

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

Policy written by: Lisa Sharrock	Issue Date: September 2024
Policy Reviewed	September 24
Next review due	September 25

C O N T E N T S

	Page No.
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. DESIGNATED ROLES	2
3. LEGAL CONTEXT	2
4. POLICY STATEMENT	3
5. RESPONSIBILITIES	4
6. PREVENTION	5
7. TRAINING	9
8. DEFINITIONS AND RECOGNITION OF CHILD ABUSE	10
9. INTERNAL REPORTING	32
10. DISCLOSURE OR DISCOVERY OF ABUSE OR ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE	32
11. REFERRALS TO THE LOCAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT	33
12. PUPILS/PUPILS IN WORKPLACE PLACEMENTS	33
13. PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS	35
14. EQUALITY ACT	35

The Ribble Autism School

Impact of Autism

Safeguarding and protecting children from harm is paramount in all we do. Children are vulnerable simply because they are children, however, due to the complex nature of autism, the children and young people in our care for at The Ribble Autism School are particularly vulnerable. People with autism have core impairments in social understanding, communication and flexible thinking, this alongside disordered sensory systems, lack of theory of mind (an inability to predict or interpret others' thoughts and intentions) learning disability and challenging behaviours. These complex needs create many barriers to keeping children safe from harm or abuse.

Safeguarding training is delivered in house and reflects the complex difficulties in identifying abuse and looks in depth and some of the specific indicators that may raise concern.

Difficulties are further compounded by the number of professionals involved in the care and education of our pupils. As such, close communication and consistent recording systems are essential. Joint training is delivered across the service to ensure a consistent approach.

It is important to note that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge (this bullet point is new)
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Making sure that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Safeguarding Children is everyone's responsibility at The Ribble Autism School. The Children Act 1989 states that the welfare of children and young people (hereafter referred to as children) is paramount. This includes their right to be safeguarded against all forms of abuse, including sexual exploitation. Staff should be alert to indications of possible child abuse and understand procedures to be taken to raise their concerns. It is especially important to be aware of any patterns of behaviour within the local area and it is good practice to share emerging trends with safeguarding partners.

This policy applies to everyone in our school and it should be read and understood alongside the following The Ribble Autism School policies;

- Managing Allegations against staff
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- School Policy on the Education of Looked After Children
- Online Safety

- Staff Recruitment and Selection
- Intimate Care
- Positive Behaviour Support
- Whistle-blowing
- Data protection

1.1.1 Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2024, states that Safeguarding is ‘protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children’s health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable children to have the best outcomes.

1.1.2 **Child(ren)** means everyone under the age of 18. Statutory guidance ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ (2018) defines **safeguarding and promoting welfare** as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Therefore ‘safeguarding’ includes, but is not exclusive to, ‘child protection’. However, all staff are aware of the school’s collective responsibility to act in order to **protect** children from various potential sources and types of harm:

- Physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect;
- Bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying;
- Racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse;
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls;
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- Radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour;
- Child sexual exploitation;
- Criminal exploitation;
- Modern Slavery;
- Trafficking;
- Gang involvement and youth violence;
- The impact of new technologies on sexual behaviour, for example sexting;
- Substance misuse;
- Domestic abuse;
- So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, breast ironing/flattening;
- Fabricated or induced illness (formerly known as ‘Munchausen’s’);
- Poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children.

2. **DESIGNATED ROLES** – The Designated safeguarding Lead at The Ribble Autism School is the Headteacher, Lisa Sharrock. There are also two deputy DSLs, the Regional Director – Wendy Sparling and the Deputy Headteacher. All staff have a responsibility to complete online safeguarding children and safeguarding adults training and attend annual face to face training. All staff must also read, understand and adhere to The Ribble Autism School and Aspris Group policy, and The Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024) document - particularly Part One.

LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Safeguarding Children is everybody's responsibility

SITE DETAILS		
Name of the Service:	The Ribble Autism School	
Name of Service Manager:	Lisa Sharrock	
Safeguarding/Protection Lead: (<i>Designated Safeguarding Lead in education settings</i>)	Name:	Lisa Sharrock
	Phone:	01257 220011
	Email:	lisasharrock@aspriscs.co.uk
Regional Safeguarding Lead	Name:	Tim Booth
	Email:	tim.booth@lancashire.gov.uk
Aspris Executive Safeguarding Lead: (Also CSE lead for the Group)	Katie Dorrian, Safeguarding Lead 07518295368 katiedorrian@aspris.com	
PREVENT lead for Aspris:	Katie Dorrian, Safeguarding Lead 07518295368 katiedorrian@aspris.com	
Local Authority PREVENT Lead:		
SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS DETAILS		
Local authority that the site is located in:	Lancashire	
Local Safeguarding Children Partnership: (or regional equivalent)		
Contact details for the LADO:	Name:	Tim Booth
	Phone:	01772 536694
	Email:	tim.booth@lancashire.gov.uk

Designated contact at Local Authority Safeguarding Children Team:	Name: Phone: 01772 530283/530329 Email: lscb.cyp@lancscc.gov.uk
Designated contact at Police:	Name: Phone: 01257 246225 Email:
Out of Hours contact at our Local Authority:	Name: Out of Hours Duty Officer Phone: 0300 123 6722 Email: chorley.NPT@lancashire.nhs.net
Contact for Local Authority training:	Name: Michelle Lewis Phone: 01772 531196 Email: school.safeguarding@lancashire.gov.uk
Designated contact at Clinical Commissioning Group:	Name: Phone: 01772 214232 Email: csrccg.enquiries@nhs.net
INFORMATION THAT MUST BE AVAILABLE TO COLLEAGUES	
Where is the policy AOP06 Safeguarding Children in Education and AOP06A Safeguarding Children in Residential Care located:	Aspris Intranet/ Policies and Forms/ Aspris/ Operational/ Operational Policies/ AOP06 Aspris Intranet/ Policies and Forms/ Aspris/ Operational/ Operational Policies/ AOP06A
Where is the Local Area Safeguarding Information located? (Procedures, Handbook etc.)	Operations Director/Headteacher's Office Safeguarding Policy

ACTION TO TAKE IF AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE IS MADE TO YOU:
<p>You should ensure the immediate safety of all individuals.</p> <p>You should notify:</p> <p>Lisa Sharrock, Headteacher</p> <p>Wendy Sparling, Operations Director</p> <p>You should complete an electronic Incident Report (MIS Engage)</p> <p>You should follow the Procedures for referral that have been agreed with the local Safeguarding Children Team.</p> <p>Follow the criteria and paperwork for referral as approved by your local Safeguarding Children Team.</p> <p>If you are unable to contact the (D)SL for your service, you should contact your Regional Lead, or: The Executive Lead</p>

3. LEGAL CONTEXT

- 3.1 There is no single law that defines the age of a child across the UK. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK government in 1991, states that a child “means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. Working Together 2015 defines a child as anyone ‘anyone who has not yet reached their 18th Birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection’. This is also detailed in the Children Act 1989. Authorities in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland each have their own guidance setting out the duties and responsibilities of organisations to keep children safe, but they all agree that **a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, unless that child has a learning disability, in which case they are viewed as a child until their 19th birthday.**
- 3.2 The legal context in which professionals intervene in the lives of children is determined by the Children Act 1989, which was expanded upon by the Children Act 2004. ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ 2006 (revised in 2015) provides the guidance by which agencies work together to protect children in line with the legislative requirements. The Ribble Autism School and Children’s Homes recognise that in order for staff to fulfil their duties in line with ‘Working Together’, they will have different training needs which are dependent on their degree of contact with children and/or with adults who are parents or carers, their level of responsibility and independence of decision-making. (See section 7 – Training)
- 3.3 All matters relating to the wellbeing of children and their families in England is dealt with by the Department for Education and the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs). The Ribble Autism School follows Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board’s procedures and has developed strong links with the Designated Officer (DO), previously referred to as LADO.
- 3.4 Reference must also be made to ‘Keeping children safe in education 2024’ which is statutory guidance and sets out what education settings must do to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It is issued under section 175 of the Education Act 2023, the Education (independent school standards) Regulations 2014, and the Education (non-maintained special schools) (England) regulations 2011.
- 3.5 Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education has been simplified and published as a standalone document. All staff at The Ribble Autism School will read and sign to demonstrate their understanding of this document at least annually or sooner if there are any changes to it.
- 3.6 The updated document ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024’ includes Part 5 offering ‘support for children of all ages that improves a family’s resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse’. In addition we identify our schools’ duty to prevent and protect children from sexual violence and sexual harassment between children. At The Ribble Autism School, all pupils are supervised at all times and so sexual violence or harassment between children is highly unlikely. However, in the event of this occurring, the DSL or deputy will follow guidance set out in ‘Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

- 4.1 The commitment of all staff at The Ribble Autism School is to effectively protect all children from any form of abuse.
- 4.2 Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. The Ribble Autism School aims to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.
- 4.3 Statements made by children about allegations of abuse or neglect will always be taken seriously, as will their wishes and feelings. It is important to listen carefully to the child and report any allegations or suspicions of abuse to the designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, or, in their absence, a senior member of staff.
- 4.4 A multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approach to identification of allegations, reporting, planning and review should be the normal approach when dealing with incidences where intervention is considered necessary. This would follow Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board's procedures.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The Head will ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the Proprietary Board, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are fully implemented and followed by all staff.
- 5.2 The Head will act as a strategic conduit between the DSLs, the Proprietary Board and The Ribble Autism School on safeguarding matters.
- 5.3 The Head will be the case manager and liaise with the LA designated officer (LADO) in the event of allegations of abuse being made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- 5.4 The Head will ensure that a senior member of staff from the leadership team is appointed as the DSL in school and that there is always cover for this role.
- 5.5 The Head will ensure that the DSLs access appropriate training, which is regularly updated in line with statutory and the three safeguarding partners guidance.
- 5.6 The Head will ensure that sufficient resources and time is allocated to enable staff to discharge their responsibilities.
- 5.7 The Head will refer cases to the DBS where an allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or resigns or the employer ceases to use their person's services – this is a legal requirement.
- 5.8 The Head will lead in such a way as to create an environment where all staff and volunteers feel empowered to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and will address any concerns sensitively, effectively and in a timely manner.
- 5.9 It is the responsibility of the leadership team at The Ribble Autism School to ensure that adequate safeguarding and child protection practices are in place within the provision including following safer recruitment procedures.

- 5.91 As part of Safer Recruitment procedures, candidates shortlisted for employment will be informed that they will be subject to online searches as part of the school's due diligence checks.
- 5.92 Copies of documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications will be kept on their personnel file.
- 5.10 It is the responsibility of all staff to read this policy, Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024, to complete the Safeguarding training commensurate with their job role and to report any genuine concerns to the designated Safeguarding Officer.
- 5.11 The Head Teacher/DSL will take lead responsibility for ensuring that there is appropriate filtering and monitoring of IT systems within the school. Staff Safeguarding and Child Protection training should include an understanding of the above. The DSL should follow the recently published DfE publication of [Filtering and monitoring standards](#) and guidance and should aim to meet the DfE's [Cyber security standards](#). Governing bodies/proprietors strategic training should include an understanding of the above and should review the above standards with IT staff and service providers. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy should reflect the individual schools' approach to the e-safety on school devices and networks.

6. PREVENTION

- 6.1 Our school complies with part three of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024; the Proprietary Board will take steps to prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history. The school will take proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required; and ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised. The school has a written **recruitment and selection policies and procedures** in place.
- 6.2 The school obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the school have been appropriately checked.
- 6.3 The school maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.
- 6.4 In our school, at least one person on any appointment panel has undertaken safer recruitment training.
- 6.5 **Safer Recruitment** - Safer recruitment policies must be followed for all staff. Refer to policy HR01 Recruitment.
- 6.6 **Agency Staff** – Agency staff references and DBS checks are the responsibility of their employer i.e. the Agency, but must be confirmed in writing to The Ribble Autism School prior to any shift being worked. Agency staff induction will include an overview of safeguarding procedures specific to the site. It is the responsibility of the Senior Administrator to ensure agency staff have been cleared by their employer i.e. the agency.
- 6.6.1 In 2012 the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), which was introduced as a result of The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and worked as a new vetting and barring scheme for all those who work with children and vulnerable adults, merged with the Criminal Records

Bureau (CRB) to become the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The DBS will carry out criminal records checks for potential staff and issue a certificate. The DBS maintain a Barred list for Children detailing individuals who are not suitable to work or carry out regulated activity with children. The leadership team at The Ribble Autism School are required to make referrals to the DBS about individuals they believe to pose a risk of harm to vulnerable groups. There is guidance on making a referral to DBS at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-referrals-form-and-guidance>. It is an offence for employers to employ anyone who is on the barred list, or if they neglect to refer an individual to the DBS.

- 6.7 **Notifications to Regulatory Bodies and DBS** - It is the responsibility of the Regional Director/ Headteacher to notify their specific regulatory body if an employee is dismissed on safeguarding grounds in consultation with company principal, Central HR and the Regional Manager or Regional Director.
- 6.8 **Partnership Working** - No effective child safeguarding process can work unless those concerned are committed to the concept of partnership working. All agencies involved, private or public bodies, should have the wellbeing of the child as the first priority.
- 6.9 **Information Sharing** - Information shared between agencies, including the local Children's Services Dept (social services) and the police must be treated with the strictest confidentiality and in line with the document 'Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services' (DFE-00128-2015) 2015. If sexual exploitation is suspected or disclosed, there is guidance in 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation' (DCFS 2009) on disrupting perpetrator behaviour, identifying possible criminal offences and evidence gathering, with a view to information sharing, as such cases may already be under surveillance on monitoring by police and criminal justice agencies who lead on this aspect of safeguarding children.
- 6.9.1 In most cases consent should be sought before sharing information, but there are cases when you should not seek consent. For example if doing so would:
- (a) place a person (the individual, family member, yourself or a third party) at increased risk of significant harm if a child, or serious harm if an adult
 - (b) prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime
 - (c) lead to an unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm to a child or serious harm to an adult.
- 6.9.2 Even where you do not have consent to share confidential information, you may lawfully share it if this can be justified in the public interest. Seeking consent should be the first option. However, where consent cannot be obtained or is refused, or where seeking it is inappropriate or unsafe as explained in 4.4.1 above, the question of whether there is a sufficient public interest must be judged by the practitioner on the facts of each case. Therefore, where you have a concern about a person, you should not regard refusal of consent as necessarily precluding the sharing of confidential information.
- 6.9.3 A public interest can arise in a wide range of circumstances, for example to protect children from significant harm, protect adults from serious harm, promote the welfare of children or

prevent crime and disorder. There are also public interests, which in some circumstances may weigh against sharing, including the public interest in maintaining public confidence in the confidentiality of services.

- 6.9.4 In addition the Children Act 2004 introduced a duty to co-operate to improve the wellbeing of children and young people and for agencies to work together.
- 6.9.5 Taking account of the information sharing guidance, where it is decided that parents should be informed, this must be done in a planned way. The views of the child, any allegations which involve a parent or adult in the family, and the statutory responsibility for the child will influence how this will be done.
- 6.9.6 The local authority has a statutory responsibility to make further enquiries if concerns about the wellbeing of any child are expressed to them, which reach their threshold for intervention. The appropriate personnel from The Ribble Autism School would participate in the conference and will provide whatever information is deemed necessary.

- 6.10 **Whistle blowing if you have concerns about a colleague** – Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a child or young person are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the children or young person is paramount. The school's **whistleblowing policy** enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues **should be reported to the Headteacher immediately**. *Complaints about the Headteacher should be reported to the Regional Director*. Staff may also report their concerns directly to Children's Social Care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary secure action.

- 6.11 **Management of Allegations** – As per Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, the school's Allegations against Staff policy details the full procedures in relation to the management of allegations that might indicate that a person would pose a risk of harm² if they continue to work in regular or close contact with children in their present position, or in any capacity with children in school, including agency staff and volunteers has:

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

Any allegations against a member of staff will be reported to the Headteacher immediately. Where the allegation relates to the Headteacher, they will report it to the Regional Director immediately. Where staff have concerns about the conduct of a member of staff in school,

they will report this immediately to the Headteacher, concerns about the conduct of the Headteacher will be reported to the Regional Director immediately.

The person to who they have reported it, becomes the 'case manager'.

Where allegations/concerns do not meet the harm threshold, the case manager will follow the section describing the procedures for this in the school's Allegations against Staff policy.

If an allegation is substantiated and:

- The member of staff is dismissed; resigns; or otherwise ceases to provide his or her services; or
- The employer ceases to use the person's services

The case manager will discuss with the LADO who should make a referral to DBS. Where it is a member of teaching staff, then the case manager will consider a referral to TRA.

The LADO is: Tim Booth

Telephone number: 01772 5536694 **Email address:** tim.booth@lancashire.gov.uk

Parents or carers of a child or children involved should be;

- formally told about the allegation as soon as possible and the case manager will consult with the LADO, police and Children's social care (where police/CSC are involved) on what information can be disclosed.
- Kept informed of the progress of the case, only in relation to their child – no information can be shared regarding the member of staff, and
- Made aware of the requirements to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers in school whilst investigations are in progress as set out in s141F

The school will follow the three safeguarding partners procedures management of allegations procedures http://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_allegations.html

6.12 Educating Children about Issues (PSHE) – The Ribble Autism School strive to ensure that the pupil is aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can help keep themselves safe. The non-statutory framework for Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) provides opportunities for children to learn about keeping safe, and who to ask for help if their safety is threatened. As part of developing a healthy safer lifestyle, pupils should be taught, for example:

- (a) To recognise and manage risks in different situations and then decide how to behave responsibly, as appropriate.
- (b) To judge what kind of physical contact is acceptable and unacceptable, as appropriate.
- (c) To recognise when pressure from others (including people they know) threatens their personal safety and wellbeing and develop effective ways of resisting pressure, including when and where to get help, as appropriate.

6.12.1 Although, issues such as domestic violence and abuse can be difficult to broach directly, discussions about keeping safe may reinforce the message that any kind of violence is

unacceptable, letting children know that it is okay to talk about their own problems, and signpost sources of help. Raising these issues can lead children to bring up personal problems and concerns. Staff delivering lessons on these subjects need to be prepared for that possibility.

6.12.2 Lesson plans relating to extremism and radicalisation can be delivered to any young people deemed to be at risk of drawn in to terrorism.

6.12.3 Protected Characteristics are interwoven throughout the Curriculum at The Ribble Autism School.

6.12.4 The Ribble Autism School takes a cautious approach to supporting a gender questioning child and:

- Considers the broad range of the individual's needs.
- Identifies that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there are still unknowns around the impact of social transition, and that children may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs.
- Does this in partnership with their parents (except in rare circumstances where involving parents would bring a significant risk of harm to the child)
- Includes any clinical advice that is available and recommend that families should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice when making decisions about support for a gender questioning child.
- Considers how to address wider vulnerabilities, such as the risk of bullying.

6.13 **Online Safety** – The DSL takes responsibility for ensuring there is adequate filtering and monitoring of IT systems in line with the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024. The Ribble Autism School utilise appropriate filters both on the education network and the wifi, which has a filter in situ. Further information regarding the filtering and monitoring of internet use can be found at The UK Safer Internet Centre and via the DfE guidance '[Filtering and Monitoring Standards](#)' updated in 2024. Staff are likely to be in regular contact with parents and carers. Those communications should be used to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and parents and carers are likely to find it helpful to understand what systems schools and colleges use to filter and monitor online use.

The school has an online safety policy which is updated annually. Updates are shared with the staff team and aims to meet the [Cyber Security Standards](#).

6.13.1 Staff encourage online safety at all times for children and young people, who are encouraged to discuss online experiences, and tips and lessons around being safe online can be utilised. Being safe online and e-safety are covered within the PSHE and Computing curriculums but will also be addressed on a more ad hoc basis should specific needs or vulnerabilities be identified within the pupil body.

6.14 **Visitors** - All visitors to and from The Ribble Autism School must be recorded and supervised as appropriate. (Refer to Aspris policies on visitors and visiting children, H53 Arrangements for Visits by children, AM65 Visitors, ES21 Visitors to Schools). The visitor book is located in reception, and all visitors are required to wear a badge to identify this and also receive an information leaflet regarding safeguarding at The Ribble Autism School.

7. TRAINING

- 7.1 A training plan is in place and will be managed and monitored. It is the responsibility of the Site Learning Administrator to ensure that all employees comply with the training plan and to regularly view the compliance levels via monthly Learning Lounge reports. Training will be refreshed annually at a minimum.
- 7.2 All employees working at The Ribble Autism School will undertake the Online Academy training module on Safeguarding Children to enable them to recognise early signs of abuse and understand how to communicate concerns to child protection leads and share vital information between agencies – Level 1. Prior to commencing employment staff also receive Level 3 face to face safeguarding training as part of their induction process. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 states that safeguarding training should be ‘updated regularly, as required, but at least annually’.
- 7.3 The Leadership team has the responsibility to identify further suitable training through their Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB), appropriate to the level of contact with children or parents/carers and the responsibilities of the employee in regard to children.
- 7.4 All Designated Safeguarding Officers will attend centrally arranged Designated Safeguarding Children Officer training (Level 4). Course dates are published by the Learning and Development Department.
- 7.5 In accordance with part two of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 there is appropriate cover in place for the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Head.
- 7.6 The Leadership team should ensure that the training materials and guidelines provided by LSCB are available to all employees. This is available within Lancashire by accessing the Lancashire Policy & Safeguarding Children manual online at <http://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/>
- 7.7 Depending on the level of contact with children, supervision will be delivered on a one-to-one basis or in a supervision group. Supervision is ‘an accountable process which supports assures and develops the knowledge skills and values of an individual, group or team’. The purpose is to improve the quality of their work to achieve agreed outcomes. (Providing Effective Supervision, Skills for Care and CWDC 2007, page 5). Annual appraisals, termly observations and daily briefings take place, and offer opportunities for individual/ group supervisions and practice feedback.

8. DEFINITIONS AND RECOGNITION OF CHILD ABUSE

8.1 Whilst the statutory responsibility for deciding whether or not a child has been abused lies with personnel both in and outside of The Ribble Autism School, staff should be aware of what is meant by child abuse. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 states that abuse and neglect are 'a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. There are four types of abuse which are defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, these are:

- (a) Neglect
- (b) Physical Abuse
- (c) Sexual Abuse
- (d) Emotional Abuse

This policy also looks at the definitions of Radicalisation, child sexual exploitation and Female Genital Mutilation, as described in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024. It must be noted that abuse is not just an adult crime. Children can pose a threat either physical or sexual to other children. Even when sexualised behaviour is identified and a child is on a treatment programme, they still have to be educated and managed within the school or residential care home. See part 5 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.

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

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015.

Physical signs of neglect may include;

- (a) Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children.
- (b) Constantly dirty or 'smelly'
- (c) Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- (d) Inappropriate clothing for the conditions.

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

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015.

It is a criminal offence to physically assault another individual and should be reported to the LSCB and to the police by a senior member of staff for appropriate investigation. Signs of physical abuse may include:

- (a) Discrepancy between injury and explanation, conflicting explanations, or no explanation for an injury, or Injuries of different ages
- (b) Delay in seeking treatment.
- (c) Bruising (including bruising which could be deliberately applied or multiple bruising)
- (d) Bites, burns, ligature marks, scalds, inconsistent with an accident, fractures, head injuries, poisoning
- (e) Constant diarrhoea or Voracious appetite
- (f) Listlessness or fixed watchfulness
- (g) Alopecia.

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

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015.

Signs may include:

- (a) Sexually transmitted infections
- (b) Soreness or injury in genital/anal area
- (c) Recurrent urinary tract infections
- (d) Vaginal discharge/bleeding
- (e) Pregnancy
- (f) Changes in behaviour – e.g. wetting/soiling.
- (g) Sleep disturbance
- (h) Inappropriate sexual language/knowledge
- (i) Excessive masturbation
- (j) Promiscuous affection seeking
- (k) Running away
- (l) Drug/alcohol abuse
- (m) Eating disorders
- (n) Psychosomatic illness

- 8.5 **Emotional Abuse** – The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of the way they communicate. It may feature

age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2020.

Signs may include:

- (a) Failure to thrive (could include appearance and development not consistent with age)
- (b) Deliberate self harm
- (c) Psychosomatic illness
- (d) Wetting and soiling
- (e) Withdrawn, aggressive, or bizarre behaviour.
- (f) Attention seeking behaviour.
- (g) Inappropriate seeking of affection
- (h) Running away
- (i) Under achievement
- (j) Difficulty in formulating friendships.

N.B Children from all cultures are subject to abuse and neglect, so practitioners need to make sensitive and informed judgements about a child's needs, and parents' capacity to respond to their child's needs. It is important that professionals are sensitive to differing family lifestyles and to child-rearing patterns that may vary across different racial, ethnic and cultural groups. At the same time, they must be clear that child abuse cannot be condoned for cultural or religious reasons.

- 8.6 Keeping children Safe in Education 2024, Part 1 and Appendix A, outline a range of safeguarding issues. Among those are what the three safeguarding partners' procedures refer to as Children in Specific Circumstances.

So-called 'Honour Based' Abuse - The terms 'honour crime' or 'honour-based abuse' or 'izzat' embrace a variety of crimes of violence (mainly but not exclusively against women), including assault, imprisonment and murder where the person is being punished by their family or their community. They are being punished for actually, or allegedly, undermining what the family or community believes to be the correct code of behaviour. In transgressing this correct code of behaviour, the person shows that they have not been properly controlled to conform by their family and this is to the "shame" or "dishonour" of the family. It can be distinguished from other forms of abuse, as it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/ community members. Victims will have multiple perpetrators not only in the UK; HBV can be a trigger for a forced marriage.



A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. In the cases of some vulnerable adults who lack the capacity to consent, coercion is not required for a marriage to be forced.

Emotional control. Removing from school or education, controlling freedom of movement up to and including house arrest, preventing the victim from learning English, preventing professionals from having any individual contact with the victim, in the case of incoming spouses, threatening to have incoming spouses deported to the country of origin, often these threats will include removal of the victim's children, control over the victim's visa status, use of black magic by way of amulets, potions or spells to exert control over the victim.

Physical abuse. This can involve parents and siblings, husbands and in-laws in terms of an extended family and /or community. This includes the spectrum of physical abuse from threats of physical violence, up to and including acid attacks and murder.

Financial abuse. Controlling the income of the victim, many victims will be refused access to any money, even in some cases their own earnings, in order to maintain control and dependency.

Sexual abuse. Where there has been Forced Marriage there is often criminal behaviour such as kidnap and abduction, false imprisonment, administering noxious substances (to ensure compliance) and rape. There have been cases of victims having been drugged as part of an abduction both within the UK and to remove victims from the UK for the purposes of marriage.

Emotional abuse to the victim and to a third party, threats of harm to the victim can include by family members, both here and in the countries of origin, criticism and humiliation of the victim, enforced servitude by way of unpaid work either in family businesses or within the home, sometimes referred to as a form of domestic slavery. This abuse can involve the victim's children being removed from her care to be cared for by another member of the extended family. Emotional abuse can include threats by the perpetrator to harm themselves (i.e. I will kill myself if you do not marry him or her). They can include shaming in front of the entire community. Lastly, community collusion. A distinct difference between domestic violence and

Honour Based Violence is that there is the element of collusion between perpetrators, be they members of the victim's family or in-laws or extended family and the wider community.

Confidentiality and disclosure Risk can escalate very suddenly. The same level of confidentiality will be applied as to any other safeguarding matter. It should always be remembered that in the case of HBA and FM, perpetrators may go to enormous lengths to obtain information about the whereabouts of a victim in hiding, up to and including hacking into information held in computer databases. In some cases, existing family or professional networks have been used, e.g. Taxi Drivers. MPs and GPs have been asked to divulge information. Special care should be given when considering the use of interpreters and advice should be taken if you are unsure as to who is safe.

Where we have concerns relating to Forced Marriage, we will follow the three safeguarding partners procedures

http://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_forced_marriage.html

Serious Violence - At The Ribble Autism School, all staff are aware of the indicators that may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved in, serious violent crime. These may include:

- Increased absence from school
- A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- A significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions

These may indicate that children have been approached by, or involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Children Affected by Gangs and Youth Violence

Defining a gang is difficult. They tend to fall into three categories: peer groups, street gangs and organised crime groups. It can be common for groups of children and young people to gather in public places to socialise, and although some peer group gatherings can lead to increased antisocial behaviour and low-level youth offending, these activities should not be confused with the serious violence of a street gang.

A street gang can be described as a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of children who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity.

A street gang will engage in criminal activity and violence and may lay claim over territory (not necessarily geographical for example it could include an illegal economy territory). They have some form of identifying structure featuring a hierarchy usually based on age, physical strength, propensity to violence or older sibling rank. There may be certain rites involving antisocial or criminal behaviour or sex acts in order to become part of the gang. They are in conflict with other similar gangs.

There is a distinction between organised crime groups and street gangs based on the level of criminality, organisation, planning and control. However, there are significant links between different levels of gangs for example street gangs can be involved in drug dealing on behalf of organised criminal groups young men and women may be at risk of sexual exploitation in these groups.

Children may be involved in more than one 'gang', with some cross-border movement, and may not stay in a 'gang' for significant periods of time. Children rarely use the term 'gang', instead they used terms such as 'family', 'breddrin', 'crews', 'cuz' (cousins), 'my boys' or simply 'the people I grew up with'.

Risks

The risk or potential risk of harm to the child may be as a victim, a gang member or both - in relation to their peers or to a gang-involved adult in their household. Teenagers can be particularly vulnerable to recruitment into gangs and involvement in gang violence. This vulnerability may be exacerbated by risk factors in an individual's background, including violence in the family, involvement of siblings in gangs, poor educational attainment, or poverty or mental health problems. Page 36 POL-SCH-BS-00294-v8-0321

A child who is affected by gang activity, criminal exploitation or serious youth violence can be at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Girls may be particularly at risk of sexual exploitation.

Violence is a way for gang members to gain recognition and respect by asserting their power and authority in the street, with a large proportion of street crime perpetrated against members of other gangs or the relatives of gang members.

The specific risks for males and females may be quite different. There is a higher risk of sexual abuse for females, and they are more likely to have been coerced into involvement with a gang through peer pressure than their male counterparts.

There is evidence of a high incidence of rape of girls who are involved with gangs. Some senior gang members pass their girlfriends around to lower ranking members and sometimes to the whole group at the same time. Very few rapes by gang members are reported.

Gang members often groom girls at school using drugs and alcohol, which act as disinhibitors and also create dependency, and encourage / coerce them to recruit other girls through school / social networks.

Indicators

- Child withdrawn from family.
- Sudden loss of interest in school or change in behaviour. Decline in attendance or academic achievement (although it should be noted that some gang members will maintain a good attendance record to avoid coming to notice)
- Being emotionally 'switched off', but also containing frustration / rage.
- Starting to use new or unknown slang words
- Holding unexplained money or possessions
- Staying out unusually late without reason, or breaking parental rules consistently
- Sudden change in appearance – dressing in a particular style or 'uniform' similar to that of other young people they hang around with, including a particular colour.
- Dropping out of positive activities

- New nickname
- Unexplained physical injuries, and/or refusal to seek / receive medical treatment for injuries.
- Graffiti style 'tags' on possessions, schoolbooks, walls
- Constantly talking about another young person who seems to have a lot of influence over them.
- Breaking off with old friends and hanging around with one group of people
- Associating with known or suspected gang members, closeness to siblings or adults in the family who are gang members.
- Starting to adopt certain codes of group behaviour e.g. ways of talking and hand signs.
- Going missing
- Being found by Police in towns or cities many miles from their home
- Expressing aggressive or intimidating views towards other groups of young people, some of whom may have been friends in the past.
- Being scared when entering certain areas
- Concerned by the presence of unknown youths in their neighbourhoods.

Dependant on how the young person communicates to you that they are in a gang, will influence your response. Such a statement may be their declaration of allegiance to their chosen gang or conversely, it may be a cry for help, asking for you to acknowledge their problem and for you to support them to get away from the gang.

An important feature of gang involvement is that the more heavily a child is involved with a gang, the less likely they are to talk about it.

There are links between gang-involvement, criminal exploitation and young people going missing from home or care. Some of the factors that can draw gang-involved young people away from home or care into going missing are linked to their involvement in carrying out drugs along county lines. There may be gang-associated child sexual exploitation and relationships that can be strong pull factors for girls who go missing.

Where we have concerns relating to Gang involvement or youth violence we will follow the three safeguarding partners procedures
http://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_gang_activity.html

Further advice is provided in the Home Office publication Preventing Youth Violence and gang involvement.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and County Lines

Child Criminal exploitation is defined where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines) forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Dangers associated with CCE:

- being subject to threats, blackmail and violence
- being arrested, including for crimes committed by the gang that they have not directly committed under the law of joint enterprise.
- having their safety or the safety of friends and family threatened
- risk of emotional abuse
- abusing drugs, alcohol and other substances
- being exploited and forced to commit crimes.
- not being able to leave or cut off ties with the gang.
- risk of physical harm, rape and sexual abuse
- risk of severe injury or being killed
- long term impact on education and employment options
- County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move [and store] the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.
- County lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons.

A typical county lines scenario is defined by the following components:

- A group (not necessarily affiliated as a gang) establishes a network between an urban hub and another location, into which drugs (primarily heroin and crack cocaine) are supplied.
- A branded mobile phone line is established in the market, to which orders are placed by introduced customers. The line will commonly (but not exclusively) be controlled by a third party, remote from the market.
- The group exploits young or vulnerable persons, to achieve the storage and/or supply of drugs, movement of cash proceeds and to secure the use of dwellings (commonly referred to as cuckooing).
- The group or individuals exploited by them regularly travel between the urban hub and the other location, to replenish stock and deliver cash.
- The group is inclined to use intimidation, violence and weapons, including knives, corrosives and firearms.

Some indicators of county lines involvement and child criminal exploitation are listed below, with those at the top of particular concern:

- Persistently going missing from school or home and / or being found out-of-area
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phone
- Excessive receipt of texts / phone calls
- Relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups
- Leaving home / care without explanation
- Suspicion of physical assault / unexplained injuries
- Parental concerns
- Carrying weapons
- Significant decline in school results / performance
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks.
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

Common terminology

- **Cuckooing** - where gangs establish a base in the market location by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing'.
- **Going country** - term that describes county lines activity. It can also mean the act of travelling to another city/town to deliver drugs or money.
- **Trapping** - the act of moving drugs from one town to another or the act of selling drugs in one.
- **Trap House** - A building used as a base from where drugs are sold (or sometimes manufactured). These houses usually are occupied by someone (usually adult drug users but sometimes young people are forced to stay in trap houses).
- **Trap Line** - when someone owns a mobile phone specifically for the purpose of running and selling of drug.

Where we have concerns regarding county lines we will follow, the three safeguarding partners procedures:

http://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_gang_activity.html

The DSL will also complete the Child National Referral Mechanism form available via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms> where a child has been trafficked for the purposes of transporting drugs. Further information is available in the Home Office publication Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern slavery is a form of organised crime in which individuals including children and young people are treated as commodities and exploited for criminal gain. Children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 (applicable mostly in England and Wales) includes two substantive offences i) human trafficking, and ii) slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour.

Boys and girls of all ages are affected and can be trafficked into, within ('internal trafficking'), and out of the UK for many reasons and all forms of exploitation - e.g. sex trafficking - children can be groomed and sexually abused before being taken to other towns and cities where the sexual exploitation continues. Victims are forced into sexual acts for money, food or a place to stay. Other forms of slavery involve children who are forced to work, criminally exploited and forced into domestic servitude. Victims have been found in brothels or saunas, farms, in factories, nail bars, car washes, hotels and restaurants and commonly are exploited in cannabis cultivation. Debt bondage (forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they will never be able to), organ harvesting, and benefit fraud are other types of modern slavery.

Children and young people may be exploited by parents, carers or family members. Often the child or young person will not realise that family members are involved in the exploitation.

Some young people may not be victims of human trafficking but are still victims of modern slavery. Slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour may also be present in trafficking cases; however, not every young person who is exploited through forced labour has been trafficked.

Indicators:

A reluctance to seek help - victims may be wary of the authorities for many reasons such as not knowing who to trust or a fear of deportation or concern regarding their immigration status and may avoid giving details of accommodation or personal details;

- The child seeming like a willing participant in their exploitation, e.g. involvement in lucrative criminal activity - however this does not mean they have benefitted from the proceeds.
- Discrepancies in the information victims have provided due to traffickers forcing them to provide incorrect stories.
- An unwillingness to disclose details of their experience due to being in a situation of dependency.
- Brought or moved from another country.
- An unrelated or new child discovered at an address.
- Unsatisfactory living conditions - may be living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation.
- Missing - from care, home or school - including a pattern of registration and de-registration from different schools
- Children may be found in brothels and saunas.
- Spending a lot of time doing household chores
- May be working in catering, nail bars, caring for children and cleaning.
- Rarely leaving their home, with no freedom of movement and no time for playing
- Orphaned or living apart from their family, often in unregulated private foster care.
- Limited English or knowledge of their local area in which they live.
- False documentation, no passport or identification documents
- Few or no personal effects - few personal possessions and tend to wear the same clothing.
- No evidence of parental permission for the child to travel to the UK or stay with the adult.
- Little or no evidence of any pre-existing relationship with the adult or even an absence of any knowledge of the accompanying adult
- Significantly older partner
- Underage marriage.

Physical Appearance - Victims may show signs of physical or psychological abuse, look malnourished or unkempt, or appear withdrawn. Physical illnesses - including work-related injuries through poor health and safety measures, or injuries apparently as a result of assault or controlling measures.

There may be physical indications of working (e.g. overly tired in school or indications of manual labour).

Sexual health indicators - sexually transmitted infections, or pregnancy; injuries of a sexual nature and /or gynaecological symptoms.

Psychological indicators - suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder which may include symptoms of hostility, aggression and difficulty with recalling episodes and concentrating. Depression/self-harm and/or suicidal feelings; an attitude of self-blame, shame and extensive loss of control; drug and or/alcohol use.

Where we have concerns relating to Modern Slavery we will follow the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership procedures:

http://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_modern_slavery.html

The DSL will also complete the Child National Referral Mechanism form available via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms>

Child on Child Abuse

At The Ribble Autism School, we recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Any incidents of alleged or suspected abuse by children or young people will be taken seriously and reported to the DSL immediately. Staff must also be alert to the possibility that a child or young person who has harmed another may also be a victim and, as such, they may have significant unmet needs themselves. Peer abuse might take various forms; for example (and the following list is not exhaustive):

- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- Upskirting. Which typically involves taking a picture under a person clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genital or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.
- Sexting (also known as youth produced imagery)
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

We know that child on child abuse might manifest differently for boys and girls e.g. girls being touched inappropriately or coerced into sexual activity, boys being initiated into gangs etc. Such abuse may also be indicative of a previous or ongoing abusive experience for a perpetrator and / or victim and research indicates that children with SEN, additional or complex needs are particularly vulnerable.

Staff should be mindful of the added vulnerability of children and young people who have been the victims of violent crime, including the risk that they may respond to this by abusing younger or weaker children. The alleged perpetrator is likely to have considerable unmet needs, as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children. Evidence suggests that such children may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, may have witnessed or been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, may have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. They may, therefore, be suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm and be in need of protection. Consequently, any plan to reduce and / or manage risk posed by a child who is alleged to have abused another must also address their needs and [multi-agency] responses should not be about criminalising children unnecessarily.

We recognise that is not enough 'just' to respond to incidents should they arise. Therefore, we will **minimise the possibility of peer abuse** by:

- Creating and maintaining an environment which is safe, caring, respectful and stimulating, and which seeks to promote the social, physical and moral development of our pupils.
- Ensuring that core safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures link to, are understood and implemented in conjunction with other, related policies and procedures including PSHE, SRE, Online Safety, Anti-bullying, Positive Behaviour Support, Whistle Blowing, Staff Code of Conduct and Allegations against Staff

- Actively discouraging and challenging all unacceptable behaviour, including all forms of bullying and abuse. We will also challenge the attitudes and behaviours which underpin it.
- Having in place clear strategies for promoting positive behaviour, including a system of rewards and sanctions that is clear to staff, pupils and parents / carers alike.
- Maximising opportunities within the curriculum, via PSHE, assemblies and focused weeks to deliver key keeping safe and associated behavioural, spiritual, moral, social and cultural messages - including the use of external resources and expertise e.g.; the NSPCC's 'Pants / Underwear Rule' guidance and drawing upon the expertise of external speakers and groups
- Striking appropriate balances between pupil's right to privacy and the need for proportionate supervision to keep them safe in and around school
- Ensuring that all adults associated with our school understand their role and responsibilities as role models.
- Ensuring that staff and any volunteers are trained to look for and respond appropriately to any potential indicators of peer abuse.
- Seeking appropriate and timely advice where uncertainty exists and / or concerns arise i.e. from Children's Social Care
- Ensuring that children, and parents, know how to raise any worries or concerns with adults / staff in school and by signposting them to appropriate sources of advice and support outside school.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in School

At The Ribble Autism School we recognise that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any sex. That it can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and harassment can occur online and offline, can be both physical and verbal, and is never acceptable.

In our school:

- sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- we will take concerns seriously and not dismiss sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”.
- we will challenge behaviour (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia and flicking bras and lifting up skirts and recognise that dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.
- we recognise that all of the above can be driven by wider societal factors beyond the school and college, such as everyday sexist stereotypes and everyday sexist language.

In line with the Sexual Offences Act 2003, **Sexual violence** is;

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Harassment is unwanted sexual conduct of a sexual nature and can occur on or offline. In the context of this policy, it is child on child sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Sexual harassment can include the list in not exhaustive:

Offline behaviour

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names.
- sexual "jokes" or taunting
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (The DSL will consider when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence – and experience of the victim will be taken in account when considering this) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature.

Online behaviour

- This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

It may include:

- non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos
- sexualised online bullying.
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media.
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

- Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, from normal and developmentally expected behaviour to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage.
- When considering harmful sexual behaviour, ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors to consider. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature.
- Further information is available via the NSPCC; <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/harmful-sexual-behaviour>

Responding to Allegations of Peer Abuse Inc. sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in school

Everyone in school recognises the need for sensitivity and proportionality when dealing with these difficult issues. The following rules of thumb will apply to their management:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed.
- The DSL will seek appropriate and timely advice wherever necessary and follow the three safeguarding partners' procedures. The safety and best interests of victim(s) will be the paramount consideration at all times. The DSL will also consider the possibility and take account of any wider and / or ongoing risk(s) to others.
- The needs of the victim and the needs of the alleged perpetrator will be considered separately.
- In addition to safeguarding the identified victim, the school and other agencies should consider (i) whether the alleged perpetrator seems to pose a risk to any other children; and (ii) how best to manage that risk.
- Children and young people who abuse others are responsible for their abusive behaviour, and safeguarding action must include addressing their behaviour and its causes.
- The alleged perpetrator is likely to have considerable unmet needs as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children.
- Where necessary, the school will participate fully in a co-ordinated approach by Children's Social Care, youth offending, education and health agencies.
- Where the concerns are of a sexual nature, the DSL will need to consider completing a Risk Management Plan
- Where it is considered that there is a need for an in-house Risk Management Meeting, and if needed to speak to the Safeguarding Coordinator regarding this

Upskirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender can be a victim.

Where we have concerns relating to child on child, we will follow the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership procedures:

https://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_peer_abuse.html

The learning centre will also work within the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence advice; https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/707653/Sexual_Harassment_and_Sexual_Violence_Advice.pdf

Further information is also available at:

<https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/category/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool>

Children requiring mental health support Inc self-harm and suicidal ideation

At The Ribble Autism School, we recognise that we have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils. At our school, we have a dedicated mental health practitioner who any child can access when required, as well as pupils being able to access scheduled therapy sessions.

We recognise that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that had a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

In our school, we recognise that schools are in a unique position, as they are able to help prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience as part of an integrated, whole school approach that is tailored to the needs of pupils.

A whole school approach is one that goes beyond the teaching in the classroom to pervade all aspects of school life, including:

- culture, ethos and environment: the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff is promoted through the 'hidden' or 'informal' curriculum, including leadership practice, the school's policies, values and attitudes, together with the social and physical environment.
- teaching: using the curriculum to develop pupils' knowledge about health and wellbeing; and
- partnerships with families and the community: proactive engagement with families, outside agencies, and the wider community to promote consistent support for children's health and wellbeing.

More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

Where staff have a mental health concern that is also a safeguarding concern, they must immediately report this to the DSL and follow up this conversation by recording the concern on the safeguarding database. Where the concern they have does not relate to a safeguarding concern, they should discuss with the mental health practitioner in school.

Self-Harm and Suicidal ideation

Any concerns regarding self-harm or suicidal ideation should be considered under the three safeguarding partners procedures. Some children in 'acute need' may require Child in Need Section 17 support. This could include children who self-harm or disclose an intent to complete suicide. Broadly defined, self-harm refers to the deliberate attempt to physically injure oneself without causing death. This can include self-mutilation (e.g. cutting behaviours), self-poisoning, burning, scalding, banging, and hair pulling.

Although clearly damaging, alcohol and drugs misuse, eating disorders, unsafe sex and other excessively risky behaviour, such as dangerous driving, are not generally classified as self-harm and would be classed as risk taking behaviours.

If a child is suspected or found to be self-harming, the strategies that should be those determined by any existing plan, for example, in the child's Placement Plan. If no plan or strategy exists, all reasonable measures should be taken to reduce or prevent continuation of the behaviour. In all cases, consideration will be given to the DSL in conjunction with the clinical services team to undertake a Risk Management Plan and advice sort in relation to this. This may include providing additional supervision, minimising access to materials that may be used to self-harm or, as a last resort, use of Physical Intervention, advice to the parent /carer regarding a GP appointment with a view to a CAMHS referral or where there is an immediate threat to life, calling for assistance from the emergency services.

Where there are concerns about a child expressing intent to complete suicide, the DSL will discuss this with the clinical services team and where advised by the clinical services team, will work with them in undertaking a Risk Management Plan

Where we have concerns relating to the suicide and self-harm we will follow the three safeguarding partners procedures

https://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_self_harm.html

Bullying including Online Bullying or Cyberbullying

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect; it is a very serious issue that can cause anxiety and distress. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our anti-bullying policy. Cyberbullying is the use of mobile phones; instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass threaten or intimidate someone. One of the issues with cyberbullying is the increasingly early access to these technologies.

Examples are:

- Encouraging a child to self-harm or end their own life.
- Setting up false accounts and posting within that online account.
- Trolling – the sending of messages that are upsetting or menacing via social media.
- Hacking accounts in order to embarrass the child or cause trouble for them.
- Encouraging voting in an abusive pole.
- Racism, sexism or homophobia.
- Setting up hate sites or groups in relation to a particular child.
- Sexting.

Where we have concerns, we will follow the three safeguarding partners' procedures relating to bullying https://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_bullying.html

Domestic Abuse (Act 2021)

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

The Government definition of domestic abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

The Ribble Autism School is part of the Lancashire Encompass Programme which enables multi-agency working to further safeguard children and young people.

Controlling behaviour

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

We recognise that all children who witness or live in a household where domestic abuse occurs, even if they don't witness it, can be adversely affected by it in the context of their home life where it occurs between family members. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children, in some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Where any calls come into the school via Operation Encompass, they will be forwarded to the DSL and where the DSL is not available to the Deputy DSL

Where there are concerns that any young person is a witness to domestic abuse or is a perpetrator, then we will follow the three safeguarding partners guidance

http://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_domestic_violence_abuse.html

Further information is available via:

NSPCC: UK domestic-abuse signs symptoms effects

Refuge: What is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children

SafeLives: young people and domestic abuse

Radicalisation and Extremism

The government definition of radicalisation is:

Radicalisation is defined as – ‘the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups’.

Extremism is defined as – ‘vocal or active opposition to fundamental values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs’. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

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

Prevent is the name given to the Government's strategy to respond to the challenge of extremism; it is part of its broader counter terrorism strategy which is known as **Contest**. We recognise that Prevent is an integral part of safeguarding in school that it is not separate and does not stand alone. For example, we will be mindful of its potential significance in respect of:

- Recruitment and selection
- The use of external providers and speakers
- Online safety
- The curriculum and our duty to promote and support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability that are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people.

Staff will be alert to changes in children's behaviour that could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. School staff will use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately following the three safeguarding partners procedures

http://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_radicalisation.html This will include making referrals to the Channel programme as appropriate.

Prevent Duty Guidance: (Paragraphs 57-76 covers schools)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

Further information is available via the website Educate against hate.

<https://educateagainsthate.com>

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on a number of organisations, including schools, to prevent all radicalisation and extremism. The purpose is to protect children from harm and to ensure that they are taught in a way that is consistent with the law and British values.

In order to comply with the Prevent Duty:

- We have assessed the risk of pupils being drawn into radicalisation and have developed a prevent action plan to reduce this risk and this has been signed-off by school board.
- We will always conduct relevant checks in order to prohibit extremist speakers and events in school.
- We have put strategies in place to manage access to extremist material.

Our Single point of Contact in School (SPOC):

Elizabeth Shute

Our Prevent Officer:

Prevent Team - 01772209733

Police Prevent: West & South Division (Preston, Lancaster, Skelmersdale, Blackpool etc.)

Telephone: 01772 209733 / 830, team led by Sgt 73 Colin Dassow Email:

colin.dassow@lancashire.pnn.police.uk

Channel Referrals:

- concern@lancashire.pnn.police.uk 01772412742 8am-6pm Monday to Friday out of hours 101 or 99

Sexting

The UK Council for Child Internet Safety in their guidance: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people use the term nudes and semi-nudes to mean sending or posting nude or semi-nude images or live streams under the age of 18 offline. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline.

The term 'nudes' is used as it is most commonly recognised by young people and more appropriately covers all types of image sharing incidents. Alternative terms used by children and young people may include 'dick pics' or 'pics'.

The motivations for taking and sharing nude and semi-nude images, videos and live streams are not always sexually or criminally motivated. Such images may be created and shared consensually by young people who are in relationships, as well as between those who are not in a relationship. It is also possible for a young person in a consensual relationship to be coerced into sharing an image with their partner. Incidents may also occur where:

- children and young people find nudes and semi-nudes online and share them claiming to be from a peer.
- children and young people digitally manipulate an image of a young person into an existing nude online.
- images created or shared are used to abuse peers e.g. by selling images online or obtaining images to share more widely without consent to publicly shame.

Where our school has concerns about sharing of nudes or semi-nudes we will follow the UK Council for Internet Safety guidance: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people.

All concerns regarding sharing of nudes or semi-nudes must be reported to the DSL immediately who will assess the situation on a case-by-case basis using the guidance in sections 1.6(a), 1.6(b) and section 2 of the above guidance to make informed decisions. As per the above guidance, we recognise that in many cases, we may respond to incidents without involving the police, for example where an incident can be defined as 'experimental' (see section 1.6a) and there is no evidence abusive or aggravating elements and will follow the advice on the circumstances in which this would be appropriate (section 2). **Where there are abusive and/or aggravating factors, incidents will always be referred to the police and/or Children's Social Care**

Where there is no referral to the police/CSC, it may be necessary to assist the child/parents in reporting it and/or removing the image from a website or elsewhere.

Help and advice is available via the Professionals Online Safety Helpline (Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm)

Email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk

Telephone: 0344 381 4772

Staff dealing with Sexting and Related Issues – a quick glance.

ALWAYS	NEVER
General	
Inform the DSL immediately, record the incident and act in accordance with school online safety and child protection policies and procedures	View, download or share the imagery yourself (if you have seen it as the child presented it to you – inform you DSL)
Explain to the young person that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive help and support from the DSL	Ask the children to share or download
Confiscate and secure the device(s). Turn the device off and give it to the DSL	View the image, send, share or save the image anywhere, allow pupils to do any of the above
Image has been shared across a school network, a website or a social network:	
Block the network to all users and isolate the image	Send or print the image, move the material from one place to another.

The DSL role in searching devices, viewing and deleting imagery

The Education Act 2011 gives schools and/or teachers the power to seize and search an electronic device if they think there is good reason to do so i.e. if there is reason to believe it contains indecent images or extreme pornography. However, staff should exercise caution and bear the following in mind before searching a device:

- The action must be in accordance with the school's child protection policy, related policies and procedures e.g. ICT / Online safety, anti-bullying, positive behaviour.
- Any search should only be conducted following authorisation by the Head Teacher

Imagery will only be viewed by the DSL when it;

- is the only way to make a decision about whether to involve other agencies (i.e. it is not possible to establish the facts from the young people involved)
- is necessary to report the image to a website, app or suitable reporting agency to have it taken down, or to support the young person or parent in making a report.
- is unavoidable because a pupil has presented an image directly to the DSL or the imagery has been found on a school device or network.

If it is necessary to view the imagery then the DSL will:

- Never copy, print or share the imagery; this is illegal.
- Discuss the decision with the Head teacher.
- Ensure viewing is undertaken by the DSL or another member of the safeguarding team with delegated authority from the Head teacher.
- Ensure viewing takes place with another member of staff present in the room, ideally the Head teacher or a member of the senior leadership team. This staff member does not need to view the images.
- Wherever possible ensure viewing takes place on school or college premises, ideally in the Head teacher or a member of the senior leadership team's office.
- Ensure wherever possible that images are viewed by a staff member of the same sex as the young person in the imagery.

- Record the viewing of the imagery in the school's safeguarding records including who was present, why the image was viewed and any subsequent actions.

Deleting Imagery

If the DSL decides that other agencies do not need to be involved, then consideration will be given to deleting the image from the device[s] to limit any further sharing of images. The DSL will record this action with a clear rationale as to why this action was taken. This will be within the concern/referral section of the Aspris Group Safeguarding database.

Children who are absent from Education

At The Ribble Autism School, we recognise that children who are absent from education particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance misuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage.

In our school, we have an emergency contact list with at least two named people on it. On an annual basis ready for the new school year, we update that contact list by sending out the data request pro forma to parents and carers.

The school will follow up any unauthorised absence. The initial enquiry will be by 10 am on the first day of non-attendance where there has been no contact from the parent or carer to explain the reason for the absence.

- Where it has not been possible to make contact, the other numbers on the contact list will be tried.
- Where no contact has been made by day 2, the school will conduct an unannounced home visit on day 2.
- Where no contact is made, the person undertaking the home visit will make enquiries of neighbours.
- Further checks including checking with any other known relatives, landlords – private or social housing providers – and other local stakeholders who are involved. This will be both via phone and via home visits.
- Where a child has been absent and no contact made by day 2, the matter will be recorded on the Aspris Group Safeguarding database as a concern and within the chronology of contacts all contact with relatives, neighbours, landlords and other local stakeholders will be recorded in the chronology of contacts.
- If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care (and the police if appropriate).

Our school will follow the relevant Local Authority agreement for reporting for children who fail to attend without the school's permission for a period of 10 days or more or who regularly fail to attend. The school will refer to [Working Together to Improve Attendance](#) document from the DfE in the case of children who are absent from education for prolonged periods.

Young Carers

A young carer is a child under 18 years who helps to look after a relative who has a condition such as a disability, mental health issue, substance misuse problem or illness. In the majority of cases, young carers will care for someone in their immediate family e.g. a parent or sibling.

Care responsibilities can include:

- Washing, dressing or other intimate care
- Personal Inc. giving medication, changing dressings etc.
- Feeding
- Household chores
- Childcare responsibilities

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of being homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. This can be a child or their family being made or being at risk of homelessness or a young person who aged 16 or 17 living independently from their parents or guardians.

Indicators can be:

- Household debt
- Rent arrears
- Domestic abuse
- A family being asked to leave a property
- Anti-social behaviour

Where there are concerns about homelessness or the risk of it, the DSL will make referrals to the Local Housing Authority at the earliest opportunity. Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of significant harm, a referral will also be made to Children's Social Care.

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, the rights of young carers was significantly strengthened and all young carers have the right to an assessment regardless of who they care for, how often and when. An assessment can also be undertaken without a request on the 'appearance of need' basis.

Local Authorities must:

- Take a whole family approach to assessing and supporting adults so that young carer's needs are identified when undertaking an adult or adult carer's needs assessment;
- Ensure that adult and children's social care services work together to ensure effective assessment.

<http://www.lancashirechildrenstrust.org.uk/>

Further resources are available at:

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/young-carers-and-carers-of-children-under-18>

9. INTERNAL REPORTING

- 9.1 All safeguarding incidents and allegations of abuse will be reported on the Corporate Governance Incident Reporting System. A note will be made of whether the incident is disclosure of a historical event or whether it is a current issue that has happened whilst the child is the responsibility of The Ribble Autism School staff. A register of all safeguarding incidents will be kept centrally via this reporting system.
- 9.2 If an incident has been discussed with the local Children's Services Department (i.e. Designated Lead), the advice of the local Children's Services Department will be acted upon. A log of these discussions are maintained in the safeguarding file alongside a chronology of actions taken.
- 9.3 Staff who suspect any form of child abuse or safeguarding issue should discuss their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer or in their absence discuss with senior staff members.

10. DISCLOSURE OR DISCOVERY OF ABUSE OR ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

10.1 Step by Step Guide

- (a) Listen to what the person who is alleging abuse has to say.
 - (b) Advise the person alleging abuse what will happen next
 - (c) Never ask leading questions about the alleged abuse.
 - (d) Report any allegations or suspicions of abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. In his/her absence, consult the next senior member of staff available.
 - (e) Record:
 - i. All details and times of conversations and telephone calls.
 - ii. Names of staff present at the time.
 - iii. Any other relevant information. (See appendix for checklist)
 - (a) Remember, speed is essential Record in detail the circumstances, including the nature and extent of any injuries and any action taken.
 - (b) Keep records up to date, to evidence outcomes or further work required.
 - (c) Refer the case to the local Children's Services Department and take their advice on what to do next as delays in reporting abuse can have serious consequences for an abused child.
- 10.2 In the event of, or knowledge of abuse of children at the school by a member of staff, employees should use the following procedures:
- (a) Consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will liaise with the local Children's Services Dept, (i.e. the Local Authority Designated Officer) either to seek advice or to make a referral as either a child in need or a child in need of protection.
 - (b) Record in detail the circumstances, including the nature and extent of any injuries and any action taken including any immediate medical assistance required.

- 10.3 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, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) if they have concerns about a child.
- 10.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that the following procedures are carried out where abuse is suspected or alleged:
- 10.5 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be the point of contact for all matters concerning a particular case and he/she will liaise with the local Children's Services Department and co-ordinate any actions that they prescribe or recommend.
- 10.6 Staff may be required to contribute to an initial case conference set up by the Children's Services Department either by providing a report or by attendance.
- 10.7 Historical abuse will always be discussed with the local Children's Services Department as the perpetrator could still be in a position to abuse children and the child or young person who disclosed may require support.
- 10.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that concerns are fully and accurately recorded on the Incident Reports. These, along with other reports or details regarding any allegation or incident of abuse, will be kept securely and confidentially by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 10.9 The Regional Director is responsible for undertaking all such duties described above in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 10.10 A case file will be commenced in relation to each allegation. These will include a chronology of all actions taken, copies of all relevant information and relevant correspondence. These will be signed off by Regional Director/ Headteacher once the case is closed, with a full summary report available.

11. REFERRALS TO THE LOCAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT

- 11.1 The Ribble Autism School will use the documentation provided by or agreed with the Lancashire Children's Services Department to make referrals. Any referral that is made to the Children's Services Department must also be made to the relevant regulatory body.

12. PUPILS IN WORKPLACE PLACEMENTS

- 12.1 There are occasions when children are placed in settings outside of their normal educational/residential setting. This might be as work experience, or under the increasing flexibility agenda or alternative provision arrangements.
- 12.2 The teachers at The Ribble Autism School organising placements need to ensure that local procedures are in place to protect children from harm, focusing greatest protection on settings in which children may be most at risk, for example when children are placed for long periods in one to one situations with an adult. Employers and training organisations need to be made

aware of safeguarding issues and asked to co-operate in putting appropriate safeguards in place. The safety of the pupil remains the responsibility of the site making the placement and therefore The Ribble Autism School staff will need to continue to undertake regular risk assessments.

- 12.3 Additional safeguards will be necessary for placements that are in the same workplace when one or more of the following conditions apply.

The placement is:

- (a) For more than one day per week
- (b) For longer than one term in any academic year
- (c) Aimed at children who may be vulnerable, e.g. those who have special needs, or are young (aged under 16)
- (d) One where the workplace supervisor or a colleague will have substantial unsupervised access to the child, because of the nature of the business (i.e. micro business, sole trader or journeyman)

Or

- (e) Has a residential component.

- 12.4 If any of the above conditions apply, the following safeguards should be in place:

- (a) The teachers at The Ribble Autism School who arrange, vet, or monitor work placements should have had training in safeguarding.
- (b) Training organisations or employers taking responsibility for a child or children on a long term placement should be asked to make a commitment to safeguarding their welfare by endorsing an agreed safeguarding policy or statement of principles.
- (c) Any person whose normal duties will include regularly caring for, training, looking after or supervising a child in the workplace should be vetted and subject to DBS checks to ensure she/he is not disqualified from working with children or otherwise unsuitable to be responsible for them.
- (d) **N.B.** this should not include people who will have contact with the child simply because she/he will be in the same location, or as part of their work. It is intended to apply to people who are specifically designated to have responsibility for looking after, supervising or directly training a child or children throughout the placement. Checks should normally be arranged by the organisation arranging the placement, through the LA, School or FE institution, and the person should be regarded as a volunteer for the purpose of the check. The results of these checks will be recorded on the institution's Single Central Register.
- (e) That person should also be given basic child protection training by the placing institution to be aware of their responsibilities in accordance with "*What to do if you're worried a child is being abused*". They should be given details of a person to contact at the institution in the event that there are any concerns about a child for whom they are responsible.

- (f) Local Authority policies and procedures should define what actions need to be taken by whom and when if any child protection issues are raised prior, during or after the placement.
- (g) In some cases it is also important to ensure that the child/pupil concerned is suitable for the placement (for example, when placing children in environments involving them working with younger children) and in some circumstances DBS checks may be required. **N.B. DBS** checks would not normally be appropriate for pupils taking Applied GCSE in Health and Social Care

13. PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS

- 13.1 The The Ribble Autism School behaviour support policy adheres to the Aspris Behaviour and Discipline policy regarding the use of physical interventions.
- 13.2 Physical interventions will only be carried out by staff who have completed training in Team Teach session. This is refreshed annually in accordance with legislation. Physical intervention is used ONLY in accordance with individual children's behaviour support plans.
- 13.3 In the event of a serious incident where there is significant risk or harm or damage to property, staff have a duty to use reasonable, necessary and proportionate force to keep the child safe. Consent to intervene as appropriate is granted by the Headteacher once a person assumes any role in the school.
- 13.4 The Department of Health and Department for Education have issued joint guidance on the use of physical intervention. Where it has been used, a full record of the incident must be made, and if serious the appropriate authorities informed (Primary Care Trust/Local Authority/Local Safeguarding Children's Board). In exceptional cases the appropriate regulatory body should also be advised (Ofsted) by the Headteacher, in consultation with the Regional Director.

The Equality Act

- 14.1 Confirmation that provisions within the Equality Act allow schools to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils or pupils with certain protected characteristics in order to meet their specific need.

A school could, for example, consider taking positive action to support girls if there was evidence they were being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or sexual harassment. There is also a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – Role description for Designated Safeguarding Leads

APPENDIX 2 – List of relevant policies/ documents/ legislation

APPENDIX 3 – Report Writing Checklist

APPENDIX 4 – Safeguarding flow chart for staff

APPENDIX 5 – Safeguarding flow chart for YP

APPENDIX 6 – Safeguarding Concerns Form

APPENDIX 1

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024 states "It is a matter for schools and colleges as to whether they choose to have one or more deputy designated lead(s). Any deputy must be trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead."

"Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate **lead responsibility** for child protection...remains with the designated safeguarding lead; this **lead responsibility** should not be delegated."

The role of the designated Safeguarding Officer on sites where children are accommodated, cared for or educated should include, as a minimum, the following:

- (a) Undertake training and updates to the level specified
- (b) Monitor (and if appropriate, deliver) safeguarding training of colleagues on site and ensure it is of good quality, up to date and meets the requirements of the regulator and Aspris group policy.
- (c) Communicate changes to procedures/documentation to colleagues
- (d) Ensure that their own knowledge of safeguarding legislation and guidance is up to date
- (e) Ensure site colleagues are up-to-date and informed on specific and topical safeguarding issues e.g. CSE, social media
- (f) Assist/advise other colleagues on safeguarding issues
- (g) Be aware of what situations require referral to the local Safeguarding team
- (h) Understand and advise other colleagues on referral processes
- (i) Ensure that clear and accurate records of incidents are kept and follow-up is timely and thorough
- (j) Provide reports for relevant local management and governance meetings that monitor safeguarding and analyse the effectiveness of policies and procedures
- (k) Input into the development of local safeguarding procedures
- (l) Share learnings from safeguarding incidents
- (m) Take a lead role with the Local Safeguarding agencies and provide the link from the site
- (n) Share best practice and lessons learnt through regular contact across the division and Aspris Group.

Appendix 2

Relevant Policies:

Aspris Policy Safeguarding Children

Aspris Policy Safeguarding Children

Aspris Policy Health and Safety, including E-safety

Aspris Policy Visitors to Schools

Aspris Health Care Policy Arrangements for Visits by Children

Aspris Policy Visitors

The Ribble Autism School Positive Behaviour Management Policy

The Ribble Autism School Child Sexual Exploitation Policy

Relevant Documentation

Safeguarding Chronology

Ofsted Notification Form

DBS Referral form and Guidance

Relevant Legislation/ guidance

Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership; <http://www.lancashiresafeguarding.org.uk/https://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

'Working Together to Safeguard Children' DfE July 2018;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Keeping Children Safe in Education, Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (2020); updated September 2023
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020_-_Update_-_January_2021.pdf

The Prevent Duty Departmental advice for schools and childcare June 2015 providers;
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439598/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf

Guidance for Safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings May 2019; <https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/GSWP%20Sept%202019.pdf>

Information sharing, advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers. DfE July 2018; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>

Child Sexual Exploitation – Definition and a Guide (DfE 2017);

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners>

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015 – Advice for practitioners March 2015;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>

Multi – Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation (2016)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380125/MultiAgencyPracticeGuidelinesNov14.pdf

Teacher Standards (2012) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>

Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Inc. the 'Prevent Duty')

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/counter-terrorism-and-security-bill>

Serious Crime Act (2015) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/9/contents/enacted>

Children and Social Work Act 2017 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents/enacted>

The Data Protection Act 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/data-protection-act-2018>

Sexual Violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges. May 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-violence-and-sexual-harassment-between-children-in-schools-and-colleges>

Children Missing Education September 2016 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

Child Marriage [Forced marriage - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

County Lines [County Lines Toolkit For Professionals | The Children's Society \(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](#)

Farrer & Co [addressing-child-on-child-abuse.pdf \(farrer.co.uk\)](#)

CSA Centre [Supporting practice in tackling child sexual abuse - CSA Centre](#)

DfE [Filtering and monitoring standards](#)

DfE [Cyber security standards](#)

DfE [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Children Act 1989

Children Act 2004

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

The Education Act 2002

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

The Education (Non-maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 2011

United Nations Conference on the Rights of the Child

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused

Providing Effective Supervision, Skills for Care and CWDC 2007

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

APPENDIX 3

Checklist for Report Writing

- Reports **MUST** be written in black ink
- Reports should state what was occurring prior to the disclosure (set the scene)
- Reports should mention any witnesses present
- Errors or amendments must be struck through with one line and initialled by the author
- Reports should not include abbreviations, slang or jargon, **UNLESS** they were used by the Individual making the disclosure
- The date and time that the report was written are recorded as well as the date and time of the disclosure
- You have signed the record and printed your name clearly below the signature
- Any professional qualification you hold is recorded, along with your job title
- The report should be written on a fresh, clean piece of paper
- The report should not include any assumptions or judgements, only **FACTS**

Staff member to ensure that the young person is safe, and if appropriate offer them complaints procedure/ to speak to the police/ EDT. Staff will inform Head of Ed, Principal, and then complete a safeguarding referral form, which needs to be cross referenced and discussed in hand over - only if necessary, otherwise it should be sealed in an envelope for the manager. *This should happen immediately/ before end of school day.*



The DSL will advise on the necessary course of action to be taken. They will commence a chronology and case file as well as recording actions on on call log. It is the responsibility of the Head of Ed, Principal to contact social services/ EDT/ police/ deter team (in cases of CSE). Parents must also be informed unless the allegation has been made about them. *This should happen immediately/ before end of school day.*



DSL to peruse all documentation, including statements/ communication logs at first available opportunity, and complete an Ofsted notification form in line with Department for Education- Notification of a serious event. If the allegation is against a member of staff or relates to marks on a child or young person, it will be discussed with the DSL. Individual's social workers will be updated on actions taken. Where applicable Individual Risk Assessments and Placement Plans will be updated. *Follow Up's will take place within 24 hours of original disclosure/ allegation.*



During the follow up period (*after 24hrs*) relevant and necessary information will be shared with the staff team, and a debriefing will take place which will go on file for signing. Individual sessions will take place to ensure young people are kept informed as appropriate. Strategy meetings will take place. Updates will be sent to Ofsted, Social workers etc.



Lessons learnt meetings take place, and lessons are considered in relation to ALL children and young people.

If you think that you or someone you care about is being abused, you should always tell someone, like a member of staff, your mum or dad, your social worker or the police. It's their job to keep you safe.



If you decide to talk to a member of staff they will act quickly to make sure you are safe. They will listen to you, be honest and they will speak to the professionals that need to know, so that they can keep you safe and help you too.



Your concern will be dealt with by a qualified social worker who will come and see you as soon as possible. The social worker will decide what to do about your concern. Staff will help you where they can.



An assessment will be completed, which is a plan to keep you safe and will make sure you get the help you need. You will be kept informed of what is happening all of the way through the process and who is there to help and support you.

The Ribble Autism School - Initial Safeguarding Concerns Form

Please complete this form if you have any concerns about the safety, wellbeing or care of a child in our school.

The completed form should then be handed in person to the designated safeguarding officer for the school who will respond appropriately to your concern.

Young Person's name:			Name of person completing the form:				Date & Time:	
Please tick the box that best describes your concern	I am very worried that the child may suffer significant harm in the immediate future.	I have concerns that the child may be suffering physical abuse.	I have concerns that the child may be suffering sexual abuse.	I have concerns that the child may be suffering emotional abuse.	I have concerns that the child's needs are being neglected.	I have concerns that the child is witnessing domestic abuse.	I have concerns the child may be vulnerable to radicalisation.	
What is the nature of your concern? (If the child has made a disclosure please quote as accurately as possible)								
Received by:		Signed:				Date:		

SAFEGUARDING TEAM USE ONLY	
Immediate action	Sign and date:
Follow up action	
Actions for the future	
Review:	