
Last reviewed: August 2025

Next review due: August 2026

Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy

Legislation and Guidance:

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023). We comply with this guidance and the safeguarding and child protection policies of the education settings in which our temporary workers may be placed.

Scope

This policy has been created to outline the clear safeguarding protocols for ALL staff at Connex Education Partnership. At Connex, we have staff working in a range of roles including, but not limited to, administration, consultancy, tuition, mentoring, and supply teaching. While we are not a registered education provider; it is vital that all staff – whether regularly coming into contact with children, young people or adults at risk or not – understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

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Safeguarding Statement

At Connex Education Partnership, we respect and value all children and adults at risk and we are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. This is the responsibility of every adult working for Connex Education Partnership.

Recruitment

At Connex Education Partnership we pride ourselves on embedding a culture and ethos of safeguarding across all areas of our work which includes the recruitment process for Connex employees and temporary workers. Key Connex employees have been trained in Safer Recruitment practices, while all temporary workers are made aware of our commitment to safeguarding through specific interview questions, online checks, safeguarding information in handbooks and online safeguarding training for all temporary workers.

Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined by the Department for Education as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.

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- Ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- 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 (both online and offline)

This policy relates not only to the safeguarding of children and young people but to young people who may still be in full-time education over the age of 18 years; and adults who may receive tuition for example.

The term 'adult at risk' is used in this policy to replace 'vulnerable adult'. This is because the term 'vulnerable adult' may wrongly imply that some of the fault for the abuse lies with the victim of abuse. We use 'adult at risk' as an exact replacement for 'vulnerable adult' as that phrase is used throughout existing government guidance.

Key aims of this policy are to ensure all temporary workers:

- Understand the different forms of abuse and the possible indications of abuse.
- Understand the importance of, rather than waiting for a problem to escalate, instead to take action early for children of all ages and at any stage, in order to improve a family's resilience and outcomes or reduces the chance of a problem getting worse.

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- Confidently use their professional curiosity to spot potential signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and take action to protect children.
- Understand the duty that is placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children and young people are competent, confident, and safe to do so.
- In working for Connex Education Partnership, understand they are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct that would lead a reasonable person to question their motivation or intention.
- Understand the role of their responsibilities for safeguarding children and their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- Are familiar with the steps to be taken in the event of becoming aware of, suspecting, or receiving allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation – including that which has an online element.
- Understand the requirement to understand and to follow the safeguarding policy of the education setting with which they are working

What is child abuse?

Child abuse happens when a person harms a child. It can be physical, sexual, or emotional. It can also involve neglect or exploitation. It can happen offline (e.g., in school, at home or within the local community), online or in many cases, a combination of the two. Therefore, those working with children must be vigilant to abuse in any form, via any means and by any individual. Abuse of children may be by:

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- Friends or Family members
- People working or volunteering in organisations or the community
- People they know
- Strangers
- Child on child

General signs of abuse

Children experiencing abuse often experience more than one type of abuse over a period and may be afraid to tell anyone about the abuse. They may struggle with feelings of guilt, shame, or confusion – especially if the abuser is a parent, family member or friend. While working with Connex Education, a child may make a disclosure about abuse, or signs of abuse or potential abuse may be observed. All temporary workers working with children or adults at risk need to be able to recognise the signs of abuse.

These include:

- Being afraid of particular places or making excuses to avoid particular people
- Knowing about or being involved in 'adult issues' which are inappropriate for their age or stage of development, for example alcohol, drugs/or sexual behaviour
- Having angry outbursts or behaving aggressively towards others
Becoming withdrawn or appearing anxious, clingy, or depressed

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- Becoming withdrawn or appearing anxious, clingy, or depressed
- Self-harming or having thoughts about suicide
- Showing changes in eating habits or developing eating disorders
- Regularly experiencing nightmares or sleep problems
- Regularly wetting the bed or soiling their clothes
- Running away or regularly going missing from home/care
- Not receiving adequate medical attention after injuries

Children who may be particularly vulnerable:

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. For instance, Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are often more dependent upon other people for support and therefore potentially more vulnerable to abuse. They may also be less able to express themselves or what is happening to them.

It is important to understand that this increase in risk is due more to societal attitudes and assumptions or child protection procedures that fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances, rather than the individual child's personality, impairment, or circumstances. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and a reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

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When working with children with SEND, it can be helpful to read the SEND Code of Practice which can be found here: SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

To ensure that all children and young people receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- homeless
- disabled or have special educational needs
- young Carers
- Looked After Children
- previously Looked After Children
- adopted Children
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic abuse, or parental mental health needs (known as Trio of Vulnerabilities or The Toxic Trio)
- asylum seekers
- experiencing mental health concerns
- or have experienced multiple suspensions, [are] at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
- living away from home
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- living in temporary accommodation
- live transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations

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- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, or sexuality
- at risk of sexual exploitation and/or criminal exploitation
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- at risk of forced marriage and so-called 'honour'-based abuse
- susceptible to being drawn into extremism
- absent or missing from education

In addition to the above, we will give special consideration to adults at risk who:

- are care leavers
- are affected by substance misuse
- have SEND

Types and definitions of Abuse – There are 4 main categories of abuse are:

1. Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. This is known as 'Fabricated or Induced Illness by Carers' or previously, 'Munchausen's by Proxy'.

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2. Sexual abuse:

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all temporary workers should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

Sexual Abuse in adults at risk:

When we consider the signs of sexual abuse in adults at risk, we need to keep in mind that consenting adults are legally able to engage in sexual activity if they wish to. We must therefore be conscious not to infantilise or desexualise adults at risk, particularly those with SEND.

Thus, consent becomes the main factor when we consider whether an adult is being sexually abused. Examples of sexual abuse in adults include (but are not limited to):

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- Rape, attempted rape or sexual assault
- Inappropriate touch anywhere, if non-consensual
- Non-consensual masturbation of either or both persons
- Non-consensual sexual penetration or attempted penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth
- Any sexual activity that the person lacks the capacity to consent to
- Inappropriate looking, sexual teasing or innuendo or sexual harassment
- Sexual photography or forced use of pornography or witnessing of sexual acts
- Indecent exposure
- In some cases, it may be sexual abuse if an adult at risk is provided with intimate personal care, when this is not always necessary. Adults and children with SEND and health issues should always be supported to independently provide for their own intimate care, where possible.

3. Emotional Abuse:

Emotional 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.

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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 cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. It is a form of emotional abuse for a child to witness or experience the abuse of others (including, for example, in cases of domestic abuse wherein a child should be considered a victim in their own right).

It can include humiliating or regularly criticising a child, shouting at or threatening a child or name calling, mocking or making them perform degrading acts. Trying to control a child's life and not recognising their individuality, not allowing a child to have friends or develop socially. It can involve manipulating a child, exposing a child to distressing events or interactions, persistently ignoring a child or being emotionally unavailable during interactions with a child.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Babies and pre-school children who are being emotionally abused may:

- Be overly affectionate towards strangers or people they haven't known for very long

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- Not appear to have close relationships with their parent, for example when being taken or collected from nursery
- Lack confidence or become wary or anxious
- Be unable to play
- Be aggressive or nasty towards other children and animals

Older children and/or adults at risk may:

- Use language, act in a way or know about things that you wouldn't expect for their age
- Struggle to control strong emotions or have extreme outbursts
- Show signs of depression, aggression, extreme anxiety, changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy
- Seem isolated from their parents/carers
- Lack social skill or have few, if any, friends
- Fear making mistakes
- Fear their parent/carer being approached regarding their behaviour
- Self-harm
- Display obsessive behaviours or phobias
- Display sudden underachievement or lack of concentration
- Seek adult attention and not mix well with other children
- Experience sleep or speech disorders

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- Make negative statements about themselves including those which sound as though they have originally come from someone else (i.e. using vocabulary the person would not usually use).
- Run away from home or school
- Display behaviours such as stealing and lying.

4. Neglect:

- Neglect is not meeting a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. This can result in serious damage to their health and development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer not:
 - providing adequate food, clothing or shelter
 - supervising a child or keeping them safe from harm or danger (including leaving them with unsuitable carers)
 - making sure the child received appropriate health and/or dental care
 - making sure the child receives a suitable education
 - meeting the child's basic emotional needs – this is known as emotional neglect

Bullying & cyberbullying:

Bullying is when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate, or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable.

Bullying includes:

- verbal abuse, such as name calling
- non-verbal abuse, such as hand signs or glaring
- emotional abuse, such as threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone
- exclusion, such as ignoring or isolating someone
- undermining, by constant criticism or spreading rumours
- controlling or manipulating someone
- racial, sexual or homophobic bullying
- physical assaults, such as hitting and pushing
- making silent, hoax or abusive calls

Bullying can be at school, home or online (often referred to as 'Cyber-bullying') and can involve social networks, games and mobile devices.

Cyberbullying includes:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- trolling – sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chatrooms or online
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- setting up hate sites or groups about a child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll

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- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause them problems

Child trafficking:

Child trafficking is child abuse; it involves recruiting and moving children who are then exploited. It can be international or within the UK. Children may be trafficked for the purposes of:

- Child exploitation (either sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation or both)
- Benefit fraud
- Forced marriage
- Domestic servitude
- Forced labour
- Criminal exploitation

Spotting the signs of child trafficking:

Signs that a child has been trafficked may not be obvious, but you might notice unusual behaviour or events. Children who have been trafficked may:

- have to do excessive housework chores
- rarely leave the house and have limited freedom of movement
- not have any kind of documents
- give a prepared story which is very similar to stories given by other children

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- be unable or reluctant to give details of accommodation or personal details
- not be registered with a school or GP practice
- have a history with missing links or unexplained moves
- be cared for by adults who are not their parents or carers
- be one among a number of unrelated children at an address

Adult Trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery

The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons ('Palermo Protocol') provided, in Article 3, the first internationally recognised definition of human trafficking which is cited in domestic case law:

"'Trafficking in persons' shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control of another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or removal of organs."

Human trafficking is an offence that covers the movement of a person or people from one place to another with the intent to exploit them.

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It is important to recognise that adults at risk may be more vulnerable to deception and coercion which can lead to being exploited and trafficked. Trafficking does not have to be between countries. Adults at risk may be trafficked from one part of a city to another, for example, for the purposes of exploitation.

Due to a wide range of reasons including higher levels of social isolation and barriers to work; adults at risk may be more likely to trust someone offering them work or financial opportunities. Thus, it may take some time before it becomes clear that a situation that was at first, consensual, has become exploitative and coercive.

Alongside the signs and indicators mentioned above (for children and young people), additional signs in adults at risk may include:

- a job opportunity or new friendship that appears 'too good to be true'
- the person acting and speaking as if they were instructed or coached by someone else
- The person appears to be short on cash despite having a job
- Seeming withdrawn or frightened
- An adult speaking of needing to 'repay a debt or favour' For more information, please read: [Human_Trafficking_practical_guidance.pdf](#) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

FGM involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non- medical reasons. It is also known as female circumcision or cutting. FGM is child abuse.

Mandatory reporting 2015

If FGM in an under 18 year old is 'known', seen or disclosed, this must be urgently reported to the POLICE.

Reporting Suspected or being at risk of FGM – Follow the usual Safeguarding procedure.

Worried about FGM?

Call the FGM helpline if you're worried a child is at risk of, or has had, FGM. It's free, anonymous open 24/7, call 0800 028 3550 or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Remember that FGM is always illegal and a form of abuse whether the victim is an adult or child.

If an adult at risk discloses having had – or being at risk of – FGM, this should be reported immediately to the Local Authority DSL and to the DSL at Connex Education Partnership.

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Forced Marriage:

This is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage whereby two consenting adults enter willingly into a marriage that has been arranged or 'set up' by friends, family or community members. In an arranged marriage, either party can choose to withdraw from the arrangement at any point.

Conversely, forced marriage happens when one or both participants are coerced into matrimony – without their free consent. They may have been emotionally blackmailed, physically threatened or abused.

Forced marriage is a CRIME. It is a form of violence against women and men, domestic abuse, a serious abuse of human rights, and where a minor is involved, child abuse.

All temporary workers must therefore remain vigilant regarding children getting married under the age of 18. Signs and indicators include (but are not limited to):

- A child getting engaged, wearing what appears to be an engagement ring or possessing other engagement gifts or jewelry.
- Discontinuation of education: A child abruptly stops attending the school or shows a sudden disinterest in education, which may indicate that they are preparing for marriage.
- Isolation: A child withdrawing from social activities, friends, and family or becoming more isolated from their usual social circles

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- Early pregnancy: If a child is pregnant or has given birth at a young age, it may be an indicator of child marriage.
- Reluctance to discuss marriage: A child may become evasive or uncomfortable discussing their marital status.

Remember that all children can be at risk of forced marriage or underage marriage. It is vital to avoid viewing this as an issue that only affects children from ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office unit which set up in January 2005 to lead on the Government's forced marriage policy, outreach, and casework. It operates both inside the UK, where support is provided to any individual, and overseas, where consular assistance is provided to British nationals, including dual nationals.

Contact

Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7008 0151 Email: fmufco.gov.uk

Email for outreach work: fmufco.gov.uk Facebook: Forced Marriage page.

Twitter: @FMUnit

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE):

CCE is 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 using technology.

Possible signs of CCE:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation.
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being.
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol.
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Children who regularly miss academy or education or do not take part in education.

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County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

According to The Children’s Society, CCE has become strongly associated with County Lines, but this is not the only model of child criminal exploitation. It can also include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs (often forced to insert drugs in their vagina or anus in a practice known as ‘plugging’) or money across the country, forced to commit financial fraud, forced to shoplift or pickpocket.

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Serious violence:

Serious Youth Violence is defined as 'any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime, where the victim is aged 1-19' i.e. murder, manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm. 'Youth violence' is defined in the same way, but also includes assault with injury offences.

Indicators which may signal that a child is at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime may include:

- Increased absence from school/academy
- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- 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 (this could indicate that the child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation (see above))

Risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include:

- Being male
- Having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from education
- Having experienced child maltreatment
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery

Grooming

Grooming is when a person builds a relationship with a child, young person or an adult at risk, so they can abuse them and manipulate them into doing things. The abuse is usually sexual and/or financial, but it can also include other illegal acts.

Types of grooming

Grooming can take place online or in person and it can happen over a short or long period of time – from days to years.

Online grooming:

Groomers are good at lying about who they are, particularly online where they can create a false identity and pretend to be younger than they are.

People can be groomed online through:

- Social media networks
- Text messages and messaging apps, like WhatsApp
- Email
- Text, voice and video chats in forums, games and apps

In-person grooming:

A groomer can be a stranger or someone the victim already knows and trusts, for example through a friend or family, or at a club they go to. It can be difficult to tell if someone is being groomed – the signs aren't always obvious and may be hidden.

Signs to look out for when it comes to grooming:

- Are they being secretive about how they're spending their time?
- Do they have an older boyfriend or girlfriend?
- Do they have money or new things like clothes and mobile phones that they can't or won't explain?
- Are they drinking or taking drugs?
- Are they spending more or less time than usual online or on their devices?
- Do they seem upset or withdrawn?
- Are they using sexual language you wouldn't expect them to know?
- Are they spending more time away from home or going missing for periods of time?
- Does a new friendship or relationship seem 'too good to be true'?
- For an adult with SEND, does there appear to be a noticeable imbalance of power between them and a new friend/partner?

A person won't know they're being groomed, they will trust their abuser who is giving them lots of attention and gifts. Also, their groomer may have warned them not to talk to anyone about it.

'Financially motivated Sexual Extortion' or 'Sextortion'

Sextortion is when children or adults at risk are forced into paying money or meeting another financial demand (such as purchasing a pre-paid gift card) after an offender has threatened to release sexual/indecent images of them.

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The sexual images do not even have to be real. They may be deep fake image or even just the threat that the offender has some images – even if they never evidence this to the young person or adult at risk.

Some sextortion might include the threat of sharing intimate information (such as that the young person or adult at risk HAS sent some nudes at some point to someone, or that they are sexually active)

Sextortion may take place just once or may become an ongoing pattern of abuse.

In 2024 for the first time, the National Crime Agency issued an alert to all education settings warning them of the rise in cases of Sextortion of children and young people. The NCA issued the alert due to a significant rise in cases, including a large proportion of cases involving male victims aged 14-18.

Signs and Indicators of Sextortion include:

- Stealing (from home, school, even their teachers and friends)
- Appearing to be in a rush to return home, or to retrieve their devices
- Panic about communications with parents/carers
- Secrecy about online activities (inc. hiding devices)
- Significant changes in behaviour e.g., mood swings, increased anxiety or anger, especially after using electronic devices or being online
- Excessive use of the internet inc. throughout the night or at set times of day

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- An unusual or sudden decline in academic performance, truanting, or loss of interest in school-related activities and even hobbies. Becoming increasingly withdrawn and appearing pre-occupied.
- Adults at risk may display unusual, sexualised behaviour (that is unusual for them) or signs of distress such as self-harm.

Staff should NOT:

- Blame or shame a victim of sextortion at any point. Perpetrators are highly skilled in manipulating their victims and it is never their fault
- Ask to view any images or force the child or adult at risk to describe what was in the images/videos
- Tell the victim (whether adult or child) to delete any images or delete them on their behalf

Sextortion is never legal and affects children, young people and adults at risk.

Connex Staff are to liaise immediately with the DSL at the education setting as well as the DSL at Connex Education.

Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school, within the local community and online.

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

- Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children and young people
- 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) Including AI-assisted images or images created using deepfake technology.
- Upskirting, 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

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- Downblousing, which typically involves taking a picture inside a person's clothing or from above, looking down their chest or cleavage without their permission and/or knowledge. This occurs with the intention of viewing their breasts or chest to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.
- 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)

Please note – even though these are examples of child-on-child abuse, these risks also affect adults. They are always abusive and, in most cases, illegal. Where children abuse other children online, this can take the form of, for example, abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages; the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups; and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content.

If Connex Education staff have any concerns about Child-on-Child abuse, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the procedures set out in this policy, as appropriate.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools:

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur:

- Between 2 children of any age and sex

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- Through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children
- Online and face to face (both physically and verbally)

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school.

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that Connex Education staff make sure they are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Maintaining the anonymity of the victim/s and alleged perpetrator/s in these cases is very important and Connex Education staff must ensure information is shared on a 'need-to-know' basis with the DSL at Connex Education and the DSL at the child's education setting.

They will endeavour to keep all details of the disclosure confidential and only share information with other professionals for the purposes of safeguarding the child/ren involved. Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ+) children are at greater risk.

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Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- Challenging inappropriate behaviours
- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts.

Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

When we consider safeguarding adults at risk from sexual violence and sexual harassment, it is important to keep in mind the issue of consent. Adults at risk may consensually engage in sexualised behaviour with one another and while inappropriate whilst in a learning environment, this does not constitute sexual violence or harassment.

If Connex staff have a concern that an adult at risk does not consent to – or is in any way harmed by – sexual behaviour, language or touch; it is vital that this is reported to the adult's key worker, Local Authority DSL and the DSL at Connex.

NB. If adults at risk are consensually engaging in sexualised behaviour whilst in a learning environment, it is appropriate to politely request that this behaviour stops. If this is not heeded, Connex staff may again report this behaviour.

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In line with KCSiE 2025, every education setting will provide a safe space for children who are part of the LGBTQ+ community to speak out and share any concerns they have with staff.

Although being LGBTQ+ is not a safeguarding concern in itself, staff must be aware that this group of young people can be at increased risk of other forms of abuse and exploitation including child-on-child abuse.

If Connex staff have any concerns relating to sexual violence or sexual harassment, they will speak with the DSL at Connex Education and the DSL at the child's education setting immediately.

Further guidance can be found within Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part 5.

Spotting the signs of child-on-child abuse:

Young people may:

- be absent from school or lack interest in school activities
- Have physical injuries which can't be explained
- Display mental or emotional health issues
- become withdrawn or showing lack of self esteem
- Appear sleepy or as though they have a lack of sleep
- Engage in alcohol or substance misuse
- Display sudden changes in behaviour
- Exhibit inappropriate behaviour
- show harmful behaviour towards others or self

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Please note: Connex Education has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse including homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, misogyny, misandry, sexual violence, and sexual harassment. Therefore, any concerns must be raised in line with procedures.

In line with guidance provided within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, we also recognise the risks that can face siblings of victims – and perpetrators – of sexual violence and sexual harassment.

These risks can include:

- Being victimised by online bullying
- Other forms of child-on-child abuse
- Sexual violence and/or sexual harassment being directed at them
- Impact upon their mental health

Keeping this in mind, Connex Education staff will share any concerns they have with the DSL at Connex Education and the DSL at the child's education setting.

Mental Health Concerns

Mental health concerns can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

- Staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

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- If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by reporting to the Connex Education DSL and the DSL in the education setting in which you are placed.
- If staff have a mental health concern that is not also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL to agree a course of action.
- Connex Education staff are not expected or trained to diagnose mental health conditions or issues but may notice behaviours that may be of concern.

Prevent, radicalisation and extremism:

In line with The Prevent Duty (2023), All professionals working with young people have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

- Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups
- Extremism

Please note. The definition of Extremism changed in March 2024 (New definition of extremism (2024) – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)) to the following:

'The promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to:

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

Terrorism is an action that:

- Endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people.
- Causes serious damage to property; or
- Seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system

The use or threat of terrorism 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.

Connex Education staff will be alert to changes in children, young people and adults at risk behaviour.

The government website Educate Against Hate and charity NSPCC say that signs that a child or adult is susceptible to being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance

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- Rejecting activities, they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

It should also be noted that children, young people and adults at risk may display extreme misogynistic views or subscribing to Incel ideologies. Signs and indicators of this may include:

- a sense of blame or hatred towards women and girls
- a sense of blame or hatred towards boys and men who are seen to be more physically attractive or confident
- a desire for revenge against women and girls for perceived 'rejection' (such as declining an offer of friendship or romantic relationship)
- a sense of entitlement towards sex and sexual relationships

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- Children who are susceptible to radicalisation may have low self-esteem or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour – staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.
- In the event of any concerns about a child, young person or adult learner's welfare should be raised immediately with the DSL at Connex Education and the DSL at the child's education setting who will follow their settings safeguarding procedure. Connex Education staff should always take action if they are worried.

Likewise, if a temporary worker notices that a child or adult at risk appears to be accessing extremist content online, this should be reported to the DSL at Connex Education and the DSL at the child's education setting (or in the case of adults at risk, their keyworker and the DSL at the LA). The online content can be reported via the government website: Report online material promoting terrorism or extremism. – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Private Fostering:

There is a mandatory duty on education settings to inform their local authority of a private fostering arrangement (PFA) they are aware of.

Therefore, in our work with schools and academies, Connex education staff are expected to be aware of what constitutes a 'Private Fostering Arrangement' and report to the DSL at Connex Education and the DSL at the child's education setting if they become aware of or suspect a PFA.

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A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and stepparents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence. Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country.

In some cases, privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or be involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

Connex Education staff must advise the DSL of the education setting when they become aware of a change of living circumstances for any child. As outlined previously, they should notify the DSL when they become aware of private fostering arrangements.

The DSL will then speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the LA. The education setting itself has a duty to inform the local authority of the private fostering arrangements.

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Signs and indicators a child is affected by a PFA:

- A child mentioning their parents/carers being abroad or working away
- A child lacking correct equipment or uniform
- A child mentioning staying with someone that you have not heard of before
- A child being late to school because they have travelled further than usual or are unfamiliar with the journey
- A child being nervous about parents/carers being contacted

Safeguarding Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children

For more information, please read:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181669/DFE-RR043.pdf

Children in Whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced (formerly known as Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy)

This is a form of child abuse in which the parents or carers give false accounts of symptoms in their children and may fake signs of illness (to draw attention to themselves). They seek repeated medical investigations and needless treatment for their children. The government guidance on this is found in 'Safeguarding Children in whom illness is Fabricated or Induced' (15th March 2008). All suspicions of the above, must reported to the DSL.

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Spiritual Abuse

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or Religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes their will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed.

They may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.

All suspicions of the above, must be reported to the DSL.

Online Safety

Young people increasingly use electronic equipment daily to access the internet and share content and images via social networking sites such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok.

Unfortunately, some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face- to-face meetings.

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Pupils may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate websites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behaviour, and criminal activity. Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk as outlined in KCSiE 2025:

- Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism
- Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as child-to-child 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, such as 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

It is vital to recognise that online safety harms are no less harmful than 'offline' harms. The impact upon children and young people can be just as harmful and long-lasting. In fact, technology can often facilitate offline abuse and abuse can take place online and offline concurrently.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, all schools and education settings have a responsibility to implement effective filtering and monitoring

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systems on their devices to ensure the safety of children online. These should be analysed and assessed regularly to ensure their effectiveness and to guard against 'over-blocking' which can lead to children being unable to access important and useful information needed for their education.

More information about the responsibilities of education settings can be found here: Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges – Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges – Guidance – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

All Connex education staff working with children understand that they should report to the DSL within the education setting, if they spot or believe a child has been able to access sites and information that should have been blocked and/or could be harmful. Indeed, any issues relating to filtering and monitoring (including concerns about 'overblocking') will be reported to the DSL.

If Connex Education staff become aware of or suspect that any children or adult at risk they are working with are being harmed or are at risk of online safety harms, they will follow our usual safeguarding procedures.

Contextual Safeguarding Issues:

At Connex Education, we are aware that children and adults at risk can face many harms within the family home or within the family unit. This tends to be referred to as 'Intrafamilial harms' and is traditionally how safeguarding was viewed.

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However, this does not consider the various and increasing harms facing children outside of the family home/unit. These can be referred to as 'Contextual Safeguarding Risks', part of which are 'extra-familial harms'. According to the NSPCC: 'Contextual safeguarding, which has been developed by Dr. Carlene Firmin at the University of Bedfordshire's Contextual Safeguarding Network, recognises that as young people grow and develop, they are influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside of their family.

For example, in school or college, in the local community, in their peer groups or online. Children and young people may encounter risk in any of these environments. Sometimes the different contexts are inter-related and can mean that children and young people may encounter multiple risks.

Contextual safeguarding looks at how we can best understand these risks, engage with children and young people and help to keep them safe. It's an approach that's often been used to apply to adolescents, though the lessons can equally be applied to younger children, especially in today's changing world.

It is recognised that as children become older, they are more likely to be affected by the behaviour and attitudes of their peers, rather than their family members. The term 'extra-familial harm' refers to all harm facing children outside of the family home or unit. This can include risks facing them within their own intimate relationships or with their peers.

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In terms of primary settings, these contextual safeguarding risks may be also to do with the risks facing older siblings and family members. These risks may then impact upon the younger, primary-age child. As with all risks facing young people, Connex Education staff will share any concerns swiftly with the DSL at Connex Education and the DSL at the child's education setting.

Additional information is available on the Contextual Safeguarding Network website: www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk

Low-level Concerns

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns relating to staff in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children. Our policy regarding low-level concerns is based on 'Section 2: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold' in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO

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Connex staff have a responsibility to safeguard all children and therefore are expected to report low-level concerns both about other temporary workers as well as any other staff working in a position of trust that they may come into contact with. For example, a full-time member of staff in a school where a Connex temporary worker is placed.

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to policy
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
- humiliating children.

Concerns about a Connex staff member should be reported directly to the DSL and low-level concerns about a member of staff from another setting should be reported to the DSL or Headteacher of that school or setting. If this has taken place, we would expect the staff member to update Connex's DSL so we can be sure the correct procedures have been followed.

It is vital to create a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to share low-level concerns. They can then be addressed appropriately. We achieve this by:

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- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others.
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns about others
- Empowering staff to self-refer.
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage.
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised.
- Helping to identify any weakness in Connex's safeguarding policies and procedures.

Procedures

Any disclosure from a child or concern held by a member of staff related to child protection and safeguarding must in all cases be treated seriously, in strict confidence and reported immediately to the Connex Education DSL or DDSL and the allocated Designated Safeguarding Lead within the education setting.

In the case of any work with children, young people or adults at risk who are not on roll with an education setting (e.g. temporary worker has been contracted by a Local Authority to work with a child who is not in full-time education), the staff member should liaise immediately with the child or adult's key worker and DSL.

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If a concern arises about a child or adult at risk 'out of hours' (for example, outside of usual school opening times or outside of office hours), all Connex staff are clear that they must not delay taking action if they feel a child or adult may be at risk of significant harm.

In such circumstances, Connex staff should contact emergency services on 999 in case of emergency.

In non-emergency situations, they should contact the local Children's Social Care (or in the case of adults at risk, Adult Social Care) to discuss their concerns.

Contact details can be found by searching online for '(area) Children's Social Care' for example. They can then phone and discuss their concerns with a duty social worker. They may be advised by the duty social worker to complete a referral (often referred to as a MARF or Multi-Agency Referral/Request Form) which will be sent to them by the social worker or can often be accessed via the Local Authority website.

Connex staff should always ensure that if they have had to take these actions, they update the DSL at the education setting (or, in the case of adults at risk, the DSL at the adult's education provider) as well as the DSL at Connex Education Partnership, to advise of their concerns and the actions taken.

If unsure, Connex staff can always contact the NSPCC Professionals Helpline for advice and support on 0808 800 5000 or emailing help@nspcc.org.uk however this should not be in place of seeking emergency services.

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We recognise however that many children will not wish to make a disclosure for a variety of reasons and therefore rather than waiting for or relying upon a disclosure or confirmation of their suspicions, staff will use their professional curiosity to spot signs and Indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and will pro-actively report any concerns they have.

We understand the importance of Early Help and the impact this can have on a child's life so will act early on concerns, ensuring the right support can be put in place for children, young people and adults at risk.

In the event of Connex Education Partnership's Designated Safeguarding

Lead being contacted, the following protocol will be followed:

1. Our DSL or DDSL will immediately contact the DSL at the education setting and pass ensure all information has been passed to them. If the concern or allegation relates to potential physical abuse the body map contained in this policy will be used.
2. The school will then follow their Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for contacting the local Police Child Protection Unit or the Social Services Department of the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer and any other relevant parties.
3. Connex Education Partnership shall support the school with any action that the school deems appropriate and shall undertake reasonable endeavours to provide the school with any assistance or documents.

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4. Connex Education Partnership shall not, under any circumstances, undertake any independent investigation or questioning (as this may jeopardise any enquiry) unless Connex Education Partnership is given authorisation by the school or the Authorities. Following authorisation, Connex Education Partnership may independently follow up on the allegation.
5. All allegations, disclosures, concerns or suspicions shall be referred to the school no matter how insignificant they seem to be or when they occur. Any information about suspicious behaviour or circumstances will be passed to the local Police Child Protection Unit or the local Social Services at the first opportunity.

If a young person or adult at risk discloses abuse to an employee of Connex Education Partnership, they must:

1. Allow the young person or adult at risk to speak without interruption, encouraging them to tell you only what they feel comfortable telling you, and be accepting and be non-judgmental about what is said. Do not ask investigative or leading questions of any kind.
2. Advise the young person or adult at risk that you will offer support, but that you **MUST** pass what they tell you and are not able to keep anything they tell you confidential.
3. If they refuse to tell you anything unless you promise to keep it a secret, inform them that you want to help and that there is one person you must tell. If they then refuse to tell you anymore, please respect their decision and report this incident.

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4. Ensure that the young person or adult at risk is not immediately at risk of any further abuse.
5. Immediately after a disclosure, contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Connex Education Partnership and the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead. In the case of adults at risk, this would be the adult's keyworker and the Local Authority DSL.
6. Report the facts as you know them/ or understand them, including the pupil's name and the account given to you by the young person or adult at risk, using the words that they used as well as including any other information you feel is relevant.
7. Provide this detailed information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Connex Education and the DSL at the Partnership/School as soon as you are able. In the case of adults at risk, this would be the adult's keyworker and the Local Authority DSL.
8. Connex Education Partnership shall retain a copy of all such notifications in accordance with GDPR guidelines.
9. The body map detailed within this policy must be completed in any disclosure relating to physical abuse.

Please remember: The Data Protection Act and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the DSL. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

If you receive an allegation about any adult, all temporary workers must:

1. Immediately after receiving an allegation or disclosure, contact the Designated Safeguarding Children Lead at the School and for Connex Education Partnership.
2. Report the facts as you know them/ or understand them, including the names of relevant adults and/or young people and the account given to you using the words that they used as well as including any other information your feel is relevant.
3. Provide this detailed information to the Designated Safeguarding Children Lead at the School and/or Connex Education Partnership as soon as you are able.
4. Connex Education Partnership shall retain a copy of all such notifications in accordance with GDPR guidelines.

How to use the Connex Education Child Protection body map:

In the event of a concern or disclosure relating to physical abuse, all staff must record:

- Information on when you noticed the injury or when it was disclosed
- Details of the injury – where it is on the child, what it looks like, its colour, shape, size, and condition
- Details of all visible injuries, even small marks that may not seem of concern at the time
- Condition of the injury – is it deteriorating or getting better?

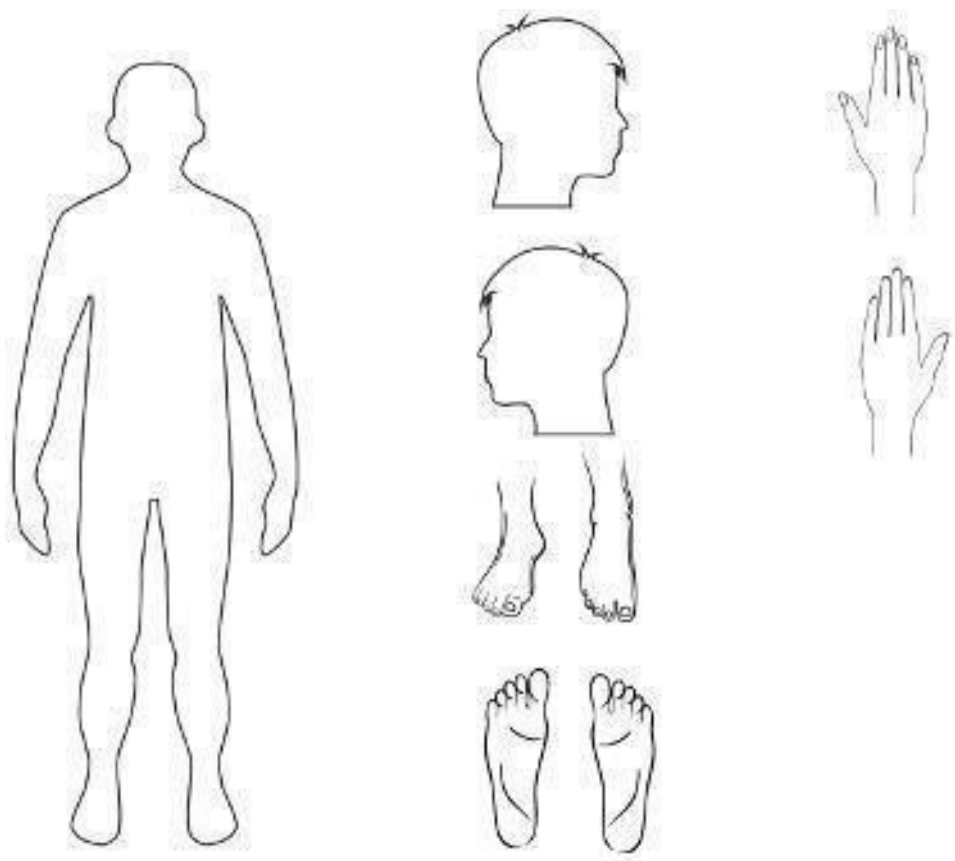
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- Is the child in distress or indifferent about the injury?
- Information on any explanations behind the injuries
- Observations of the child – how are they feeling, what is their behaviour like?
- Information on anything that the child or parent says about the injury
- Include both a drawing and a written description of the injury

A copy of the body map must be provided to both the school designated safeguarding lead and to the designated safeguarding lead at Connex Education via dsl@connex-education.com

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Body map for use in reporting concerns related to physical abuse



Observations

Name of child/adult.....

Name of education establishment DSO in setting informed (Y/N)

Name of worker Date observed

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Online tuition

- Must be conducted via our approved portal
- All online tuition sessions are recorded and stored securely in the event of an allegation or safeguarding concern – access to the recordings is strictly prohibited
- All electronic communication must be through the secure chat function of our approved online tuition portal
- All online chat and attachments shared within tuition is retained and at all times visible to the school
- Must be conducted in line with our 'Social Media Policy'
- Must be conducted in line with our 'Online Tutoring Policy'

Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

In all circumstances, if the Designated Safeguarding Lead cannot be contacted, please refer to one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Connex Education Partnership have a Designated Safeguarding Lead to:

- Offer support and training to all staff and volunteers involved in Connex Education Partnership's work.
- To ensure that all Connex Education staff are vetted in line with our compliance procedures.
- To act as the main point of contact in the event of any allegation or disclosure or liaise with the schools' DSL as appropriate.

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- To act as the as the main point of contact for Safeguarding between Connex Education Partnership and partner schools.

If there is an allegation, signs and indicators of abuse are identified or if at any point an adult involved with Connex Education Partnership work fails to comply with any element of the Code of Conduct this information must be passed immediately to Connex Education Partnership Designated Safeguarding Lead. It is the Designated Safeguarding Lead's responsibility to collect all relevant information and make decisions on how to proceed (this will include contacting the designated safeguarding lead at the relevant partner school/s). You have a duty of care and responsibility to pass on all relevant information regarding any allegations of abuse or identified signs and indicators of possible abuse.

Please note – all staff have a duty of care and responsibility to notify Connex Education Partnership of any changes or developments in their personal life which could affect their ability to work in a position of Trust with children, young people and adults at risk. Examples of this could include, but are not limited to:

- an allegation of abuse, neglect or exploitation against their own or any other child
- A Position of Trust referral having been made due to their involvement in other work including voluntary work (e.g. as a Scout leader or similar)
- Children's Social Care involvement within their own family including their children being made subject to a Child Protection plan, Child in Need plan or being subject to care proceedings

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In such circumstances, staff should liaise with their local branch and designated consultant who will in turn pass on this information to Connex's DSL.

Allegations against other professionals:

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including another Connex Education team member, supply teacher, volunteer, or contractor), or an allegation is made about a temporary worker posing a risk of harm to children or adults at risk, you must speak to the DSL at Connex Education as soon as possible.

They will consider whether the concern or allegation meets the threshold for a referral to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). They will liaise with the Headteacher of the school in the case of all concerns or allegations against a member of school staff, or with the chair of governors if the concerns relate to the Headteacher themselves. The threshold for a LADO referral could be met if:

An adult who works with children (in a paid or unpaid capacity) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child or adult at risk.
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or adult at risk.
- behaved towards a child or adult at risk in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children or adult at risk; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children or adults at risk

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It is imperative that temporary workers understand that any concerns, no matter how small, will be responded to. Staff are to speak with the DSL if they have concerns that a school staff member or a Connex Education colleague's behaviour or conduct is:

- Inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.
- Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:
- Being over-friendly with children or adults at risk.
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children or adults at risk on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child or adult at risk on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- Using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language.

To reduce the risk of allegations, all Connex Education staff should be aware of safer working practice and should be familiar with the guidance contained in the Staff Code of Conduct or Government document 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings'.

Record keeping:

All information and documentation relating to incidents or allegations will be kept securely and under restricted access by the DSL and DDL.

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Information is stored securely within our hosted Sharepoint environment, which is subject to annual independent technical audit, which includes rigorous tests on cyber security and protection against hacking and phishing attacks. Our systems use multi- factor authentication, and access is strictly limited by our internal IT team.

Policy review:

- Connex Education holds monthly compliance meetings to review policies and procedures and reviews policies and procedures in the event of an allegation or safeguarding issue. In addition, reviews are conducted in line with our risk register and considering all feedback from staff and schools.
- Any updates to policies or procedures relating to Child Protection or Safeguarding will be communicated in writing to all staff by our Compliance Manager.
- All policies are regularly externally audited by the REC Audited Education and updated in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and all other statutory and non-statutory guidance – all changes will be communicated by our Compliance Manager

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – dsl@connex-education.com Roisin McErlane

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) – ddsl@connex-education.com
Andrea Papaconstantinou

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Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) – ddsl@connex-education.com
Lauren Clough

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) – ddsl@connex-education.com
Hannah McDaid

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