



Worcestershire Virtual School (Interim) Safeguarding Policy

November 2022

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“Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility”

This policy is informed by;

Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (July 2018)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf

Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges [Keeping children safe in education 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2022.pdf)

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five (Sept 2021)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf

Regional Child Protection Procedures for West Midlands 2021

<http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/>

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership [WSCP]

<https://www.safeguardingworcestershire.org.uk/>

In addition:

The Virtual School will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

The Children Act 1989

The Children Act 2004

Education Act 2002 (section 175)

The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005

Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined 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.

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

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parents refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

Victim refers to those who have been subjected to abuse. It is important to recognise that not every victim considers themselves as such or would want to be described in this way. Ultimately, the Virtual School should be conscious of this when managing any incident and be prepared to use any term with which the individual child is most comfortable.

(Alleged) Perpetrator(s) is defined as person who carries out a harmful, illegal, or immoral act. Cautious use of this term should be made as in some cases the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well. The Virtual School will think very carefully about terminology, especially when speaking in front of children. As above, the use of appropriate terminology will be agreed on a case-by-case basis.

Safeguarding Principles within Worcestershire Virtual School

Our Principles

The purpose of this document is to provide Policy and procedure for all staff in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of those pupils who are part of the Worcestershire Virtual School (WVS). WVS recognises that the safety and welfare of children is paramount and that we all have a responsibility to protect children in all of our schools'. We take all reasonable steps to ensure, through appropriate procedures and training, that all children, irrespective of sex, age, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual identity or social status, are protected from abuse. We will seek to:

- Ensure our children are placed within schools that create a safe and welcoming environment where children can learn.
- Support and encourage other groups and organisations to implement similar policies.
- Recognise that safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone, not just those who work with children.
- Ensure that any training or events are managed to the highest possible safety standards.
- Review ways of working to incorporate best practice, including this policy being regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current best practice and Government expectations.
- Treat all children with respect regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.
- Following our Safer Recruitment processes, carefully recruit and select appropriate employees, contractors and volunteers.
- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all complaints and concerns about poor practice or suspected or actual child abuse.
- Share information about concerns with agencies who need to know, involving parents, carers and children appropriately and follow these concerns up until resolved.
- WVS maintains an attitude of 'it could happen here' at all times, and staff are required to 'think beyond the obvious'. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child and have a responsibility to take action as outlined in this policy. They take account of the 'one chance rule' in relation to honour violence based issues, that an adult may have only one opportunity to save a potential victim.

Worcestershire Virtual School recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding children and young people and protecting them from harm. This safeguarding policy is regularly reviewed, where appropriate, and updated annually by the Worcestershire Virtual School Head (VSH)/Team and the Worcestershire Virtual School Governing Body.

Safeguarding children and young people is defined as:

- The actions we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.
- These actions are everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play. All WVS staff who work with children and young people are trained annually in safeguarding and child protection.
- Our ethos is that the effective safeguarding of children/young people can only be achieved by putting them at the centre of a system where we listen and hear what they say. Every individual within our school will play their part, including working with professionals from other agencies, to meet the needs of our vulnerable children/young people and keep them

safe. We will be vigilant in our work with children and young people and will respond with appropriate action in a timely manner for those children who may need help or be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

- All staff are encouraged to report any concerns that they have and not see these as insignificant. On occasions, a referral is justified by a single incident such as an injury or disclosure of abuse. More often however, concerns accumulate over a period of time and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm over time; this is particularly true in cases of emotional abuse and neglect. In these circumstances, it is crucial that staff record and pass on concerns in accordance with this policy to allow the DSL within each team to build up a picture and access support for the child at the earliest opportunity. A reliance on memory without accurate and contemporaneous records of concern could lead to a failure to protect.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined 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
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children and young people from deliberate harm. It also relates to broader aspects of care and education including:

- Pupils' health and safety and well-being, including their mental health
- Meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- The use of reasonable force
- Meeting the needs of children with medical conditions
- Providing first aid
- Educational visits
- Intimate care
- Emotional wellbeing
- Online safety and associated issues

Safeguarding can involve a range of potential issues such as:

- Neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse (domestic abuse)
- Bullying, including online bullying (by text message, on social networking sites, etc.) and prejudice based bullying
- Racist abuse, abuse of people with a disability abuse targeted at children who are LGBTQ+
- Gender based violence/violence against women and girls
- Extremist behaviour and/or radicalisation
- Child sexual exploitation and trafficking
- The impact of new technologies, including 'sexting' and accessing pornography
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Substance misuse
- Issues which may be specific to a local area or population, for example gang activity and youth violence
- Particular issues affecting children including domestic violence, female genital mutilation and honour based violence and forced marriage.

In our work we:

- Treat all children/young people with respect regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity
- Work to the guidance provided by Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership
- Ensure that any training or events are managed to the highest possible safety standards
- Review ways of working to incorporate best practice. Including this policy being regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current best practice and Government expectations
- Carefully recruit and select all employees, contractors and volunteers.
- Respond swiftly and appropriately to all complaints and concerns about poor practice or suspected or actual child abuse
- Follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff and that such procedures are robust to deal with any allegation and that clear records of investigations and outcomes of allegations are held on staff files
- Risk-assess any off-site activity, led by the WVS
- Share information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

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

Sharing Concerns

Where WVS staff members have concerns about a child/young person, they will decide what action is to be taken in the first instance with the team Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). When concerns arise whilst working in a school/setting (inc. alternative provisions)/provider, the member of WVS will follow the school/setting (inc. alternative provisions)/provider's safeguarding policy and refer to the DSL on site but will also immediately raise the concern with the WVS team DSL.

Appendix B outlines the escalation process.

DSLs for WVS

The DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) within the Virtual School is;

Kerry Lawrence

klawrence5@worcschildrenfirst.gov.uk Tel: 01905 843966

The Deputy DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) within the Virtual School is;

Matthew Stiles

mstiles@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk Tel: 01905 643262

Child Abuse

There are four types of child abuse as defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018).

Physical Abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning/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.

Emotional Abuse (Domestic abuse)

Is 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 children 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 what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the 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.

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact or non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (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.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may include a failure to:

Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter.

Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.

Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or

Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

In addition, there are a number of behaviours or issues that the WVS is aware of and works to prevent:

Bullying

Bullying is "behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally". (DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", July 2017) Bullying can include: name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos. Bullying can be a form of child-on-child abuse and can be emotionally abusive; it can cause severe and adverse effects on childrens' emotional development.

Bullying and forms of bullying including prejudice based and cyber bullying is abusive and will include at least one, if not two, three or all four, of the defined categories of abuse.

E-Safety

Mobile phones, laptops, iPads, and other on-line type products are integrated into all our lives. Many are used within our school/setting (inc. alternative provisions)/providers. However, there are those that seek to use these for their own or others gratification. The WVS team are vigilant and responsive to any signs of inappropriate use of technology by or against children and young people and will raise any concerns with the WVS DSL.

The Virtual School will support and challenge school/setting (inc. alternative provisions)/providers to ensure that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. Schools/settings (inc. alternative provisions)/providers should have an effective whole school/setting (inc. alternative provisions)/provider approach to online safety which empowers them, to protect and educate children, pupils, students, our staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.

- **contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes’.
- **conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **commerce** - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group

Online safety should be an on-going and interrelated theme that is considered when planning the curriculum, any staff training, the role and responsibilities of the designated safeguarding lead and engaging with parents to raise an awareness in order to support their children.

Further resources can be found at;

[Online Safety for Children - Tips & Guides | NSPCC](#)

[E Safety Facts - Staying Safe Online | SWGfL](#)

[Staying safe online | Childline](#)

[Internet safety for children | Keep your child safe online - CBeebies - BBC](#)

Child-on-Child including Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

All our staff are aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer-on-peer abuse or **child-on-child**) and that it can happen both inside and outside of a school/setting (inc. alternative provisions)/provider and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports. All staff have read;

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

All our staff understand, that even if there are no reports in a school/setting (inc. alternative provisions) or provider it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if there are **any** concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

All our staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boy being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;(this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);

- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes' images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- up-skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

This abuse can:

- Be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences
- Result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim; vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm

Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs e.g.:

- Significant disruption in their own lives
- Exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse
- Educational under-achievement
- Involved in crime

WVS staff are aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from the school/setting (inc. alternative provisions)/provider, 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, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation

The WVS team are aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from a school/setting (inc. alternative provisions)/provider, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery. Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.

Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

For detailed information on what sexual violence and sexual harassment constitutes, important context to be aware of, related legal responsibilities for school/setting (inc. alternative provisions)/providers, advice on a whole school/setting (inc. alternative provisions)/providers approach to preventing child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment and more detailed advice on responding to reports see departmental advice:

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges.

Action following a report of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment (SVSH)

The WVS staff will support schools/colleges/other providers to consistently follow their own policy on SVSH.

Staff are aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

What is sexual violence and sexual harassment? It is important that school’s/setting’s (inc. alternative provisions)/provider’s staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

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.

What is consent? Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of 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.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- 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 (schools/settings (inc. alternative provisions)/providers should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. 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; and up skirting.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

All suspected or actual cases of CSE are a Safeguarding concern in which Child Protection procedures must be followed. If any staff are concerned about a pupil, they must refer to the DSL and the CSE lead within the school/setting (inc. alternative provisions)/provider where the child or young person is on roll as well as sharing the information with the WVS DSL.

Radicalisation/PREVENT

The WVS safeguarding lead will ensure all staff adhere to their duties in the Prevent guidance 2015 to prevent radicalisation

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty>

The WVS team DSLs will;

- Ensure staff understand the risk and build capabilities to deal with issues arising

- Communicate the importance of the duty
- Ensure all staff implement the duty

The WVS team DSLs will respond to any concern about Radicalisation/Prevent as a Safeguarding concern and will report in the usual way using Worcestershire local safeguarding procedures; https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20003/council_democracy_and_councillor_information/1244/prevention_of_extremism_and_radicalisation

If out of county, refer to the local Prevention of extremism and radicalisation procedures. These procedures should be available through the local safeguarding board or via the school/setting (inc. alternative provisions)/provider's DSL.

We will seek to work in partnership, undertaking risk assessments where appropriate and proportionate to risk, building our children's resilience to radicalisation. The WVS team DSLs will inform the WCF EDUCATION Safeguarding advisor of any concerns regarding radicalisation that have been reported.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The WVS team recognise and understands that there is now a mandatory reporting duty for all teachers to report to the police where it is believed an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 in the UK. Failure to do so may result in legal/disciplinary action being taken.

All suspected or actual cases of FGM are a safeguarding concern in which safeguarding procedures will be followed; this will include a referral to the police and to Children's Social Care via Family Front Door. If any staff are concerned about a pupil, they will refer to the DSL within the school/setting (inc. alternative provisions)/provider unless there is a good reason not to do so.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges.

The WVS team recognise that additional barriers can exist when identifying abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- The potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

The individual needs of every child/young person with special educational needs or disability will be reviewed regularly and consideration given to any additional vulnerabilities they may have which could lead to safety and welfare concerns arising. Should any concerns arise in relation to any child in relation to their safety and welfare the WVS DSL will immediately liaise with the WCF Education Safeguarding Advisor and Head of the SEND services.

Children Missing Education

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored by the WCF Vulnerable Learners team. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The WCF Vulnerable Learners will take appropriate action, liaising with social care and the educational placement as well as following local procedures, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the day. Please see the Worcestershire Children First (WCF) Children Missing Education Policy for further information. Individual Education providers are responsible for publishing their own Attendance Policies and reference should be made to these where there are concerns.

Alternative Provision

Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the provider meets the needs of the pupil.

Schools should obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been conducted on individuals working at the establishment, i.e., those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff. This will be confirmed with the school during the PEP process.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. No adult must ever guarantee confidentiality to any individual including parents, children and colleagues. Staff should make children aware that if they disclose information that may be harmful to themselves or others, then certain actions will need to be taken.

Wherever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances, obtaining consent may not be possible or in the best interest of the child or young person, e.g. where safety and welfare of that child or young person necessitates that the information should be shared. The law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or children. Disclosure should be justifiable in each case, according to the particular facts of the case, and legal advice should be sought if in doubt.

Record Keeping

All documents should be recorded and stored in accordance with Worcestershire's GDPR policies. Well-kept records are essential to good safeguarding and child protection practice. We are clear about the need to record concerns held about children or young people, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies. Concerns should be recorded on the proforma in appendix A.

In our work with children and their families, we recognise the importance of:

- Keeping clear detailed up to date written records of concerns about children and young people. This includes a chronology.
- Ensuring all records are kept secure
- Ensuring all records are clear, factual and jargon free.

- All concerns raised remain 'live' until a secure outcome/resolution has been reached.

A record of concern should be made and discussed with the WVS DSL, when it is identified that a concern exists and has not been resolved to a satisfactory point, when there is disagreement between professionals managing the concern, or when the concern has not been shared with the appropriate parties.

Allegations Against Staff

The WVS team will never let allegations by a child or young person go unrecorded or unreported, including any made against its own staff. If staff receive a disclosure, about an adult colleague, in all instances the WVSHT should be advised, and the child or young person made aware that their concern is being taken seriously.

The WVS DSL should be the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns, although it is recognised that depending on the nature of some low-level concerns and/or the role of the DSL, the WVS team member may wish to consult with the HT of the setting and take a more collaborative decision-making approach.

Staff training

All staff must undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction. The training should be regularly updated. Induction and training should be in line with any advice from the safeguarding partners.

In addition, there is a requirement that all staff should receive annual safeguarding and child protection training. Updates will be provided to ensure staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. This may be provided via email, e-bulletins or staff meetings

Working with other agencies/visits

The majority of the work of the WVS team involves working with a range of professionals and agencies. When any safeguarding concerns arise during visits to educational settings, the DSL of the setting/provider must be notified, and the setting's safeguarding and child protection procedures should be applied. In addition to this, any staff member must report this to the WVS DSL and follow these safeguarding procedures.

Useful Information

The Family Front Door, Initial Contact and Referral Team is the central point for all referrals for children and young people aged 0 to 18 years and living in Worcestershire where there is safeguarding, or child protection concerns for them.

This team receives referrals from professionals, members of the community, family members, children and young people directly. Please contact the Family Front Door directly telephone [01905 822666](tel:01905822666)

Children's Social Care respond to levels of need identified at level 4 of the Worcestershire LSCB levels of need guidance.

Please refer to the [Worcestershire LSCB levels of need guidance](#) for support in identifying the levels of need a child or young person has and the right referral pathway for that child or young person.

If you have an immediate concern about the safety and welfare of a child, please phone the Family Front Door directly on [01905 822666](#). You will be required to submit the information on a referral form following this as per the WLSCB procedure.

If you have a child protection concern outside of normal office hours, please contact our out of hours emergency duty team (EDT) telephone [01905 768020](#)

Appendix A - Logging a Concern about a Child's Safety and Welfare – all staff and visitors

Safeguarding concern template

| |
|---|
| Pupil's Name: |
| Date of Birth: |
| Year Group: |
| Date: |
| Time |
| Name: |
| Signature: |
| Position: |
| Note the reason(s) for recording the incident – <i>please identify the concern regarding this incident that has caused you to raise it with the WVS DSL.</i> |
| Details of concern/incident - record the who/what/where/when factually (use reverse or continuation sheet if necessary): |
| Any other relevant information (witnesses, immediate action taken) |
| Action taken - record and date any further updates/actions: |
| Reporting Staff signature & Date |
| DSL – Response/Outcome |
| DSL Signature & Date |

Appendix B

Guide to progressing a concern

When a safeguarding concern is shared, there is no further action required, if the information is shared for information purposes and you are confident that the concern has been appropriately addressed. However;

a) If a concern is raised by someone within a school/setting (inc. alternative provisions)/provider, the concern should immediately be shared with the relevant school/setting (inc. alternative provisions)/provider's DSL.

b) If a concern is raised via an alternative source, the information should be shared with the Social worker.

If there is any reason that sharing the concern via these routes may cause additional risk or concerns, refer immediately to the Virtual School DSL or dep DSL.

Next steps

1. Contact the team DSL or deputy DSL to discuss concerns and to identify actions.

2. Make a record of safeguarding concern and actions on **Safeguarding concern template**

(see Appendix A), including actions to be taken and a date to be followed up.

Save into U:\U161 CHS\U675 Virtual School Headteacher\G3 Mgt & Admin\Safeguarding\Safeguardingconcerns

3. Make a record in the 'Notes' section of the PEP, eg; '18/08/21 - Safeguarding concern raised with Virtual School DSL. Concern recorded in secure safeguarding file'.

4. Complete actions and follow up as identified on the record form. Continue to liaise with DSL until concern is concluded

5. DSL to transfer file to secure records.

Where there are concerns raised about adults that are working with children/young people, these allegations will be discussed with the LADO.

01905 846221

[Are you worried about an adult who works with children? | Are you worried about an adult who works with children? | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Where the course of action is not clear, or not agreed, advice will be sought from;

Denise Hannibal - Education Adviser - Safeguarding

Email: dhannibal@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk Tel No: 01905 844436 Mobile: 07825531295

Policy Author: Designated Safeguarding Lead of Worcestershire Virtual School
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