



# **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Guidance**

Consultation with recognised trade unions	16.09.21
Approved and adopted by SIPS Education Limited	18.11.21

## Introduction

This document is the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for SIPS Education.

This policy applies to all staff, board members and volunteers, temporary and supply staff working at SIPS Education. It will be reviewed annually by Board.

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

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- 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

SIPS Education has a culture of vigilance and is committed to safeguarding children and young people, and we expect everyone who works at SIPS Education to share this commitment.

All adults in SIPS Education take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them.

We will always act in the best interest of the child.

**If any member of SIPS Education staff has concerns about a child in a school setting that they visit / work in they must follow the**

## **school's policy and refer any concerns to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

### **Terminology**

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and acting to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Child protection** refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

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

**Child** includes everyone under the age of 18.

**Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example stepparents, foster carers, and adoptive parents.

### **Purpose of Safeguarding Policy**

Purpose of a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	To inform all members of staff, parents, volunteers, and governors about SIPS Education's responsibilities for safeguarding children and their responsibilities therein
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Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP)	We follow the procedures agreed by Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP)
Colleagues and Volunteers	<p>Staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. SIPS Education will therefore:</p> <p>Ensure that all staff and volunteers receive safeguarding children training, to help identify concerns.</p> <p>Ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and those relating to the safeguarding of children.</p>
Principles	<p>SIPS Education recognises its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of the children and young people entrusted to its care by establishing a safe and trusting environment in which children can learn and develop.</p> <p>The staff and the Board of SIPS Education are committed to establishing and maintaining an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to. We will ensure that children know there are adults in SIPS Education who they can approach if they are worried and that the principles of confidentiality are made clear to children and young people. Children need to be supported in approaching any member of staff they feel most comfortable in speaking with. SIPS Education promotes a positive, supportive, and secure ethos, giving pupils a sense of being valued.</p>

	<p>SIPS Education also recognises its duty to work with other agencies in protecting children from harm and in responding to concerns about possible abuse, including the Schools and Academies, Police, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Attendance and Prosecution Service, Inclusion Support Service and other agencies/services.</p> <p>The Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is made available to parents on request</p>
<p>Implementation, Monitoring and Review of the Safeguarding and child protection Policy</p>	<p>The DSL will ensure that the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is put on the agenda of the Board at least once a year for discussion, monitoring, review, and renewal. In this way the Board authorises the DSL to carry out his/her responsibilities as outlined in the statutory guidance</p>

### **Legislation and Statutory Guidance**

This policy is based on the Department for Education’s statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), and the Governance Handbook.

**Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)** places the following statutory duties on all schools, SIPS Education abides by these duties in partnership with schools:

- Staff should be vigilant to signs of abuse and to whom they should report any concerns

- Procedures are in place for dealing with suspected or actual cases of abuse of pupils, including procedures to be followed in the case of allegations against persons in a position of trust
- SIPS has a Designated Safeguarding Lead who is a member of the senior management team and responsible for co-ordinating safeguarding/child protection work within the organisation and liaising with other agencies as appropriate
- Staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding and child protection should receive appropriate single agency and multi-agency training approved by Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership at least every two years
- All other staff in SIPS Education should receive training to raise their awareness of signs and symptoms of suspected or actual abuse and the procedures they should follow annually
- That organisations should share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare
- The definition of safeguarding children includes both mental and physical health. Particular attention must be paid to the mental health of young people.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for child protection will co-ordinate action on child protection within SIPS Education.

All staff should know who the DSL is and be aware of their individual responsibility to be alert to the signs of abuse and to raise any

concerns with the DSL. They should be aware of what happens when a concern has been raised.

The DSL for Safeguarding and Child Protection is a member of the Senior Leadership Team. SIPS has several Deputy DSLs to act in the absence/unavailability of the DSL.

In the absence of the DSL and the Deputy DSL the most senior member at SIPS Education will assume responsibility for any child protection matters that arise. However, if there is no person qualified to DSL level, staff members must understand their duty to report any Child Protection concerns directly to the Local Authority.

### **Key personnel**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for child protection is

Laura Hadley  
Strategic Director  
07990 515039

The Deputy DSLs are:

Kim Whiting  
Strategic Director  
07890 945736

Kate Shadwell  
HR and Learning Service Manager  
07531 081647

Tanya Derham  
Music and Arts Service Manager  
07964 910167

David Swanson  
Deputy Music and Arts Service Manager  
07964 908570

Robert Hayward  
Deputy Music and Arts Service Manager  
07964 912493

**It is the responsibility of the DSL to:**

- Ensure that they and their deputies receive refresher training at least every two years
- Keep their DSL knowledge and skills up to date
- Ensure that all staff who work with children undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding children annually which will enable them to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it, as well as recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse including Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, Online Safety, Domestic Abuse (DA), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Honour Based Abuse (HBA) and Forced Marriage (FM)
- Ensure there is effective induction in safeguarding and child protection for all adults working at SIPS Education, be they staff or volunteers, including agency staff which should be undertaken no later than 10 working days following the commencement of their contract.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues with relevant school-based staff where applicable
- Make sure that concerns are raised by staff/volunteers when necessary
- Offer support and guidance to all adults working within SIPS Education about safeguarding and child protection



- Ensure that the names and contact details of the DSL/Deputy are on display for all staff, parents, pupils, and visitors to SIPS Education.
- Ensure that (whenever possible) the DSL and Deputy DSLs are not out of the business (e.g. at training events) at the same time. If they are absent, arrangements should be in place to ensure their duties are covered during their absence.
- Ensure that the telephone number for the MASH team is available and easily accessible to staff in case, for any reason, the DSL and Deputy DSLs are not contactable, in order to ensure there is no unwarranted delay in referral
- Discuss concerns as required with outside agencies
- Complete all necessary paperwork and correspondence including referral forms to the Early Help team or MASH about safeguarding and child protection referrals
- Consider appropriate safeguarding supervision arrangements
- Ensure that safeguarding and child protection records are chronologically recorded, with significant incidents or events clearly highlighted. These records should be reviewed regularly and focus on outcomes for the child/children
- Keep SIPS Education SLT, Board, Local Authority and Local Children's Safeguarding Partnership informed about safeguarding and child protection issues as requested
- Ensure staff understand their responsibility to report concerns to a DSL or seek advice from the local children's social care, as detailed in KCSIE 2018 and then KCSIE 2020 and then 2021.

## **The Board**

The Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are sufficient measures in place to safeguard the children in their establishment.

The Board will:

- Facilitate a SIPS-wide approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and

underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development

- Evaluate and approve this policy at each annual review, ensuring it complies with the law, and hold the Strategic Director – People to account for its implementation

All Board members must read Keeping Children Safe in Education in its entirety.

The Board must ensure that:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures are in place and reviewed annually
- Safer recruitment procedures are in place and reviewed annually
- Position of trust procedures are in place and reviewed annually.
- A DSL who is a senior member of the leadership team is appointed
- Relevant safeguarding / child protection training is accessed by all SIPS Education staff / volunteers according to their role and responsibilities.

### **The Strategic Director for People**

Is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Ensuring that all staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:
  - Are informed of systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
  - Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect
- Ensuring the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training, and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent

- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, and updating the content of the training regularly
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate SIPS Education Procedures – Staff Responsibilities

All SIPS Education staff and volunteers need to be alert to the potential abuse of children both within their families and from other sources, including members of the SIPS Education community.

If any member of staff is concerned about a child, the DSL (or the Deputy DSL in their absence) must be informed immediately. There is an absolute responsibility for all members of SIPS Education to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child in accordance with these procedures.

The member of staff must record information regarding the concerns and ensure the written record is passed to the DSL on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations.

The DSL will decide whether the concerns should be referred to Children's Social Care via the MASH. If it is decided to make a referral to Children's Social Care this will be discussed with the parents and consent sought, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm, place a vulnerable adult at risk or compromise any enquiries that may need to be made.

When concerns have been raised regarding a child or they are subject to any multi-agency work a written record will be kept securely and separately from the child's main record.

The DSL is responsible for making the Senior Leadership Team aware of trends in behaviour that may affect pupil welfare. If necessary, training will be arranged.

All staff and volunteers should be aware that the main categories of abuse are. See Appendix A:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

All staff and volunteers should be concerned about a child if he/she presents with indicators of possible significant harm – see Appendix A for details.

### **Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct**

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards pupils we need to agree standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all staff.

Good practice includes:

- treating all pupils with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving pupils in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful, and safe behaviour among pupils
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding SIPS Education's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, sexual

- violence and sexual harassment, physical contact, sexual exploitation, extremism, e-safety and information-sharing
- asking the pupil's permission before initiating physical contact
  - maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
  - being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils may lead to an increased risk of abuse
  - referring all concerns about a pupil's safety and welfare to the DSL, or, if necessary, directly to police or Children's Social Care
  - Following SIPS Education's rules about relationships with pupils and communication with pupils, including on social media

### **Abuse of Position of Trust**

All SIPS Education staff must be aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. Any sexual activity between a member of SIPS Education staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that pupil is over the age of consent.

### **Children who may be particularly vulnerable**

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. 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.

### **Support for those involved in a child protection issue**

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved. We will support pupils, their families, and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact
- where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a pupil, separate link people will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest
- responding sympathetically to any request from pupils or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- storing records securely.
- offering details of helplines, counselling, or other avenues of external support
- following the procedures laid down in our Safeguarding and Child protection, Whistleblowing, Complaints and Disciplinary procedures
- cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies

### **Whistle blowing if you have concerns about a colleague**

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. SIPS Education's Whistleblowing Policy enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the Strategic Director for People. Complaints about the Strategic Director for People should be reported to the Chief Executive.

Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

### **Allegations against staff**

If a member of staff has concerns about another member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer, or contractor), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer, or contractor) posing a risk of harm to children, they must speak to the Strategic Director for People as soon as possible. If the concerns/allegations are about the Strategic Director for People, staff should speak to the Chief Executive.

The Strategic Director for People/Chief Executive will then follow the procedures set out in Appendix I, if appropriate.

If staff believe there is a conflict of interest in reporting a concern or allegation about another member of staff (including a supply teacher, volunteer, or contractor) to the Strategic Director - People, report it directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to pupils, and we must act on every allegation.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. In some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected. In the event of suspension, SIPS Education will provide support and a named contact for the member of staff.

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2021)*

Staff, parents, and Board members are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites.

Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at SIPS Education, or historical allegations will be reported to the police.

An allegation relates to an adult who works with children (in a paid or unpaid capacity) and they have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child.
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child.



- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they will pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

In these circumstances, the allegation should be taken seriously and the Strategic Director for People who has the responsibility for managing allegations against persons in a position of trust at SIPS Education, should be informed immediately.

It is not the responsibility of the person receiving the allegation to make any enquiries or discuss the allegation with anyone other than the Strategic Director for People.

As with all other concerns about the welfare of children, the member of staff receiving the allegation should make a written record of the allegation using the informant's words – including time, date, and place where the alleged incident took place, brief details of what happened, what was said and who was present. This record should be signed, dated, and immediately passed on to the Strategic Director for People.

Under no circumstances should the informant be asked to make a written record of the allegation or be asked to sign any documentation. This is the responsibility of the person receiving the allegation.

The Strategic Director for People will not investigate the allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but will consult with the Local Authority Child Protection Officers, when appropriate, and if necessary, make a referral will be made to the LADO:

Sandwell – 0121 569 4770

Dudley – 01384 813110

Birmingham – 0121 675 1669

## **Staff training**

All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures and online safety, to ensure they understand SIPS Education's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect. Staff must understand their responsibilities in connection with education and understanding of sexual violence and sexual harassment.

This training will be regularly updated and will:

- Be integrated, aligned, and considered as part of the whole-SIPS Education safeguarding approach and wider staff training, and curriculum planning
- Be in line with advice from the 3 safeguarding partners

New staff and Board members will receive a briefing during their induction, which includes SIPS Education's Safeguarding Child Protection Policy reporting and recording arrangements, and details for the DSL. All staff will receive training that is regularly updated, and the DSL will receive training updated at least every two years including training in inter-agency procedures.

All staff will be made aware of the increased risk to abuse of certain groups, including disabled and SEN children, looked after children and young carers.

## **Safer recruitment**

SIPS Education endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ safe staff by following the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) together with the LCSP and SIPS Education's Staff Recruitment policy and procedures.

Applicants will:

- complete an application form which includes their employment history and explains any gaps in that history

- provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
- provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- if offered employment, be checked in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations as appropriate to their role. This will include an enhanced DBS check and a barred list check for those engaged in regulated activity
- if offered employment, provide evidence of their right to work in the UK
- be interviewed, if shortlisted

SIPS Education will also:

- verify the preferred candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- obtain references for all shortlisted candidates, including internal candidates
- carry out additional or alternative checks for applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK
- ensure that applicants for teaching posts are not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State

At least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended Safer Recruitment training.

All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with SIPS Education's Child Protection Policy and identification of their child protection training needs.

All staff will sign to confirm they have received a copy of the Child Protection Policy.

SIPS Education obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in SIPS Education have been appropriately checked.

The DBS may consider whether to bar an applicant offered a post. Detailed guidance on when to refer to the DBS, and what information must be provided, can be found on [www.GOV.UK](http://www.GOV.UK)

Referrals should be made as soon as possible, and ordinarily on conclusion of an investigation, when an individual is removed from working in regulated activity, which could include being suspended, or is redeployed to work that is not regulated activity.

### **Regulated Activity**

School and academies are 'specified places' which means that that some SIPS Education staff and volunteers will be engaged in regulated activity. A fuller explanation of regulated activity can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) Part Three.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the SIPS Education and contact with pupils. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised or be allowed to engage in regulated activity.

### **Supervised volunteers**

Volunteers who work only in a supervised capacity and are not in regulated activity will undergo the safer recruitment checks appropriate to their role, in accordance with SIPS Education's risk assessment process and statutory guidance.

### **Allegations of abuse made against other pupils**

We recognise that children can abuse their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up", as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils.

We also recognise the gendered nature of peer-on-peer abuse. However, all peer-on-peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our SIPS Education's behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils in using SIPS Education services at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, 'upskirting', 'downblousing' or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes)

### **Procedures for dealing with allegations of peer-on-peer abuse**

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

- You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it
- Pupils must be supported, and assurance is to be given to them that they are believed and taken seriously
- The DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

## **Creating a supportive environment and minimising the risk of peer-on-peer abuse**

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensure pupils are able to report abuse using our reporting systems easily and confidently
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:
  - How to recognise the indicators and signs of peer-on-peer abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
  - That even if there are no reports of peer-on-peer abuse, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”
  - That if they have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
    - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
    - A friend may make a report
    - A member of staff may overhear a conversation
    - A child’s behaviour might indicate that something is wrong

- That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation
- That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
- The important role they play in preventing peer-on-peer abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it
- That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns

### **Photography and images**

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent and legitimate reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or distributing images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.

To protect pupils, we will:

- seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- seek parental consent
- use only the pupil's first name with an image
- ensure pupils are appropriately dressed
- encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

### **Staff / Pupil relationships**

SIPS Education provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with pupils. Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation.

## **Dealing with a Disclosure**

Where a pupil actually discloses that he/she has been abused the following guidelines must be followed:

### **Receive**

- If a child wants to talk to you, never ask them to come back later. Ask them what they want to talk to you about and, if you are concerned about their welfare, give them the time to speak to you
- Never promise confidentiality, inform the child that you are happy to talk to them but if they tell you anything that you believe may be putting them at harm that you will have to talk to someone
- Listen carefully to the child. Do not stop a child who is freely recalling information
- Where a child is visibly upset or has an obvious injury, it is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how an injury was caused or respond to a child wanting to talk to you to help clarify vague concerns and result in the right action being taken

### **React**

**If you need to clarify information, ask open-ended questions e.g., "Is there anything you'd like to tell me?", "Can you explain to me..." "Can you describe to me...?"**

- Never ask leading or suggestive questions e.g. 'Did he/she do anything that they shouldn't have done?'
- Never ask 'accusing' questions e.g., "Why didn't you tell someone earlier?"
- Never criticise the alleged perpetrator, it may be someone that they will continue to live with
- Never ask the pupil to repeat their disclosure for any other member of staff; it is your responsibility to share the information



- These four factors may compromise enquiries that need to be made later by Children's Social Care or Police.

### **Reassure**

- Ensure that the child is aware that they have done the right thing in talking to you and that they have not done anything wrong
- If you have any concerns that the child has been, or is at risk of harm, you must tell them that you will speak to someone to get help

### **Record**

- Make notes as soon as possible afterwards using the words that the child has used
- Do not record your assumptions and interpretations, just what you heard and saw
- Do not destroy original notes even if you later write things up more neatly and fully
- Record the date, time and place of the disclosure
- Sign any written records and identify your position in the setting
- Do not ask a child to write an account or sign any of your documentation as this may compromise enquiries that need to be made later by children's social care or Police

### **Refer**

Immediately inform the DSL or in their absence the Deputy DSL who will be responsible for following the appropriate procedures.

To consult with your DSL does not mean a referral has been made. This decision is the responsibility of the DSL who will contact the appropriate agency as and when required.

If you are unhappy about the response you receive from your DSL, contact the Locality Community Operating Group (COG) for your area if applicable, or, in their absence, contact the MASH teams on:

Sandwell 0121 569 3100

Dudley 0300 555 0050

Birmingham 0121 675 1669

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD YOU LEAVE WORK WITHOUT  
DISCUSSING YOUR CONCERNS WITH SOMEONE.**

### **Confidentiality**

Safeguarding children raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff/volunteers at SIPS Education.

All staff have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly Children's Social Care and the Police.

If a child wishes to confide in a member of staff/volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, the member of staff/volunteer will tell the child, in an appropriate manner to the individual needs of the child, that they cannot promise confidentiality and may need to pass the information on to help keep the child or other children safe.

Staff/volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information within the expectations of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Local Children's Safeguarding Partnership and inter-agency procedures.

## **Communication with Parents**

SIPS Education will always discuss concerns with parents/carers, and consent for any referrals should be sought unless to do so would:

- place the child at risk of significant harm or further risk of significant harm.
- place a vulnerable adult at risk of harm
- compromise any enquiries that need to be undertaken by Children's Social Care or the Police

SIPS Education will endeavour to ensure that parents understand the responsibilities placed on SIPS Education and staff for safeguarding children.

## **Record Keeping**

The importance of good clear child welfare and child protection record keeping has been highlighted in the learning from serious case reviews. Good up to date record keeping of concerns and action taken is essential for two main reasons:

1. It helps SIPS Education identify causes for concern at an early stage. Often it is only when a number of seemingly minor issues are seen as a whole, that a pattern can be seen indicating safeguarding or child protection concern.
2. It ensures that SIPS Education can monitor and manage safeguarding practices and provides evidence of robust and effective safeguarding policy and practice.

A record of a concern, suspicion or allegation should be made at the time of or as soon as possible after the event. Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child or young person or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse in a child or young person, will make a written record within the hour recording the disclosure using the child's own words, what was said or seen and

the location both of the abuse and the disclosure. Dates and times of events should be recorded as accurately as possible, together with a note of when the record was made.

A record should be made of any visible marks or injuries to a child that give cause for concern, this may be completed on a body map the child should not be examined intimately or pictures taken of any injuries/marks.

All records must be signed and dated clearly with the name of the signatory clearly printed.

When a child has made a disclosure, the member of staff/volunteer should:

- Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation using the appropriate form utilised by SIPS Education
- Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions
- Distinguish fact from opinion
- Children MUST NOT be asked to make a written statement themselves or to sign any records
- All records of a child protection nature (handwritten or typed) are given to the DSL before the end of the working day
- No copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer
- The DSL will ensure that all safeguarding records are managed and transferred in accordance with the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005

## **Reporting systems for our pupils**

Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will take the child's wishes and feelings into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

We recognise the importance of ensuring pupils feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns and/or allegations.

To achieve this, we will:

- Make it clear to pupils that their concerns will be taken seriously, and that they can safely express their views and give feedback

## **APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

### **Signs of possible physical abuse**

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or rough games.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Bruises, bites, burns and fractures, for example, which do not have an accidental explanation.
- The child gives inconsistent accounts for the cause of injuries.
- Frozen watchfulness.

### **Possible effects of Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse can lead directly to neurological damage, physical injuries, disability and in extreme cases death. Physical abuse has been linked to aggressive behaviour in children, emotional and behavioural problems and learning difficulties.

### **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.

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.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### **Signs of possible Emotional Abuse**

- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety, changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy.
- Obsessions or phobias.
- Sudden underachievement or lack of concentration.
- Seeking adult attention and not mixing well with other children.
- Sleep or speech disorders.
- Negative statements about self.
- Highly aggressive or cruel to others.
- Extreme shyness or passivity.
- Running away, stealing and lying.

## **Possible effects of Emotional Abuse**

- If a child suffers sustained emotional abuse, there is increasing evidence of adverse long-term effects on their development. Emotional abuse has a significant impact on a developing child's mental health, behaviour and self-esteem. It can be especially damaging in infancy and can be as important as the other more visible forms of abuse, in terms of its impact on the child. Domestic Abuse, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may be features in families where children are exposed to such abuse.
- Domestic Abuse comes in many forms and is not just physical but can be:
  - Emotional
  - Sexual
  - Financial
  - Controlling and coercive
  - Physical
- Exposure to Domestic Abuse and /or violence, can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on young people.

## **Sexual Abuse**

**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, 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, 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.

### **Signs of possible Sexual Abuse**

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- The child has an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour for their age, or regularly engages in sexual play inappropriate for their age.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains.
- The child is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares which sometimes have overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia.

### **Possible effects of Sexual Abuse**

- Disturbed behaviour including self-harm,
- inappropriate sexual behaviour,
- sadness, depression and loss of self-esteem has all been linked to sexual abuse.
- Its adverse effects may last long into adult life. The severity of the impact on the child is believed to increase the longer the abuse continues, the more serious the abuse, the younger the child at the start, and the closeness of the relationship to the abuser. The child's ability to cope with the experience of sexual abuse, once recognised, can be strengthened by the support of a non-abusive adult carer who believes the child, helps the child understand the abuse, and is able to offer help and

protection. Some adults who sexually abuse children were themselves sexually abused as children.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation**

The statutory definition of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be found in the guidance document Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners (DfE 2017)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

## **Possible signs of child sexual exploitation**

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones, etc. without plausible explanation.
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks.
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, academy, college or work.
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late.
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls.
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol.
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections.
- Evidence of/suspicious of physical or sexual assault.
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups.

- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers).
- Frequenting areas known for sex work.
- Concerning use of internet or other social media.
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

### **Possible effects**

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues.

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse.
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic abuse or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example).
- Recent bereavement or loss.
- Social isolation or social difficulties.
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality.
- Economic vulnerability.
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status.
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited.
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work.
- Having a physical or learning disability.
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories); and
- Sexual identity.

### **Child Criminal Exploitation**

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 through the use of 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 school or education or do not take part in education.

### **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.

Criminal Exploitation Hubs strive to coordinate intelligence by;  
CSE Mapping and intelligence: perpetrators, areas, links, trends

- Hotels and taxis and events
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has the following support
- Targeted Youth Support
- Women's Aid
- Barnardos
- Specialist CSE Social Workers

CSE Screening Tool MUST be completed for ALL children aged 10-18 who are subject to an Early Help Assessment or a MARF. For further information see guidance sheets regarding CSE support from CSE team within MASH.

Complete the CSE Screening Tool when completing a MARF or EHA

Use the online CSE Tool from Brook

<https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/cse-e-learning-tool>

## **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.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate 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.

### **Signs of possible Neglect**

- Dirty skin, body smells, unwashed, uncombed hair and untreated lice
- Clothing that is dirty, too big or small, or inappropriate for weather conditions
- Frequently left unsupervised or alone
- Frequent diarrhoea
- Frequent tiredness
- Untreated illnesses, infected cuts or physical complaints which the carer does not respond to
- Frequently hungry
- Overeating junk food

### **Possible effects of Neglect**

Neglect can seriously impair a child's health, physical and intellectual growth and development, and can cause long term difficulties with social functioning, relationships and educational progress. Extreme cases of neglect can cause death.

### **Forced Marriage (FM)**

This is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage. It is a human rights abuse and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic abuse. Young men and women can be at risk in affected ethnic groups. Whistleblowing may come from younger siblings.

Other indicators may be detected by changes in adolescent behaviours. Never attempt to intervene directly as SIPS Education or through a third party.

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. ·

While it is important to have an understanding of the motives that drive parents to force their children to marry, these motives should not be accepted as justification for denying them the right to choose a marriage partner and enter freely into marriage. ·

A person's capacity to consent can change. With the right support and knowledge, a person with a learning disability may move from a position of lacking capacity to consent to marriage, to having capacity. However, some children and adults with learning disabilities are given no choice and/or do not have the capacity to give informed consent to marriage and all it entails.

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office unit which was 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.

The FMU operates a public helpline to provide advice and support to victims of forced marriage as well as to professionals dealing with cases. The assistance provided ranges from simple safety advice, through to aiding a victim to prevent their unwanted spouse moving to the UK ('reluctant sponsor' cases), and, in extreme circumstances, to rescues of victims held against their will overseas.

The FMU undertake an extensive outreach and training programme of around 100 events a year, targeting both professionals and potential victims. The FMU also carry out media campaigns, such as 2015's 'right to choose' campaign, where the FMU commissioned a

short film to raise awareness amongst young people at risk of being forced into marriage, as well as potential perpetrators.

### **Contact**

Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7008 0151

Email: [fmufco.gov.uk](mailto:fmufco.gov.uk)

Email for outreach work: [fmuoutreach@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmuoutreach@fco.gov.uk)

Facebook: [Forced Marriage page](#)

Twitter: [@FMUnit](#)

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM.

#### **What is FGM?**

It involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

Types of procedure:

Type 1 Clitoridectomy – partial/total removal of clitoris

Type 2 Excision – partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora

Type 3 Infibulation entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia

Type 4 all other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising and scraping the genital area.

When should a referral be considered?

#### **Mandatory reporting 2015**

Under 18 & FGM is 'Known'

Seen

Disclosed

Report to POLICE



## **Suspected or At Risk?**

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 and we're here 24/7.

0800 028 3550 or email [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk)

## **Useful Sources of Information:**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/469448/FGM-Mandatory-Reporting-procedural-info-FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/469448/FGM-Mandatory-Reporting-procedural-info-FINAL.pdf)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/380125/MultiAgencyPracticeGuidelinesNov14.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380125/MultiAgencyPracticeGuidelinesNov14.pdf)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/416323/Fact\\_sheet\\_-\\_FGM\\_-\\_](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416323/Fact_sheet_-_FGM_-_)

## **Why is it carried out? There is a belief that:**

- FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage
- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Part of being a woman / rite of passage
- Upholds family honour
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfils a religious requirement
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean / hygienic
- Is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

## **Is FGM legal?**

FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights of girls and women. It is illegal in most countries including the UK.

## **Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening**

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

## **Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:**

- Prolonged absence from school/academy and other activities
- Behaviour changes on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Repeated urinal tract infection
- Disclosure

## **The 'One Chance' rule**

As with Forced Marriage there is the 'One Chance' rule. It is essential that settings take action without delay.

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, this includes Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

### **Mental Health**

This policy covers the importance and responsibility for safeguarding young people and their physical and emotional health and wellbeing. This includes their mental health.

Our staff are committed to supporting children with mental ill health and all staff are aware that mental health can, in cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered abuse, neglect or exploitation. We provide training to our staff in relation to the importance of understanding and recognising mental health issues in young people as they are often best placed to be able to identify concerns and refer to the DSL for further support and referral.

### **Children missing from education**

A child going missing from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM

- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school/academy
- Come from new migrant families

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

### **Domestic abuse**

Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse and/or violence at home where it occurs between family members. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background, and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

Older children may also experience domestic abuse and/or violence in their own personal relationships.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children.

If police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any children in the household have experienced the incident, the police will inform the key adult in school/academy (usually the designated safeguarding lead) before the child or children arrive the following day.

The DSL will provide support according to the child's needs and update records about their circumstances.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent and introduced a statutory definition for the first time.

### **Definition**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- a) physical or sexual abuse.
- b) violent or threatening behaviour.
- c) controlling or coercive behaviour.
- d) economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and
- e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.

People are 'personally connected' when they are or have been married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. If the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives.

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

(The definition can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/part/1/enacted>)

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

The National Domestic Abuse helpline can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.