



CHOLLERTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND AIDED FIRST SCHOOL

*Be the best you can be through: challenge,
nurture, inspiration, respect, happiness, inclusion, in a safe, loving
Christian family.*

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURE

See: [x. 2024-2025 SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY](#)

To ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils, it is essential for all staff to recognise behaviours that may indicate abuse or neglect. Abuse may be perpetrated by adults, including both men and women, and by other children or young people. The four primary types of abuse are:

- **Physical abuse**
- **Sexual abuse**
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Neglect**

Detailed definitions of these abuse types are included in **Appendix A**.

Staff should familiarise themselves with these definitions and remain vigilant in identifying potential abuse or neglect.

There are several specific categories where evidence suggests children may be more vulnerable to harm. In these situations, all staff should be particularly observant and consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if they have concerns about a child who may need additional support or referral to an external agency.

The following will be looked at in more depth:

1. Children Missing Education
2. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
3. Bullying
4. Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children
5. Children with sexually harmful behaviour
6. Sexual exploitation of children
7. Criminal Exploitation of Children
8. Female Genital Mutilation
9. Forced Marriage
10. Radicalisation and Extremism
11. Private Fostering Arrangement
12. Peer-on-peer Abuse
13. Domestic Violence

1. Children Missing Education

Monitoring Attendance and Absence:

Attendance, absences, and exclusions are carefully monitored, as a child missing from education can be a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including risks of sexual abuse or exploitation.

Follow-Up on Unauthorised Absences:

The school will closely monitor unauthorised absences and take appropriate actions, including notifying the local authority, especially in cases where children frequently miss school or are absent for periods during the school day. This follow-up process includes:

- Contacting parents/carers when a pupil is not in school.
- Ensuring that at least two current contact numbers for parents/carers are on file, with a reminder to parents/carers to update the school on any changes to contact information.

The school ensures that any pupil expected to join but who fails to take up their place will be referred to the local authority. Additionally, when a pupil leaves, the school will document their new school and the anticipated start date.

Monthly Reporting to the Local Authority (LA):

The school's behaviour and attendance lead submits a monthly report to the LA, indicating any instances of children missing education. Before this submission, the DSL reviews the report to stay informed of any concerns or provide additional details.

2. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- Children with SEND face unique safeguarding challenges. Governing bodies should ensure that child protection policies acknowledge the additional barriers in recognising abuse and neglect in these children. These barriers may include:
- Misinterpreting behaviour, mood, or injuries as part of the disability without further investigation.
- Increased vulnerability to bullying, which may not show obvious signs.
- Communication barriers that hinder disclosures of abuse.

3. Bullying

While not classified separately as abuse, bullying can seriously harm a child's well-being and, in extreme cases, has been linked to youth suicide. All forms of bullying—including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying—are addressed under the school's anti-bullying policy, distributed to pupils and parents upon enrollment and revisited in PSHE sessions. Serious cases of bullying may prompt the headteacher and DSL to consider child protection protocols.

4. Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children

Children in care often have histories of abuse or neglect. Staff are trained to support these students and are informed of each child's legal status, care arrangements, and the delegated authority of their carers. The designated teacher and DSL maintain contact with the child's social worker and the local authority's virtual headteacher.

5. Children with Sexually Harmful Behaviour

Children can be harmed by the harmful sexual behaviour of peers. While bullying policies address general issues, some cases require a child protection response. The school collaborates with relevant agencies to manage the complex needs of children exhibiting sexually harmful behaviours, who may also be victims of abuse. Concerns about a pupil's sexual behaviour, including online conduct, should be immediately reported to the DSL.

6. Sexual Exploitation of Children

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of abuse where an imbalance of power is used to coerce a child into sexual activity in exchange for something or for the benefit of the abuser. It can occur in person or online, and often, children may not recognise the exploitation. The risks of CSE are included in PSHE and Relationships and Sex Education, and staff are trained to recognise signs and report concerns to the DSL.

7. Criminal Exploitation of Children

Criminal exploitation often involves county lines activities, where gangs exploit children to transport drugs or money from urban to rural areas. Staff are informed about the nature and signs of such exploitation, with further details in **Appendix A**. More on criminal exploitation

8. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is illegal in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, with offenders facing up to 14 years in prison or fines. Staff are trained to recognise FGM indicators and understand mandatory reporting duties. Further information is included in **Appendix A**.

9. Forced Marriage

A forced marriage involves coercion into a marriage without the individual's consent, often through physical, psychological, financial, or emotional pressure. It is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Staff should recognise signs of forced marriage and follow appropriate safeguarding procedures. Further details are in **Appendix A**.

10. Radicalisation and Extremism

Radicalisation involves the adoption of harmful, criminal, or dangerous beliefs. Schools must be alert to risks of extremism, including Islamic radicalisation and far-right extremism. Staff receive training to spot signs of radicalisation, and the curriculum includes opportunities for discussion on related topics. The school follows government guidance on promoting British values as part of SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural education).

11. Private Fostering Arrangement

Private fostering occurs when someone other than a parent or close relative cares for a child for 28 days or more. This applies to children under 16 (or under 18 if disabled). If staff become aware of a private fostering arrangement, they must inform the DSL, and the school will notify the local authority.

12. Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Staff should recognise that safeguarding issues can manifest as peer-on-peer abuse, including bullying (physical and cyber), sexual violence, gender-based violence, initiation rituals, and sexting. Abuse is never acceptable and should not be dismissed as “banter.” Gender issues must be considered when reviewing cases. Allegations of peer-on-peer abuse that are safeguarding concerns are likely to involve:

- Older pupils targeting younger or more vulnerable students
- Serious nature, potentially criminal behaviour
- Risk to other pupils or the broader community

The school will follow safeguarding procedures and report concerns to the DSL, referring to NSSP guidance on abuse by children. In cases of sexting, the school will follow UKCIS guidance on responding to such incidents. Sexting in schools guidance

13. Domestic Violence

Our school is part of Operation Encompass and understands the impact of domestic violence on children. We notify parents of our involvement with the LA and police, and staff receive briefings during induction. Staff are also trained to recognise that violence perpetrated by a child on a parent is a form of domestic violence, and such incidents will be reported to the DSL for further action.

Impact of abuse

The impact of child abuse, neglect and exploitation should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach, and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.

Taking action

Any child, in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”.

Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary call 999
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, definitely by the end of the day
- do not start your own investigation

- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a written record by logging on to CPOMS. A **Cause for Concern Sheet**, held in the school office on the Safeguarding Board can be used to note what a child has said if necessary.
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk, but have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed or their patterns of attendance may have altered. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk. The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill or an accident has occurred. It is fine for staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use the concern form (schools may have a specific name for paperwork and should amend) to record these early concerns. If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL. Concerns which do not meet the threshold for child protection intervention will be managed through the Early Help process

[http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Family/Support.aspx#early help assessment entforms](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Family/Support.aspx#early%20help%20assessment%20entforms)

If a Pupil Discloses Abuse

When a child discloses abuse, it requires great courage. The child may feel ashamed or confused, especially if the abuse is sexual. They may not understand that what's happening is abusive, or they may be too frightened to speak out.

Guidelines for Staff:

- Let the pupil speak freely, without interruption.
- Stay calm and reassuring; avoid overreacting.
- Offer comfort with words like, *"I'm sorry this is happening,"* and *"You are doing the right thing by talking to me."*
- Avoid asking investigative questions like *"How many times?"* or *"Did anyone else see this?"*
- Explain that you must report the disclosure and who you will report it to (DSL).
- Do not offer physical comfort unless appropriate, as the child may not find it reassuring.
- Avoid criticising the child for not disclosing earlier.
- Ensure the pupil knows what will happen next.
- Report the disclosure verbally to the DSL and write it up on CPOMS promptly.
- Seek support if you feel distressed.

Notifying Parents:

- The school will typically inform parents about concerns, but if informing them could increase the risk to the child, advice will be sought from social care first.

Referral to Children's Social Care:

- The DSL will make a referral if significant harm is suspected. If appropriate, the pupil and their parents will be informed, unless this could increase the risk.
- Any staff member can directly refer to social care if they feel independent action is necessary.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing:

- Child protection matters are highly confidential and shared on a 'need-to-know' basis.
- Staff must share concerns only with the designated safeguarding lead or deputy person or appropriate authorities.
- Information shared should be factual, necessary, relevant, accurate, timely, and secure.
- Information will be stored securely, either in locked facilities or password-protected digital files on CPOMS.
- Child protection records will be separate from the pupil's school file and will be "tagged" for privacy.
- Consent is typically sought from the pupil and parents to share sensitive information, but the DSL may share it without consent when needed to protect the child.
- Child protection records are exempt from disclosure under the Data Protection Act, and requests to see them should be referred to the head teacher or DSL.

The school's confidentiality and information-sharing policy is available upon request to parents and pupils.

The child's wishes.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, governing bodies and school leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately, all systems and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

Reporting directly to child protection agencies

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- the situation is an emergency and the designated senior person, their deputy, the head teacher and the chair of governors are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

Safeguarding Lead Roles and Responsibilities

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** The DSL, currently **Glenda Glenwright**; glenda.glenwright@chollerton.northumberland.sch.uk, is responsible for overseeing safeguarding processes, including regular training and updates.
- **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):** The Deputy DSL(s), currently **Sandie Ross**; sandie.ross@chollerton.northumberland.sch.uk and **Becky Gibson**; becky.gibson@chollerton.northumberland.sch.uk support the DSL in their responsibilities and assume the role in their absence.
- **Safeguarding Governor:** The Governor with responsibility for safeguarding, currently **Charlotte Hird**, provides oversight to ensure safeguarding protocols are effectively implemented and reviewed.

Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach focusing on safeguarding young people in situations where abuse occurs outside of the family. This approach takes into account that adolescents may experience harm in their communities, schools, and online environments—contexts that are beyond the control of their parents or caregivers.

Key Principles of Contextual Safeguarding:

1. **Understanding extra-familial harm:** Young people's experiences of harm can extend beyond their home environment, including peer relationships, online interactions, and involvement with local groups or gangs.
2. **Engagement with wider networks:** Safeguarding practices should involve professionals who can influence these external environments, such as schools, community organisations, and online platforms.
3. **Recognising power imbalances:** Contextual Safeguarding acknowledges that young people can be vulnerable to abuse in social contexts where there is a power imbalance, often involving older peers, gangs, or even adults.
4. **A more holistic approach to safeguarding:** It moves away from the traditional family-centred safeguarding model, recognising that protecting adolescents requires addressing the wider social context that contributes to their vulnerability.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a severe crime involving the exploitation of individuals through force, fraud, or coercion for various purposes, such as sexual exploitation or forced labour. The **National Referral Mechanism (NRM)** is a framework designed to identify and support victims of trafficking. It facilitates cooperation between various agencies, such as the police, local authorities, and charities, to ensure victims receive proper care and support.

- **If a child is in immediate danger:** Call the police immediately on **999**.
- **If you suspect trafficking or have information about a trafficker:**
 - **Professionals:** Contact the **Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC)**.
 - **General public:** Contact the **NSPCC** for guidance or your local police or children's services at **01670 534000**.

Honour-Based Violence (HBV)

Honour-based violence (HBV) refers to a range of crimes committed to protect or defend the family's or community's honour. These crimes include, but are not limited to, **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**, **forced marriage**, and practices such as **breast ironing**. HBV is a form of abuse, regardless of the motives behind it, and must be handled as such.

- **Indicators that a child may be at risk of HBV:**
 - Warning signs that a **forced marriage** or **FGM** may occur or has already occurred are detailed in the **Multi-agency statutory guidance on FGM** (pages 38-41, and pages 59-61 for schools).
 - **Professionals** must be alert to the possibility that a child is at risk of or has suffered HBV.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) involves the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and considered a form of child abuse, with serious and lasting physical and psychological consequences.

- **Mandatory Reporting Duty:**
 - Under **Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003** (amended by the **Serious Crime Act 2015**), teachers and regulated health and social care professionals are required to report to the police when they discover that FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18. Failure to report can lead to disciplinary action.
 - Teachers must report if they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out—whether through the child's disclosure or visible evidence. However, they should not examine students.
 - For suspected cases, staff should follow **local safeguarding procedures** but do not have the mandatory duty to report.
- **Symptoms and Signs of FGM:**

- Indicators that a child may be at risk or has undergone FGM include:
 - Difficulty walking, sitting, or standing.
 - Spending extended time in the bathroom or toilet due to urination difficulties.
 - Absenteeism from school, with noticeable changes in behaviour (e.g., withdrawal or depression).
 - Reluctance to undergo medical exams.
 - Pain or discomfort between the legs.
- **Cultural Indicators:**
 - The arrival of a **female elder** from abroad.
 - The mention of a **special procedure or celebration** to become a woman.
 - The family wishes to take the child to an **at-risk country**, particularly before the summer holidays.
 - Withdrawal of a child from learning about FGM or from school altogether.
- **Important Reminder:**
 - FGM can occur both within the UK and abroad. It is crucial for professionals to be vigilant and take the necessary steps if they suspect that a child is at risk.

Forced Marriage

A **forced marriage** occurs when an individual is coerced into marriage without their full and free consent, using violence, threats, or other forms of pressure. In England and Wales, forcing someone into a marriage is a **criminal offence**. The coercion may be physical, emotional, or psychological, and some individuals may be unable to consent (e.g., those with learning disabilities). In some cases, cultural or religious beliefs are used to pressure individuals into marriage.

- **Signs of Forced Marriage** may include:
 - **Threats** or violence related to the marriage.
 - **Sudden withdrawal from school or social activities**.
 - **Fearful of speaking about marriage** or expressing reluctance.
 - **Changes in behaviour**, such as becoming withdrawn, depressed, or anxious.
- **How to Respond:**
 - School staff and professionals should be vigilant and report concerns to appropriate authorities.
 - The **Forced Marriage Unit (FMU)** can provide advice and guidance. Contact the FMU at **020 7008 0151** or email **fmu@fco.gov.uk** for more information. Further resources are available through the HMG Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines on Forced Marriage.

Recognising Extremism

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support extremist ideologies or engage in extremist activities. **Extremism** involves the support of radical beliefs or practices that may involve violence or illegal activities.

Early Indicators of Extremism:

- **Sympathy for extremist causes.**
- **Glorifying violence**, especially targeting other faiths or cultures.
- **Attendance at extremist events or rallies** outside of school.
- **Possession of extremist literature** or materials.
- **Advocating violent ideologies.**
- **Out of character behaviour**, such as changes in dress, peer relationships, or secretive activities.
- **Intolerance toward differences**, such as faith, culture, race, or sexuality.
- **Graffiti, artwork, or writing** promoting extremist themes.
- **Verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views.**
- **Advocating violence** against others.

Responding to Concerns:

- If staff notice signs of extremism, they should raise concerns with the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.
- Schools should also refer to the **Prevent Duty**, part of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, which requires staff to be alert to the risk of radicalisation.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of **sexual abuse** where a child or young person is manipulated, coerced, or deceived into sexual activity. The abuse may be in exchange for something the child needs or wants, such as money, drugs, or affection, or for the financial or social benefit of the perpetrator. This exploitation can also occur through the use of **technology**, even without physical contact.

Indicators of Child Sexual Exploitation:

- **Acquiring money, clothes, or mobile phones** without a reasonable explanation.
- **Gang association** or **social isolation**.
- **Unexplained absences** from school, college, or work.
- **Leaving home or care** without explanation, or repeatedly going missing.
- **Excessive texting or phone calls.**
- **Returning home intoxicated** (from drugs or alcohol).
- **Sexualised behaviour** inappropriate for their age.
- **Evidence of sexual or physical assault.**
- **Relationships with older individuals** or groups who may be controlling.
- **Frequenting areas known for sex work.**
- **Concerning use of the internet or social media.**
- **Self-harm** or significant emotional changes (e.g., depression, anxiety).

Vulnerabilities That Increase Risk of CSE:

While not all children with these vulnerabilities will be exploited, certain factors can increase the risk:

- **Prior experience of neglect, abuse, or sexual exploitation.**
- **Unstable or unsafe home environments** (e.g., domestic violence, substance misuse, mental health issues).
- **Social isolation or difficulty making friends.**
- **Absence of a safe place to explore sexuality.**
- **Economic vulnerability** or homelessness.
- **Involvement in care systems**, especially those in **residential care**.
- **Family members involved in adult sex work.**
- **Physical or learning disabilities.**
- **Sexual identity** concerns.

Child Criminal Exploitation: County Lines

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) refers to situations where children and young people are manipulated, coerced, or forced into illegal activities. **County lines** is one of the most prevalent forms of CCE, where criminal gangs or drug networks exploit children to transport drugs and money between urban areas and suburban or rural locations, including seaside towns.

Key Features of County Lines:

- **Geographically widespread:** County lines networks typically operate across urban, suburban, and rural areas, where children are trafficked to deliver drugs.
- **Vulnerable victims:** Children under 18, regardless of gender, are targeted. Vulnerable adults may also be exploited.
- **Exploitation is still abuse:** Even if the victim appears to agree to participate, the exploitation is still abusive and coercive.
- **Use of force or enticement:** Children may be forced or manipulated into trafficking drugs, often under threat of violence or actual violence.
- **Power imbalance:** The perpetrator often holds a significant power advantage over the victim, which can stem from factors such as age, gender, cognitive abilities, physical strength, or access to resources.

Signs of County Lines Exploitation:

- **Missing episodes:** One of the key indicators of child criminal exploitation is when a child goes missing. They may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs.
- **Physical signs of violence:** Victims may show signs of physical abuse such as bruises or injuries caused by threats or actual violence from the perpetrators.
- **Unexplained wealth:** Children may come into possession of money, clothing, or phones that they cannot explain.
- **Change in behaviour:** Withdrawal from family and friends, unexplained absences from school, or engaging with older individuals who may be involved in criminal activities.

Referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) should be considered if a child is suspected of being trafficked for county lines activities.

Four Categories of Abuse

1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse refers to any action that causes physical harm to a child. This may include behaviours such as hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or any act intended to cause physical injury. Physical harm can also occur when a caregiver fabricates or deliberately induces illness in a child, a condition previously known as Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy but now referred to as fabricated or induced illness.

2. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse involves the persistent maltreatment of a child that severely impacts their emotional development. This type of abuse includes actions that make a child feel worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only for meeting another person's needs. It may involve:

- Limiting opportunities for self-expression or silencing the child.
- Mocking or belittling the child's communication.
- Imposing inappropriate expectations for a child's age or development.
- Preventing a child from participating in normal activities or social interactions.
- Witnessing or hearing the abuse of others.
- Persistent bullying, including cyberbullying.
- Exploiting or corrupting a child emotionally. Emotional abuse is often present in all other forms of abuse but can also occur on its own.

3. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to participate in sexual activities, regardless of whether the child understands what is happening. This may include physical contact such as penetration (e.g., rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts like masturbation, kissing, rubbing, or touching over clothing. It can also involve non-contact abuse, such as:

- Exposing children to sexual images or activities.
- Encouraging inappropriate sexual behaviours.
- Grooming children for future abuse. Sexual abuse can take place both online and offline, and it is not limited to male perpetrators—women and other children may also engage in sexual abuse.

4. Neglect

Neglect refers to the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional, or psychological needs, leading to significant harm to their health or development. Neglect may include:

- Failing to provide adequate food, clothing, or shelter, including abandonment.
- Not protecting the child from physical or emotional harm.
- Inadequate supervision or using inappropriate caregivers.
- Failure to seek necessary medical care or treatment.

- Ignoring or being unresponsive to a child's emotional needs. Neglect can begin during pregnancy if a mother abuses substances, and it continues post-birth if the child's basic needs are not met.

Indicators of abuse

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated senior person.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

Signs a Child May Be Abused, Neglected, or Exploited

A child who is being abused, neglected, or exploited may display a range of physical, emotional, and behavioural signs. These include:

- **Physical Indicators:**
 - Bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures, or other visible injuries.
 - Signs of pain or discomfort.
 - Keeping arms and legs covered, even in warm weather.
 - Showing concern or reluctance about changing for physical education (PE) or swimming.
- **Appearance and Hygiene:**
 - Looking unkempt or uncared for.
 - Displaying a sudden change in eating habits.
 - Becoming excessively tired or preoccupied.
- **Social and Emotional Indicators:**
 - Having difficulty making or maintaining friendships.
 - Appearing fearful or anxious, particularly around certain people or situations.
 - Displaying reckless behaviour regarding their own or others' safety.
 - Engaging in self-harm.
- **School-related Indicators:**
 - Frequently missing school, arriving late, or leaving early.
 - Showing signs of not wanting to go home after school.
 - Displaying a change in behaviour (e.g., becoming aggressive or withdrawn).
 - Challenging authority figures.
 - Becoming disinterested in schoolwork.
- **Behavioural Indicators:**
 - Being overly wary of physical contact.
 - Displaying sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond what is typical for their age.
 - Acquiring gifts, such as money or a mobile phone, from new "friends."
 - Being involved with or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol.

Important Notes:

- **Individual indicators**, in isolation, do not provide conclusive evidence of abuse. Each indicator should be viewed as part of a larger picture, and the combination of these signs helps a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) decide how to proceed.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):

- Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group exploits an imbalance of power to manipulate, coerce, or deceive a child or young person into sexual activity. This can happen in exchange for things the child needs or wants, or for the financial gain or status of the abuser.
- **Important Note:** Even if the child appears to consent to sexual activity, they may still be exploited. CSE does not always involve physical contact and can occur through online interactions.

Action Steps:

- It is crucial for staff and caregivers to **report concerns**. They do not need to have "absolute proof" that abuse is occurring, just reasonable cause for concern that the child may be at risk. Prompt reporting and action are necessary to protect the child and ensure their safety.

Best Practice for Schools in Safeguarding Children

1. **Safe Recruitment Practices:**
 - Schools must follow safe recruitment practices in line with the **Department for Education (DfE) guidance** on safer recruitment.
 - Ensure that **DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks** and **reference checks** are conducted for all staff and volunteers before employment.
 - Maintain a **single central register** that tracks DBS numbers and training records for all staff and volunteers.
2. **A Safe and Supportive Ethos:**
 - Schools should create an environment where **children feel secure**, and their **viewpoints are valued**.
 - Children should be **encouraged to talk** about their concerns, and staff should be **active listeners** to ensure their voices are heard.
3. **Support and Guidance for Pupils:**
 - Ensure that children have access to a range of **appropriate adults** who they can turn to when feeling worried or in difficulty.
 - Establish a **clear support system** for pupils that ensures they can reach out for help when needed.
4. **Partnership with Parents:**
 - Work collaboratively with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibility for safeguarding.
 - Ensure parents recognise that **referring a child to investigative agencies** may occasionally be necessary for the child's welfare.
5. **Vigilance in Suspected Child Abuse:**
 - School staff must be vigilant in **identifying the signs and indicators of child abuse**.
 - Teachers should be familiar with the **school's child protection procedures** and **local safeguarding procedures**, ensuring that suspected cases are promptly reported to senior staff and passed on to the relevant professionals.
6. **Monitoring at-Risk Pupils:**
 - Schools should **monitor pupils who are at risk**, maintaining accurate and secure records of their progress.
 - Maintain policies on **confidentiality** and **information sharing** to ensure that appropriate professionals receive relevant reports, and attend **case conferences** when necessary.
7. **Regular Child Protection Training:**
 - Regular updates should be provided for **school staff**, especially **designated safeguarding leads (DSL)**, to ensure their skills and knowledge are current.
 - **Designated teachers** should receive safeguarding training every **two years** to stay informed on best practices and legal requirements.
8. **Inter-Agency Approach:**
 - Develop effective and supportive liaison with other agencies involved in child protection.
 - Schools should actively contribute to an **inter-agency approach** to safeguarding and child protection.
9. **Curriculum to Raise Awareness:**

- The school curriculum should be used to **raise awareness** among students about safeguarding, including understanding their rights and how to protect themselves.
 - The curriculum should help build **confidence** in pupils so they can identify and report issues like abuse, bullying, and exploitation, taking into account **sex and relationship education**.
10. **Clear Policies on Behaviour and Bullying:**
- Schools should have clear **policies on behaviour** that outline expected conduct and how issues like bullying are handled.
 - Ensure that all parties—**parents, staff, and students**—understand the school's position on bullying, what steps are taken to address it, and who students can contact for support.
11. **Handling Different Types of Bullying:**
- Schools must have a clear understanding of **different types of bullying**: physical, verbal, and indirect (e.g., cyberbullying).
 - **Prompt action** must be taken to address bullying incidents, ensuring that students know who to contact for support and understand the school's zero-tolerance stance.
12. **Supporting Vulnerable Pupils with Additional Needs:**
- Take extra care to ensure that **pupils with additional needs** (e.g., those with communication difficulties) are **effectively supported** in safeguarding matters.
 - Provide appropriate staff training and ensure these children are empowered to express themselves in a way that is understood by staff.
13. **Allegations of Abuse by Staff:**
- Schools should have a **clear policy** for handling **allegations of abuse** by staff members.
 - All staff must be fully aware of the **procedures** to follow when an allegation is made, ensuring **transparency** and **accountability**.
14. **Whole School Safeguarding Policy:**
- Schools should develop a **comprehensive safeguarding policy** that is regularly reviewed and **owned by staff**.
 - This policy should clearly outline the school's position on safeguarding and the **positive actions** the school will take to meet safeguarding standards.

Child protection file should include:

- Copy of referral form
- Minutes of strategy meetings
- Any written submission to a child protection conference / child protection plan review
- Minutes of child protection conference / child protection plan reviews
- Log of phone calls / contact with parent/carer and professionals

All safeguarding concerns raised with the DSL (whether or not they require referral to Children's Social Care) should be recorded. This should include any action taken by the member of staff raising the concern and also any action taken by the designated person (eg talking to child individually, contacting parents, taking advice from other professionals etc). These records should be kept, as with a child protection file, securely, separate to the child's

main school file. At the point of transfer to another school, child protection records should be transferred, securely and directly from DSL to DSL, separate to the child's main school file. School should ensure a record of posting is maintained and that the receiving school records receipt of documents. The main school file should have a 'flag' which shows that additional information is held by the DSL. At Chollerton First School, we use CPOMS to keep, safely store and transfer these records.

By following these best practices, schools can create a safe, supportive, and proactive environment for children, where they can thrive academically and emotionally, knowing that their welfare is a priority.