery and Trafficking:** Related to CCE/CSE at times, children being trafficked (moved from one place to another for the purpose of exploitation) is a serious issue. Any suspicion of trafficking or modern slavery (forcing children into labor, domestic servitude, etc.) will be referred as a matter of urgency. The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) can be used via Children's Social Care for potential child victims of trafficking.
- **So-Called 'Honour-Based' Abuse:** This encompasses practices such as **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**, **Forced Marriage**, and other abuses which might be perpetrated in the name of "honour" or cultural/religious belief. The school is aware that these practices are abuses and will take every measure to protect students from them.
- *FGM:* It is mandatory for teachers to report directly to the police any disclosure from a girl under 18 that FGM has been carried out on her, or if they directly observe physical signs of FGM. We also treat any suspicion of planned FGM as extremely urgent. Signs might include girls talking about a special ceremony or procedure, planning an extended holiday to their country of origin, or older female relatives visiting. The DSL will also make a referral to Children's Social Care alongside the police report. We provide annual training reminders to staff about FGM and have

age-appropriate lessons for students (particularly in upper primary/early secondary for girls) about their rights and where to get help.

- *Forced Marriage:* Forcing a person into a marriage is illegal and is a form of abuse. Young people (girls and boys) at risk might not always be aware it's going to happen but may hear family conversations or older siblings might have been forced to marry. Warning signs can include sudden requests for extended absences, fear about an upcoming holiday abroad, or expressions of concern by the student about family plans. The school will work closely with the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) if we suspect a student is at risk – this often requires immediate police and social care involvement **without** notifying the family, as that could increase danger.
- **Preventing Radicalisation:** The school has a duty under the **Prevent** agenda to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This includes identifying children who may be vulnerable to extremist ideology or at risk of being radicalized. Staff receive training to notice signs such as extremist views voiced, changes in behavior or friendship groups, or accessing extremist content online. The DSL is the designated Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and will assess and refer any concerns via the regional Prevent/Channel process. We foster values of tolerance, respect and inclusion to build resilience to extremist narratives. (See also the Prevent Duty section earlier for contacts and processes.)
- **Private Fostering:** A private fostering arrangement is when a child under 16 (or 18 if disabled) is living with someone who is not a close relative for 28 days or more, with parental consent. Schools have a duty to inform the local authority if we become aware of a private fostering arrangement, as these can sometimes be unreported and the child might need additional checks/monitoring to ensure their welfare. All staff are aware to notify the DSL if they learn of a student being cared for by someone other than parent or a very close relative for an extended period.
- **Children Missing Education (CME):** As noted, patterns of missing education can indicate exploitation or other issues. We maintain meticulous attendance records and follow up on every absence. For any child who is withdrawn to be home educated or who stops attending, we follow local procedures to inform the local authority promptly.
- **Elective Home Education:** If parents remove a child from school for EHE, we will coordinate with the local authority to ensure they are not lost between systems. Safeguarding duties still apply; if we have concerns about the safety or welfare of a child who is now home-educated, we will report them just as we would for enrolled students.

(For further definitions and signs of specific forms of abuse, see Appendix A: "Definitions of Abuse and Neglect, including Specific Safeguarding Issues", which provides more detailed information on all the above issues and more, as adapted from KCSIE 2025.)

Managing Allegations Against Persons in a Position of Trust
(Covered earlier in "Allegations Involving School Staff/Volunteers." This includes

contractors, supply staff, and any adult in school. We reiterate that any allegations against supply staff or contractors will be dealt with in cooperation with their employer/agency. We will ensure allegations are investigated properly regardless of the employment status of the accused.)

In the event of an allegation against a supply teacher or contractor, The British Muslim School will not simply remove them from the school without informing the agency/employer of the reason. We will involve the LADO and other agencies as with any other staff allegation and work with the supply agency to address the issue, ensuring children are safeguarded. The Governing Body understands it has responsibilities even for supply staff and will ensure that allegations are handled appropriately.

Whistleblowing
All staff should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practices and potential failures in the school's safeguarding regime. The school has a Whistleblowing Policy which is shared with all staff. This includes an avenue to report concerns internally (to the Principal or Chair of Governors) and externally (for example, to the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline or Ofsted) if needed. No staff member will ever suffer retribution for raising genuine concerns, even if they turn out to be mistaken. We have a culture that encourages transparency and learning from mistakes.

Statutory Policies and Appendices

- **Appendix A: Definitions of Abuse and Neglect (including specific safeguarding issues)** – *Detailed definitions and indicators for physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and descriptions of specific issues like CSE, FGM, etc.*
- **Appendix B: Sandwell SAFER Guidelines** – *Local procedures for making referrals (Specific, Appropriate, Foundation, Evidence-based, Recorded – Sandwell's model) and contact information.*
- **Appendix C: Referral Flowchart** – *A step-by-step flowchart of actions when dealing with safeguarding concerns, reflecting local pathways.*
- **Appendix D: Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare Procedural Flowchart** – *Visual aid for the process from concern to outcome (Early Help, Child in Need, Child Protection).*
- **Appendix E: Preventing Violent Extremism – Roles of the SPOC** – *Guidance on how the Prevent Single Point of Contact in school leads on preventing radicalisation.*

Appendix 1: Forms and Signs of Abuse and Specific Safeguarding Issues

(*This section provides staff with detailed information on what to look for regarding the different types of abuse and various safeguarding concerns. It should be read by all staff and is used as a reference.*)

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 in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family, or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g., via the internet). Children may be abused by an adult **or** by another child or children (child-on-child abuse).

Extra-familial harms take a variety of forms; children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence (e.g., knife crime), "county lines" drug trafficking, and radicalisation.

Knowing what to look for is vital to early identification of abuse or neglect. All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse so they can identify cases of children who may need help or protection. **If in doubt, staff should always speak to the DSL (or a deputy).** Remember: abuse and safeguarding issues are often complex and overlapping – rarely a standalone event. Many issues may overlap (e.g., a child could be experiencing multiple forms of abuse at once).

Any concern, no matter how small, must be reported to the DSL. Often it is not one big incident but a series of small concerns that, when put together, show a child is at risk. This is why recording and reporting **every** concern is so important.

General factors that might make children more vulnerable to abuse:
- Living in a home where there is **domestic abuse**.
- Being a **young carer** (i.e., child who looks after siblings or sick relatives).
- Engaging in **anti-social or criminal behavior** or being exposed to it by close association.
- Parental **substance misuse** (drug/alcohol abuse by caregivers).
- Parental **mental health problems** or chaotic home life.
- Being an **asylum seeker** or refugee.
- **Living away from home** (e.g., boarding, foster care) – though in our context boarding is within school oversight, we note this as a factor.
- Being vulnerable to or engaging in **bullying**.
- **Homelessness** or living in temporary accommodation.
- Living a **transient lifestyle** (e.g., frequently moving, unstable housing).
- Experiencing discrimination due to race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity or sexuality (which might make them feel isolated or targeted).
- Being involved (directly or indirectly) in **prostitution** or being trafficked.
- Lacking English proficiency – **having English as an additional language** can sometimes make it harder to report abuse or access help.
- Being a **looked-after child (LAC)** or otherwise in the care system, or recently returned to family from care.
- Having a **special educational need or disability (SEND)** or a physical health issue –

these children may have communication barriers or increased dependency which can be exploited, and their behaviors or signs of abuse might be misattributed to their disability.
- **Affluent Neglect:** Staff should be mindful that abuse and neglect can occur in families from all social and economic backgrounds – sometimes in more affluent families, signs of emotional neglect might be more subtle (parents physically provide but are emotionally absent, or push children excessively to achieve). The term "affluent neglect" highlights that wealth does not preclude children from suffering neglect, often emotional. Such children might have absent parents (working long hours, frequent travel) and may experience pressure for high achievement, leading to psychological stress. These situations can result in similar harm to the child's welfare and thus are safeguarding concerns if identified.

Now, **Definitions of the four main types of abuse** (as per KCSIE):

- **Physical Abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning/scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm might also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates or deliberately induces illness in a child (this is also known as Fabricated or Induced Illness).

Indicators of Physical Abuse:
– Injuries that are unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given.
– Injuries in unusual locations (hidden areas such as torso, back, thighs) or in patterns (e.g., belt marks, hand prints).
– Untreated injuries or delays in seeking medical help for significant injuries.
– The child or parent's account of the injury changes or is inconsistent over time.
– The child may be wearing long sleeves/turtlenecks on hot days (possibly to cover injuries), or seems uncomfortable with physical contact.
– Fear of going home or fear of certain adults.
– Aggressive behavior or, conversely, unusually compliant and eager to please (possibly to avoid triggering abuse).
– "Frozen watchfulness" – the child seems constantly watchful, on edge, waiting for something bad to happen.

- **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, or only valued insofar as they meet another's needs. It can include inappropriate age-related expectations (e.g., overprotection, limiting exploration, treating a teenager like a young child or vice versa), seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another (e.g., domestic violence), serious bullying (including cyberbullying), and exploitation or corruption. Emotional abuse is present in all other forms of abuse but can also occur alone.

Indicators of Emotional Abuse:
– Developmental delays (physical or emotional) with no medical reason.

– Extremes of behavior: excessively withdrawn, fearful, or excessively aggressive.
– Overly compliant, too well-mannered, too neat and clean (trying hard to please adults), or in contrast, very negative statements about themselves ("I'm stupid," "I'm worthless").
– Lack of attachment or no demonstration of typical bonding with parent (e.g., parent and child do not seem connected or child is anxious around parent).
– The child might act inappropriately adult (taking care of others, including parents) or inappropriately infantile (e.g., rocking, thumb-sucking, tantrums beyond expected age).
– Anxiety symptoms: frequent psychosomatic complaints (headaches, nausea) with no medical basis; sleep disorders or frequent nightmares; bedwetting (if previously dry).
– The child might struggle to form relationships with peers; may seek out constant adult attention and approval.
– Self-harming behaviors or risk-taking in older children; low self-esteem.

- **Sexual Abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence. The child may or may not be aware of what is happening. Activities may involve physical contact (assault by penetration like rape or oral sex, or non-penetrative acts like masturbation, kissing, touching under clothing). They may also include non-contact activities (showing pornography to a child, encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, sexual communication, or grooming a child for abuse including via the internet). Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and by other children as well as adults.

Indicators of Sexual Abuse:
– **Allegation by a child** – any direct disclosure of sexual abuse should be taken seriously. Children often struggle to tell, so any hint or partial disclosure must be noted.
– The child displays an inappropriate level of sexual knowledge for their age, or sexualized behavior/play that is not typical for their age (e.g., using explicit language or mimicking adult sexual behavior with peers or toys).
– Sudden changes in behavior: becoming withdrawn or very clingy; unexplained anger or rebellion.
– Regression (e.g., bedwetting, thumb-sucking) or onset of phobias, nightmares.
– Physical signs: pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in genital or anal areas; sexually transmitted infections; recurrent UTIs; pregnancy in a young girl (especially if parent/child are unwilling to name the father).
– The child might avoid a particular person without obvious reason, or seem frightened of spending time with a specific individual (could be a warning sign).
– The child's drawings or stories may be explicit or disturbing.
– Eating disorders (anorexia or bulimia) can sometimes be linked to trauma like sexual abuse.
– Self-harm or drastic changes in self-care (e.g., suddenly neglecting hygiene).
– For older children: promiscuity, or conversely, excessive avoidance of any sexual topic; sudden changes in dress to either flaunt or completely hide their body.

- **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect can occur in pregnancy (e.g., due to maternal substance abuse). After birth, neglect may include failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including leaving with inappropriate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment for the child. It can also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs (not giving them affection, attention, and stimulation).

Indicators of Neglect:
– The child's basic needs are unmet: they may often be dirty or smelly (poor hygiene), have unwashed clothes, or clothing inappropriate for weather (e.g., no coat in winter).
– The child is frequently **hungry**, perhaps stealing or hoarding food, or coming to school without breakfast or money for lunch.
– Health concerns: untreated medical or dental issues (e.g., persistent rash, infected wounds, rotting teeth); incomplete immunizations or frequent accidents/injuries that are poorly addressed.
– The child might be constantly tired or listless, falls asleep in class regularly.
– **Frequent absenteeism** or lateness at school, or a lot of unexplained time out of school.
– The child may appear **thin** or underweight, or in contrast, sometimes obesity can be a form of neglect if a child's diet is not managed.
– Developmental delays not attributed to other causes (cognitive and physical).
– The child may have difficulty forming relationships, possibly due to lack of consistent caregiver attention; they might seek inappropriate affection from strangers.
– **Affluent neglect** (as noted above): emotional neglect signs in a well-to-do family, e.g., parents physically meet needs via hired help but child feels isolated or under extreme pressure to achieve academically with no emotional support.

Affluent Neglect:
While many indicators of neglect focus on physical signs, staff should note that in wealthy families, neglect might not present with poor hygiene or malnourishment. Instead, look for less obvious signs: parents who are emotionally unavailable, children who are excessively alone or cared for by employees with little parent interaction, high achievement pressure causing mental health issues, or children who speak of feeling unloved despite material advantage. These situations, if causing impairment to the child's health or development, are still neglect and the school will address them appropriately (likely via early help or social care referral for assessment).

Further Safeguarding Issues (Brief Notes):

- **Child Abduction and Community Safety:** We remind students about general safety strategies (e.g., not going with strangers, knowing safe places, and that they

can talk to school staff if someone has approached them in the community in a way that made them feel uncomfortable).

- **Children and the Court System:** If a child has to give evidence in court or is involved in court cases (like as witnesses or due to parental disputes), the school provides appropriate support or flexibility (time off, counseling if needed). We can guide them to available resources (HMCTS child witness booklets, etc.).
- **Children Missing Education (CME):** We strictly adhere to procedures: if a child is missing from school without reason, we attempt immediate contact with parents. If unsuccessful and the child's whereabouts are unknown, this triggers further action – after a set period (usually 10 days continuous unauthorised absence or earlier if concerns), we inform the local authority CME team. For known reasons of extended absence (like traveling abroad), we require written confirmation and monitor the return. If a child does not return as expected, we act. The DSL considers safeguarding concerns, e.g., risk of forced marriage or FGM, if the child has been taken out of country unexpectedly.
- **Child Criminal Exploitation (County Lines):** signs include sudden acquisition of unexplained money/goods, going missing, new older friends, excessive phone use, and perhaps being found far from home. We refer such cases quickly; it often requires police involvement as well.
- **Cybercrime:** if a student is suspected of hacking or other illegal online behavior, the DSL will involve the police as necessary and work with parents. We take a restorative approach if appropriate – showing the student how to use their skills positively.
- **Fabricated/Induced Illness:** If we suspect a parent is faking or inducing illness in a child (for attention or other reasons), this is a form of abuse. Warning signs include inconsistent medical findings with the history, repeated medical visits without a clear diagnosis, or a parent who insists a child is ill despite contrary evidence. The DSL would involve health professionals and likely social care for investigation.

(The above list is not exhaustive. Staff are expected to use professional curiosity and always consider whether any unusual or concerning behavior or presentation might have a safeguarding cause. The DSL keeps updated reference materials and all staff have access to KCSIE Annex B for further details on each specific issue.)

Appendix 2: The British Muslim School Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form

(This is the pro-forma that all staff should use to document any safeguarding concern or disclosure. The form captures essential information:)
- Date, time, and location of the incident or disclosure.
- Details of the child(ren) concerned (name, class, DOB).
- The nature of the concern (what is the concern, or what the child disclosed – using the child's own words where possible).
- Observations made by the reporting adult (physical marks, emotional state, etc.).

- Any immediate actions taken (e.g., first aid given, child taken to a safe place, who else was present).
- The reporter's name, role, and signature, with date/time of writing the report.
- **For DSL use:** record of action taken by DSL (e.g., referral to MASH made, advice sought, monitoring to continue, etc.), outcome and follow-up required.

(Staff are reminded to maintain confidentiality when filling out these forms. Completed forms must be handed directly to the DSL or locked in the secure box designated, not left in general areas. In an emergency, verbal reporting precedes the form.)

(Note: The actual structured form with tick boxes and lines is provided separately/in the staff handbook. The above describes its content. The form aligns with local authority referral form requirements so that the DSL can easily transfer information when making a referral.)

Policy Review
This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an **annual** basis (or sooner if required due to updates in guidance or after any significant incident).

- **Last reviewed and approved by the Governing Body: *September 2025*.**
- **Next review due: *September 2026*.**

Signatures: 

Head Teacher: Mr. M. A. Kadir Al-Hasan ***Date: September 2025***

Chair of Governors: Misbhaur Rahman ***Date: September 2025***