



Wessex
Learning Trust

We Learn Together

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy



Wessex Learning Trust

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

All learners and young people will have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise the additional needs of Learners from minority ethnic groups and disabled Learners and the barriers they may face, especially around communication.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.



Signature:

Name: Mrs Jayne Keller

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 3 September 2026



Signature:

Name: Mr Paul Jacobs

Position: Chair of the Trust Board

Date: 3 September 2026

Contents

Contents	2
Part 1 – The Policy	4
1. Definitions	4
2. Introduction	4
2.1 Associated policies	5
3. Equality statement	5
3.1 General duties	6
4. Overall Aims	6
5. Professional Expectations, Roles and Responsibilities	6
5.1 Roles and Responsibilities of All Staff:	7
5.2 Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):	7
5.3 Role of the Local Partnership Board	8
6. Safeguarding Training for Staff	10
6.1 Safeguarding Training for All Staff	10
6.2 Training for Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	10
6.3 Other Training Considerations	10
7. Safeguarding and the Curriculum	11
8. Safer Recruitment and Safer Working Practice	12
8.1 Safer Recruitment	12
8.1.1 Work Experience	12
8.2 Visitors	12
8.3 Site Safety	13
8.4 Off-site visits	13
8.5 Use of Restrictive Interventions	13
8.6 Concerns regarding staff members	13
8.7 Whistleblowing Procedures	14
9. Early Years settings within schools including reception aged Learners	14
9.1 Legal and policy framework	14
9.2 Suitable people	14
9.3 Staff training, skills and supervision	15
9.4 Staff ratios	15
9.5 Health	15
9.6 Health and safety and suitability of premises	15
9.7 Managing behaviour	16

9.8 Attendance	16
Part 2 – Procedures	17
1. Reporting concerns	17
2. Information Sharing	17
2.5 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners	17
2.6 multi-agency working	18
2.7 Learners Missing from Education	19
2.8 Elective Home Education	19
3. Responding to incidents of Child-on-Child abuse	19
3.1 Child on Child Abuse	19
3.2 Child-on-Child sexual harassment and sexual violence	21
3.3 Extra familial safeguarding approach to Child-on-Child abuse	21
4. Mental Health and wellbeing	22
5. Online Safety	23
6. Gender-questioning Learners	24
7. Safeguarding Learners with medical conditions	24
8. Specific actions to take on key safeguarding areas	24
Weapons and Serious violence	24
Child Exploitation – both Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)	25
Domestic Abuse	25
Female Genital Mutilation	26
Generative AI	26
The Prevent Duty.	26
Private Fostering	26
Young Carers	27
Sport and single-sex provision	27
Toilets, changing rooms and boarding/residential accommodation	27

Part 1 – The Policy

1. Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard children 2026 as:

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

Child Protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including in foster care and residential care, as well as online. Under statutory guidance and legislation, action must be taken to safeguard and promote the children's welfare.

Effective safeguarding is anti-discriminatory and anti-racist. All practitioners should understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances, ethnicity and disability, which can impact Learners and families' lives.

2. Introduction

At the Wessex Learning Trust (The Trust):

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our Learners is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who works with Learners, their families, and carers has a role to play.
- To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should always consider what is in the best interests of the Learner.
- We take an 'it can happen here' approach where safeguarding is concerned.
- Everyone who works with children has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.
- Victims of harm should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for reporting an incident.

Schools/academies/Settings in the Wessex Learning Trust are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Learners by:

- Ensuring the provision of a safe environment in which Learners and young people can learn.
- Acting on concerns about a Learner's welfare immediately.
- Fulfilling our legal responsibilities to identify Learners who may need early help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

All actions taken by schools/academies/settings in the Trust will be in accordance with:

- [Education Act 2002 Section 157 \(Independent schools incl Schools/academies and CTC's\)](#)
- [The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [Teachers' Standards \(Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Information Sharing 2024](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a Child is being abused](#)
- [Filtering and monitoring standards in schools and colleges \(DfE\)](#)
- [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) Statutory Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023) - GOV.UK
- Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education - GOV.UK
- Local Guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnerships for North Somerset and Somerset:
 - [Who we are | Children's Safeguarding Board](#) – North Somerset
 - [Policies and Procedures - Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership](#) - Somerset

2.1 Associated policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Trust Safeguarding Statement
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Dealing with Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children's Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy (each school will have their own policy)
- Attendance Policy
- Drugs Policy
- Relationship Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy

Headteachers should ensure that the above policies and procedures, adopted by the Trust or school/academy, are accessible, understood, and followed by all staff. All Trust policies are available on the Wessex Learning Trust website and staff intranet (My Wessex).

3. Equality statement

We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise Learners and families' diverse circumstances. We ensure that all Learners have the same protection, regardless of their ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, race, economic condition, disability, or religion.

With regards to safeguarding, we will consider our duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and our general and specific responsibilities under the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#).

3.1 General duties

General duties include:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all protected characteristics between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Ensure staff are aware of the additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in Learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This will be in line with the individual school/academy's Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.
- All schools/academies in the Wessex Learning Trust adhere to the principles of and promote anti-oppressive practice in line with the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Learner](#) and the [Human Rights Act 1998](#).

4. Overall Aims

This policy will contribute to the safeguarding of Learners at all Trust schools/academies by:

- Clarifying safeguarding expectations for members of the education setting's community, staff, Local Partnership Board, learners, and their families.
- Contributing to the establishment of a safe, resilient, and robust safeguarding culture in the setting built on shared values; and that our learners are treated with respect and dignity, taught to treat each other and staff with respect, feel safe, have a voice, and are listened to.
- Supporting contextual safeguarding practice, recognising that the setting's site can be a location where harm can occur.
- Setting expectations for developing knowledge and skills within the setting's community (staff, learners, parents/carers) to the signs and indicators of safeguarding issues and how to respond to them.
- Early identification of the need for vulnerable learners and provision of proportionate interventions to promote their welfare and safety.
- Working in partnership with learners, parents/carers, and other agencies in the Local Safeguarding Partnership, including Early Help.

5. Professional Expectations, Roles and Responsibilities

Each school/academy in the Trust is named as a relevant agency either to the Somerset Safeguarding Children's

Partnership (Somerset Schools) or the North Somerset Safeguarding Partnership (North Somerset Schools). This policy outlines its statutory duty to cooperate, follow, and comply with the published arrangements set out by the relevant Safeguarding Partnership.

5.1 Roles and Responsibilities of All Staff:

- All staff will read and understand Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) in full.
- Trustees, Local Partners, senior staff, designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) and their deputies and staff involved in the recruitment process will read the complete document of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026).
- All staff will be aware of the systems in place which support safeguarding including reading this Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy; the Behaviour Policy/ Anti Bullying Policy for the school they are working in and the Staff Code of Conduct plus be aware of the safeguarding response to Learners who go missing or absent from education; and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- All staff will know how to contact the DSL and any deputies and the safeguarding representative from the Local Partnership Board at their school/academy.
- All staff will be able to identify vulnerable learners and take action to keep them safe. Information or concerns about learners will be shared with the DSL, including those:
 - who may need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect
 - requiring mental health support
 - who may benefit from early help
 - where there is a radicalisation concern
 - where a crime may have been committed
 - where Child-on-Child abuse has taken place
 - where a Learner is suspected to be missing or absent from education
 - where a Learner has been impacted by technology regarding online safety
- DSLs will be involved, where appropriate, in the implementation of individual plans to safeguard vulnerable learners further, understand their academic progress and attainment, and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort
- All staff will record concerns appropriately and promptly by using the setting's safeguarding recording systems.
- All staff will be aware of the need to raise with the senior leadership team any concerns they have about safeguarding practices within the school/academy.

5.2 Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Details of our DSL and Deputy DSL and how to contact them are available on each school/academy's website, in safeguarding information displayed within the school/academy and through relevant communications. Each school/academy also maintains a confidential safeguarding mailbox. Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- The DSL is a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team and has lead responsibility for safeguarding and Learner protection within the setting.
- The DSL works with the Headteacher and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that learners in need are experiencing or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on learners' attendance, engagement, and achievement at school.
- Activities include the management of work undertaken by any Deputy DSLs.

- DSLs and Deputy DSLs manage early identification of vulnerability of learners and their families from staff through cause for concern or notifications. This will ensure detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- DSLs and Deputy DSLs manage referrals to Local Authority safeguarding partners where learners with additional needs have been identified. These can include those:
 - who need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect.
 - requiring mental health support.
 - who may benefit from early help.
 - where there is a radicalisation concern.
 - where a crime may have been committed.
- **The DSL will also:**
 - be a key point of contact for outside agencies about safeguarding.
 - support and advise other staff in making referrals to other agencies.
 - when required, liaise with the case manager and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) about child protection cases which concern a staff member.
 - coordinate regular safeguarding training and raise awareness and understanding within the school community around policies and practices about safeguarding.
 - help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about vulnerable learners with relevant staff. This includes ensuring that staff:
 - know who these Learners are;
 - understand their academic progress and attainment, and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort;
 - are supported in identifying the challenges that Learners in this group might face;
 - provide additional academic support or make reasonable adjustments to help Learners who have or have had a social worker reach their potential.
 - Ensure the secure transfer of the Safeguarding/Learner Protection File when a Learner moves on to a new setting within 5 days for an in-year transfer or the first 5 days of the start of a new term.
 - Arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out-of-hours/out-of-term activities, e.g. attendance at Strategy and Initial Child Protection Conferences out of term time.
 - Work with the senior leadership team member who has lead responsibility for filtering and monitoring systems to monitor and ensure their effectiveness and know how to escalate concerns when identified. Support the school in Filtering and Monitoring by conducting an annual review of filtering and monitoring arrangements.

5.3 Role of the Local Partnership Board

The Local Partnership Board of each school/academy is responsible for its setting's safeguarding responsibilities to ensure that safeguarding and child protection practices and processes (including online safety) are effective and compliant with legislation, statutory guidance, and Local Authority Safeguarding Partnership arrangements.

Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026, Part 2). The Local Partnership Board will:

- Ensure an appointed Safeguarding Partner from each school/academy liaises with the Headteacher and the DSL to produce an annual report for the Local Partnership Board and completes the S.175/157 (annual safeguarding) audit for the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Partnership.
- Ensure that the school/academy remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to its attention without delay.
- Ensure that the DSL is an appropriate senior member of the school/academy's senior leadership team and ensure that they have adequate time, funding, training, resources, and support to carry out their role effectively.
- Ensure that the training and learning for the school community are robust and effective.
- Ensure that learners are taught about safeguarding on the curriculum, including online safety in compliance with statutory guidance [Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#), and for schools/academies with early years foundation stage, the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) Statutory Framework](#)
- Ensure that teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors, have appropriate checks carried out in line with statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026, Part 3).
- Ensure that there are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns or allegations against teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors who may not be suitable to work with or pose a risk to children, including having a process to manage low-level concerns.
- Ensure that systems are in place for learners to effectively share a concern about a safeguarding issue they are experiencing, express their views and give feedback.
- Ensure that the setting has systems in place to prevent, identify and respond to child-on-child abuse (including sexual abuse and sexual harassment) and mental health concerns, and review the effectiveness of the setting's online safety practices, including filtering and monitoring.
- Appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of Children Looked After.
- Whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of Learners and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, Local Partnership Boards will be doing all that they reasonably can to limit Learners' exposure to risks from the settings' IT system. As part of this process, Local Partnership Boards will ensure that their schools have appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. They should ensure that the senior leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place, manage them effectively, and know how to escalate concerns when identified. Local Partnership Boards consider the age range of their Learners, the number of Learners, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks.
- Receive an annual filtering and monitoring assurance report and review the effectiveness of arrangements.

6. Safeguarding Training for Staff

6.1 Safeguarding Training for All Staff

- Local Partnership Boards will ensure that all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) training at induction.
- At induction, staff will read and sign the IT usage agreement and are reminded never to use their mobile phone to contact students or take photographs of learners.
- Will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) refresher training at least annually (via formal training, email e-bulletins, and staff meetings).
- All staff must receive FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) awareness training and will understand their legal duty under the Mandatory Reporting Duty.
- All staff must complete PREVENT awareness training. This is to ensure that they can comply with the legal expectations under the PREVENT duty.
- All staff must complete Cyber Training.
- Staff training includes explicit reference to the internal whistleblowing policy and guidance for escalating concerns.

6.2 Training for Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

In addition to the all-staff training outlined above, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will undergo formal training provided by the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP) or North Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership (NSSCP) to provide them with the knowledge and skills (including online safety) required to carry out the role. The training will be updated every two years. Deputy DSLs will be trained to the same level as the DSL.

The DSL and any Deputy DSLs will liaise with their relevant Safeguarding Children's Partnership to ensure that their knowledge and skills are updated via e-bulletins, attend DSL network meetings, and take time to read and digest safeguarding bulletins and Newsletters both from the Wessex Learning Trust and other providers.

6.3 Other Training Considerations

- The Local Partnership Board will ensure that at least one person on any appointment panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training, in line with School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009. Staff responsible for recruitment administration will also be trained to the same level.
- Members of the senior leadership team will make themselves aware of and understand their role within the local safeguarding arrangements. This will ensure that those responsible for managing behaviour, inclusion, Special Educational Needs, attendance, and exclusions carry out their duties with a safeguarding consideration.
- The Designated Teacher for Looked After Learners will undergo appropriate training to fulfil their role to promote the educational achievement of registered learners who are in care.
- The mental health lead has access to appropriate training.
- Training around safeguarding issues outlined in the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (including online safety and filtering and monitoring) will be integrated, aligned, and considered as part of a whole-school safeguarding approach.

- Appropriate colleagues have received suitable training in relation to use of reasonable force and positive handling.
- Members of Local Partnership Boards and Trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training.

7. Safeguarding and the Curriculum

All Trust schools/academies are committed to ensuring that Learners are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. We recognise that effective education should be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual Learners, including Learners who are victims of abuse, and Learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This includes:

- Working within statutory guidance in respect to [Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#); and [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) Statutory Framework](#)
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, to explore key issues at an age-appropriate stage such as:
 - healthy and respectful relationships
 - boundaries and consent
 - stereotyping, prejudice and equality
 - body confidence and self-esteem
 - how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
 - the concepts of, and laws relating to - sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called 'honour'-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support, and
 - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence, and why these are always unacceptable.
- A whole-school preventative education approach that prepares learners for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, racism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/harassment, derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence and conflict.
- Appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to ensure that 'over-blocking' does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what learners can be taught about online teaching and safeguarding. (Further information can be found in KCSIE 2026, page 40)
- The curriculum will be shaped to respond to safeguarding incident patterns in the setting identified by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding team (e.g., to respond to an increase in bullying incidents).
- Providing engagement opportunities with parents and carers to consult on key aspects of the curriculum.
- Learners can inform the curriculum via learner voice/school councils

8. Safer Recruitment and Safer Working Practice

8.1 Safer Recruitment

All Trust schools/academies must pay full regard to the required safer recruitment practices detailed in Keeping Learners Safe in Education, Part Three (2026), which include:

- Scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history, and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. References are always received, scrutinised and concerns resolved satisfactorily before the appointment is confirmed.
- Ensuring we maintain an accurate Single Central Record.
- Undertaking appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the barred list checks and prohibition checks (and overseas checks if appropriate), dependent on the role and duties performed. An enhanced DBS with barred list check will be completed for all volunteers taking part in regulated activity in line with the Crime and Policing Act 2026. Under no circumstances will a volunteer, employee or contractor on whom the required checks have not been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

8.1.1 Work Experience

Where a person supervising a Learner on a work experience placement for a Learner under the age of 16 provides teaching, training, instruction, care or supervision frequently, on more than 3 days in a 30-day period, or overnight, this is regulated activity and an enhanced DBS with barred list check will be requested.

The Trust cannot request an enhanced DBS check with barred list information from a work experience provider for staff supervising Learners aged 16 to 17; instead, the school/academy will seek assurance that the placement provider has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place before any placement begins.

- Online searches will be used as part of our due diligence checks on short-listed candidates.
- Assurances are sought for contractors who are required on site, including identification checks on arrival.

8.2 Visitors

All visitors to any Trust school/academy must complete a sign-in/out process, wear a school ID badge, and are provided with key safeguarding information, including the contact details of safeguarding personnel in the school.

Scheduled visitors in a professional role (e.g. fire officer, police, LA staff) are asked to provide evidence of their role and employment details (usually an identity badge) upon arrival at school. Careful consideration is given to the suitability of any external organisations. Professionals may also be required to provide a letter of assurance from their organisation that safer recruitment checks have been completed.

If the visit is unscheduled and the visitor is unknown to the school, we will contact the relevant organisation to verify the individual's identity, if necessary.

8.3 Site Safety

Risk assessments are conducted and maintained in accordance with the school/academy's Health and Safety Policy. Where school/academy premises are hired or rented to another organisation, the school/academy will seek assurance that the provider has appropriate safeguarding and Learner protection policies and procedures in place, including inspecting these where needed, and will ensure there are arrangements for the provider to liaise with the school/academy on safeguarding matters. Safeguarding requirements will be included as a condition of use in any lease or hire agreement, and failure to comply with this could lead to termination of that agreement.

8.4 Off-site visits

We conduct a risk assessment prior to any off-site visit and assign specific roles and responsibilities to each adult, whether employed or a volunteer. (Please refer to the Educational Visits Policy for more details).

8.5 Use of Restrictive Interventions

Restrictive Interventions and reasonable force refers to the physical contact used to restrain and control Learners, using no more force than is necessary. The use of reasonable force is a matter of professional judgment for the staff member concerned and will be determined by individual circumstances. The vulnerability of any Learner with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) will also be considered.

The use of reasonable force will be minimised through positive and proactive behaviour support and de-escalation, and will follow government guidance outlined below:

- [Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance](#)

There is robust recording of any incident where positive handling or restraint has been used. Further review of the incident is carried out to reflect on how the incident could be avoided, this will involve the Learner and their family.

8.6 Concerns regarding staff members

Staff must report any concern, allegation or incident relating to the behaviour of a professional directly to the Headteacher or Executive Headteacher in the first instance. This includes concerns relating to members of staff, supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, contractors, visitors and individuals working for organisations using school or academy premises.

The following reporting and escalation routes must be followed:

- Concerns about any professional must be reported directly to the Headteacher or Executive Headteacher or Head of the setting.
- Concerns about the Headteacher or Executive Headteacher or Head of the setting must be reported directly to Jayne Keller, Chief Executive of the Wessex Learning Trust, via email at jkeller@wltrust.org.uk or by telephone through the Trust Central Office on 01934 745 348.

- Concerns about Jayne Keller, Chief Executive, must be reported directly to Paul Jacobs, Chair of the Wessex Learning Trust Board of Trustees via email at pjacobs@wltrust.org.uk or by telephone through the Trust Central Office on 01934 745 348.

8.7 Whistleblowing Procedures

Staff must be aware of the following whistleblowing channels for situations where they feel unable to raise an issue with the senior leadership team or feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed:

- Trust Whistleblowing Policy – available on the Wessex Learning Trust website, staff intranet (My Wessex) and the staffroom of each school.
- General guidance and advice on whistleblowing: <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>.
- The [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](https://www.nspcc.org.uk) is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding Learner protection failures internally. Staff can also call 0800 028 0285 or email help@nspcc.org.uk. Phone lines are open from 8 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday.

9. Early Years settings within schools including reception aged Learners

9.1 Legal and policy framework

Some schools within the Wessex learning Trust are delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which means we are required to meet the specific safeguarding and Learner protection duties set out in the [Learnercare Act 2006](#), the [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK](#) and other related statutory guidance

Wessex Learning Trust schools will ensure that Learners taught in nursery/preschool and reception classes are able to learn and develop and are kept safe and healthy so that they are ready for school by providing a safe, secure learning environment that safeguards and promotes their welfare, and takes appropriate action where there are Learner protection concerns.

9.2 Suitable people

When employing early years staff schools will follow the school's Safer Recruitment processes to ensure that staff and volunteers who are recruited to work in the early years setting are carefully selected and vetted to ensure they are suitable to work with Learners and have the relevant qualifications.

Schools will not allow anyone whose suitability has not been checked, including through a criminal records check, to have unsupervised contact with Learners being cared for.

Staff policies will apply equally to staff and volunteers in the early years settings, and the school will ensure that they receive proper training and induction so that they are aware of their role and responsibilities, all school policies and the school's expectations regarding conduct and safe teaching practice.

Whenever an allegation is made against a member of staff (including support staff) in the early years setting, we will follow the school Policy. We will also inform Ofsted as soon as possible or within 14

days of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by anyone, working or looking after Learners at the premises whether the allegations of harm or abuse are alleged to have been committed on the premises or elsewhere, for example, on a visit.

Where early years staff are taking medication that may affect their ability to care for young Learners, they need to notify the head teacher and seek medical advice. Practitioners will only be allowed to directly work with Learners if the medical advice received confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair that person's ability to look after Learners properly. All medication on the premises will be stored securely, and out of reach of Learners, at all times.

9.3 Staff training, skills and supervision

Schools will ensure that:

- All staff in early years settings have the relevant qualifications and skills for their role and receive the relevant induction, Learner protection and safeguarding training in line with this policy;
- All early year's staff who have contact with Learners and families will receive supervision that helps them to effectively safeguard Learners by providing opportunities to discuss any issues – particularly concerning Learners' development or well-being, including Learner protection concerns and Identify solutions to address issues as they arise.
- All early year's staff are able to communicate effectively in English both orally and in writing;
- A member of staff who holds a current paediatric first aid certificate is available on the school premises at all times and accompanies Learners on school trips; and
- Each Learner in the early years setting has a designated keyworker who liaises with parents to provide individual support for the Learner.

9.4 Staff ratios

Schools will ensure that:

- Staff levels within the early years setting comply with statutory guidance and can meet the needs of the Learners, provide suitable levels of supervision and keep them safe;
- Parents are kept informed of staff members and numbers; and
- Learners are kept within staff sight and hearing at all times.

9.5 Health

Schools will:

- Promote the health of Learners attending the early years provision;
- Take necessary steps to stop the spread of infection;
- Administer medicines only in line with the school's policy;
- Take appropriate action where Learners are ill;
- Ensure any meals provided are nutritious and prepared in a hygienic manner; and
- Notify Ofsted of any serious accident, illness or death of any Learner whilst attending the early years setting within 14 days.

9.6 Health and safety and suitability of premises

Schools will ensure that all indoor and outdoor spaces and facilities used for early years are safe and fit for purpose and comply with school policies and standards for site safety and health and safety.

Additionally, the school will ensure that all potential hazards within the school and during school trips are regularly risk assessed.

Schools have specific procedures for ensuring that records of parents' details and contact numbers for emergencies which are kept up to date and that Learners are released to the care of their parent or other responsible adult with the parent's consent at the end of the day as well as procedures for dealing with uncollected Learners.

9.7 Managing behaviour

Schools will take all reasonable steps to ensure that behaviour management techniques are appropriate to the Learner's age and that corporal punishment is not used or threatened. However, staff will be permitted to use appropriate physical intervention in line with the school policy, local procedures and any plans which will be specific for each Learner depending on their situation. We will keep a record of any occasion where physical intervention is used and parents/carers will be informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

9.8 Attendance

Although statutory attendance requirements apply from the term after a Learner turns five, we recognise the importance of establishing strong attendance habits from the earliest stages of education. Regular attendance in early years lays the foundation for future learning, wellbeing, and safeguarding.

1. Expectations and Responsibilities

- Parents and carers are expected to ensure that Learners attend their early years provision regularly and punctually, even if attendance is not yet compulsory.
- We will maintain accurate daily attendance records for all Learners in our provision.
- Absences should be reported by parents/carers on the first day, with a clear reason provided. Unexplained or prolonged absences will be followed up in line with safeguarding procedures.

2. Safeguarding and Early Intervention

- In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and the EYFS statutory framework, persistent or unexplained absence in early years may be treated as a safeguarding concern.
- Schools/academies will make timely contact with parents and carers and escalate concerns where necessary, including the use of multiple emergency contacts and referrals to external agencies if appropriate.
- Attendance concerns will be addressed through early help processes, with support offered to families to overcome barriers such as routines, transport, or health-related issues.

3. Promoting Positive Attendance

- Schools/academies will work in partnership with parents to promote the benefits of regular attendance from the outset, using induction meetings, newsletters, and parent workshops to reinforce expectations.
- Staff are trained to recognise the impact of absence in early years and to respond with sensitivity and support.

Part 2 – Procedures

1. Reporting concerns

All staff must be clear about recording and reporting concerns to the DSL/DSL deputies in a timely way. In the case that a learner is in immediate danger, staff should phone the Police on 999 and inform the DSL that they have done so.

Learners in each Trust school/academy will be told how to raise a concern and what mechanism they can use. They will be informed that any referral will be treated seriously.

2. Information Sharing

All Trust schools/academies are committed to having due regard to relevant data protection principles, which allow for sharing and withholding personal information as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulations. This includes how to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal and should be treated as 'special category personal data'.

Staff at the setting are aware that:

- 'Safeguarding' and 'individuals at risk' are processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data.
- Practitioners will seek consent to share data where possible in line with [Information Sharing for Safeguarding Practitioners 2024](#).

2.1 There may be times when it is necessary to share information without consent, such as:

- To gain consent would place the Learner at risk.
- Not doing so would compromise a criminal investigation.
- It cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent.
- Or, if by sharing information it will enhance the safeguarding of a Learner promptly, but it is not possible to gain consent.

2.3 There are also times when Wessex Learning Trust Schools/academies will not provide learner's personal data where the serious harm test under legislation is met, (by sharing the information the Learner may be at further risk). When in doubt the DSL will seek legal advice.

2.4 The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping Learners safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of Learners.

2.5 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners

The DSL and Deputy DSL will regularly review and monitor those Learners who have been identified as vulnerable and those Learners who are potentially at greater risk or harm. This can include

reviewing attendance data, behaviour data, attainment data and safeguarding records. This is to ensure that:

- Proportionate and early interventions can be taken to promote the safety and welfare of the Learner and prevent escalation of harm.
- Information is shared with teachers and school and college leadership staff to promote educational outcomes.
- Learners who currently have, or have had, a social worker, including those in kinship care, will have their academic progress and attainment reviewed and additional academic support will be provided to help them reach their full potential.
- Reasonable adjustments are made in relation to school-based interventions – for example responding to behaviour.

2.6 multi-agency working

We recognise that education providers have daily contact with most Learners and families, and we are uniquely placed to identify concerns and, with partners as appropriate, address them early.

Schools will work together with appropriate agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of Learners including identifying and responding to their needs. This follows statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#).

All staff are aware of the criteria and process for community-based Family Help assessments including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to Family Help support and services provided at:

- Targeted early help level (under sections 10 and 11 of the Children's Act 2004), and
- Statutory services delivered under section 17 of the Children's Act 1989 (children in need, including how this applies for disabled children)

All staff are aware of the criteria and process, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority Learners' social care for assessment and for statutory services under Section 47 of the Learners Act 1989 (reasonable cause to suspect a Learner is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm)

- Section 31 of the Learners Act 1989 (care and supervision orders), and
- Section 20 of the Learners Act 1989 (duty to accommodate a Learner)

Referrals in these cases should be made by the DSL (or Deputy DSL) to Learners' Social Care in the Local Authority in which that Learner resides.

Schools will co-operate with any statutory safeguarding assessments conducted by Learners' social care: this includes providing written reports and ensuring representation at inter-agency meetings such as integrated support plan meetings, initial and review Learner protection conferences and core group meetings.

2.7 Learners Missing from Education

A learner missing or absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, or maybe an indicator of need for early help support. Staff should follow procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with Learners that go missing or are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions.

Schools will follow the guidance detailed in [Learners Missing Education \(2016\)](#), [Working together to improve school attendance 2026](#) and Somerset Council policy for Learners Missing from Education. We will comply with submitting attendance returns to the Local Authority within the agreed timescales.

This will include notifying the local authority in which the Learner lives:

- of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly,
- or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more,
- or who has been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

2.8 Elective Home Education

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a Learner from school with a view to educating at home, schools and other key professionals will work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. This would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each Learner. This is particularly important where a Learner has special educational needs or a disability, and/or has a social worker, and/or is otherwise vulnerable. Where a Learner is subject to a Child protection plan or has an Education, Health and Care plan this will need to be reviewed with the local authority, working closely with parents and carers.

In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 schools/academies will notify the Local Authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register. Safeguarding concerns will be shared with the Attendance Monitoring Service and where required, a request for additional support from children's services will be made in line with the Children's Act 1989.

3. Responding to incidents of Child-on-Child abuse

3.1 Child on Child Abuse

All Learners have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. All Child-on-Child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. In addition, all schools/academies have a zero-tolerance approach and will respond to all reports and concerns of Child-on-Child abuse and Child-on-Child violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school, and/or online.

Child-on-Child abuse is not tolerated, passed off as "banter" or seen as "part of growing up". The different forms of Child-on-Child abuse is likely to include, but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyber bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers (teenage relationship abuse)

- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm
- physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon
- harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment – which may include misogyny/misandry.
- consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi nudes, including those generated using AI
- 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.
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

We recognise that, for some (but not all) forms of Child-on-Child abuse, it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators; however, all Child-on-Child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously regardless of the sex of those involved (KCSIE 2026, para 191).

Child-on-Child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator, who may themselves need support; it is preventable, and staff have a responsibility to report any concerns to the DSL regardless of whether the incident happened on or off site.

Sexual harassment and violence between Learners can be linked to wider cultures of misogyny all schools will consider this link when planning its curriculum and pastoral response.

Consequently, Child-on-Child abuse is dealt with as a safeguarding issue and recorded as such, not managed through the systems set out in the behaviour policy.

- Any Learner who may have been victimised and/or displayed such harmful behaviours, along with any other Learner affected by Child-on-Child abuse, will be supported through the setting's safeguarding team and pastoral system and the support will be regularly monitored and reviewed.
- We will address inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) as this can be an important intervention that may help prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.
- We acknowledge that even if there are no reported cases of Child-on-Child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported. Staff maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

We minimise the risk of Child-on-Child abuse by providing:

- a relevant, effective curriculum, that helps Learners to develop their understanding of acceptable behaviours, healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe. The curriculum is updated to reflect changes in legislation, and the mandatory teaching of Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education,
- established/publicised systems for Learners to raise concerns with staff, knowing they will be listened to, supported and valued, and that the issues they raise will be taken seriously,
- training to all staff so they understand that Child-on-Child abuse can and does happen and are trained to be alert to any behaviours that could cause concern,
- a clear procedure for all staff to report all incidents as a safeguarding concern to the school DSL/ Deputy DSL.

3.2 Child-on-Child sexual harassment and sexual violence

The DSL will follow local and national guidance when there has been signs, reports or concerns of Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB), Child-on-Child sexual harassment and sexual violence having due regard of Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. This will include liaising with other professionals to develop robust risk and needs assessments and multi-agency safety planning with appropriate specialist targeted work for Learners who are identified as posing a potential risk to other Learners.

The [Somerset Harmful Sexual Behaviour Protocol - Somerset Safeguarding Learners Partnership](#) should be utilised to inform assessment of risk and what actions to subsequently take. Any assessments need to take an extra-familial safeguarding approach to consider risks posed by any wider environmental factors present in a Learner's life. The DSL will record specifically the time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer.

Schools will consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

When an incident involves an act of **sexual violence** (rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault) the starting point is that this should be passed on to police **regardless** of the age of criminal responsibility (10 years old). This must be reported directly via 101 for recording purposes and accountability. A concurrent referral to social care must also be made.

Where a report includes an online element, we will follow [Searching, screening and confiscation at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with Learners and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a Learner. The highlighted advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable.

- The NSPCC has a dedicated helpline 0800 136 663 to provide Learners who are victims of sexual abuse in schools with appropriate support and advice. The helpline also provides support to parents and professionals.
- The Lucy Faithfull Foundation can provide support to anyone with concerns about Learner sexual abuse [Helpline - Stop It Now](#)
- The Lucy Faithfull Foundation's, Shore Space, offers a confidential chat service for teenagers worried about sexual behaviour. [Home - Shore](#)

3.3 Extra familial safeguarding approach to Child-on-Child abuse

Schools/academies will minimise the risk of Child-on-Child abuse by understanding extra-familial risks and will increase safety in the contexts of which harm can occur – this can include the school environment itself, peer groups and the neighbourhood.

Following any incidents of Child-on-Child abuse, the DSL will review and consider whether any practice or environmental changes can be made in relation to any lessons learned. This can include making changes to staffing and supervision, making changes to the physical environment and considering the utilisation and delivery of safeguarding topics in the curriculum.

4. Mental Health and wellbeing

schools/academies have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their learners. Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a Learner has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation, and or may require early help support or the involvement of a more specialist service.

This can include self-harm, signs of an eating disorder, suicidal ideation or suicide. Where a mental health concern may indicate that a Learner is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect or exploitation, staff will follow the setting's usual safeguarding reporting route to the DSL without delay, so the concern can be assessed alongside any other information held about the Learner (KCSIE 2026, para 225).

Schools/academies will ensure that preventative measures in terms of providing safeguarding on the curriculum will provide opportunities for learners to identify when they may need help, and to develop resilience.

Every setting will take a 'whole school approach' to:

- deliver high-quality teaching around mental health and wellbeing on the curriculum.
- having a culture that promotes mental health and wellbeing;
- having an environment that promotes mental health and wellbeing;
- making sure Learners and staff are aware of and able to access a range of mental health services;
- supporting staff wellbeing
- And being committed to Learner and parent participation

Every school/academy:

- Has a senior mental health lead who supports the development of knowledge and acts as a point of expertise to promote the wellbeing and mental health of learners. They have sufficient training in mental health **and** safeguarding for them to carry out their role effectively.
- Reviews attendance, behaviour, attainment, and safeguarding records at least on a termly basis to enable early identification of vulnerability to mental health problems
- Ensures staff follow a safeguarding process in terms of reporting concerns so the DSL (and wider members of the safeguarding team such as the SENDCo) can assess whether there are any other vulnerabilities can be identified and proportionate support considered.
- Responds to the immediate health and safety of a learner who is displaying acute mental health distress. This may require support from emergency services via 999 if the learner is at risk of immediate harm.
- The DSL will consider whether a case can be managed internally, through early help, or should involve other agencies.
- Communicates and works with the learner and parents/carers to ensure that interventions are in the best interests of the Learner.
- The DSL liaises with staff to ensure reasonable adjustments are made and develop ways to support achieving positive educational outcomes.

- Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem – DSLs and the senior leadership team access specialist advice through targeted services.
- We utilise the Mental Health in Schools Team (MHST) for early intervention and advice, and signpost staff, learners and families to NHS Every Mind Matters and the Hub of Hope, the UK's mental health support database (KCSIE 2026, paras 230-232).

5. Online Safety

Online safety is an integrated and interwoven theme with other safeguarding considerations. The DSL takes a lead on ensuring that interventions are effective. This means coordinating support and engaging with other colleagues in the setting who may have more technological expertise such as the IT manager.

Wessex Learning Trust Schools are committed to addressing online safety issues around content, contact, conduct and commerce. This includes:

- Ensuring that online safety is included in relevant policies and procedures.
- Online safety is interwoven in safeguarding training for staff and safeguarding on the curriculum for learners.
- Acknowledging that Child-on-Child abuse can happen via mobile and smart technology between individuals and groups.
- Provision of education via remote learning will comply with governmental advice [Safeguarding and remote education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/safeguarding-and-remote-education)
- The effectiveness of the setting's ability to safeguarding learners in respect to filtering and monitoring, information security and access management alongside the above will be reviewed annually.
- Preparing Learners with information for any online challenges and hoaxes, sharing information with parents and where to get help.
- Being alert to emerging online risks, including AI-generated content, deepfakes and 'nudification' apps which can be used to create fake sexual images of a Learner, and the spread of misinformation and disinformation online.
- Helping Learners understand how to protect their personal information online and think carefully before sharing images of themselves or others.
- Schools operates as a mobile phone-free environment by default; pupils do not have access to their mobile phone during the school day, including lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime, other than by exception.
- Paragraph 162 to 182 of Keeping Children Safe in Education highlights additional actions schools should take to keep learners safe online.
- For concerns around individual cases where a Learner has been harmed through online mediums, advice and guidance can be made through the **Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline**, T: 0344 381 4772, E: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
- Where there have been established cases of online abuse or grooming, we will alert - **Learner Exploitation and Online Protection command (CEOPS)** <https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/>

6. Gender-questioning Learners

Wessex Learning Trust Schools have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all Learners, including any Learner who is questioning their gender, as well as their peers, and will consider the impact of any decision on all Learners affected risk/needs assessments will be considered (further information can be found in KCSIE 2026, para 251-282).

Where a Learner asks for support with social transition, we will:

- engage parents/carers as a priority and give their views considerable weight, except in the rare circumstances where doing so would place the Learner at greater risk – in which case the DSL will determine what action is needed to safeguard the Learner before parents/carers are contacted;
- take a careful approach, recognising that social transition is an active intervention that may have significant effects on a Learner's wellbeing and longer-term outcomes, and that primary-aged Learners in particular are very unlikely to be supported in a full social transition;
- consider what is in the best interests of the Learner and of other Learners, drawing on clinical and non-clinical professional advice (for example from the SENCo) where relevant, and taking into account any wider health issues or neurodiversity;
- document the decision-making process and keep records, including where a request is not agreed to; ensure that toilets, changing rooms, and boarding/residential accommodation designated for one biological sex are not made available to a Learner of the other biological sex, including as a form of social transition.
- comply with the setting's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998, considering whether any policy would place a gender-questioning Learner at a disadvantage relative to other Learners, and linking this consideration to the setting's wider inclusion and equality processes.

7. Safeguarding Learners with medical conditions

An incident relating to the management of a Learner or young person's medical condition (including allergies) would not warrant a referral to local safeguarding partners. However, we will make a referral to statutory services where an incident indicates the Learner may be at increased risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation connected to their medical condition – for example, where relevant medical information is not provided to the setting, or a Learner is repeatedly sent without essential medication.

8. Specific actions to take on key safeguarding areas

A summary of specific duties is in [Keeping Children safe in education 2026](#)

Weapons and Serious violence

All staff are aware of the indicators, which may signal Learners are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in educational performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that Learners have been approached by, or

are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

Child Exploitation – both Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Schools within the Wessex Learning Trust will ensure that early help intervention is provided as soon as a concern of exploitation is identified. We will utilise the SSCP [Learner-Exploitation-Initial-Response-Pathway Including-Serious-Youth-Violence 01.2026.pdf](#) and seek advice from targeted services to consider what support may be available. The learner and their families will be part of any planning and interventions.

- If the learner is at risk of CSE or there is intelligence which indicates that the learner or peer group are at risk of CSE, schools will share information with Operation Topaz (the police). This information will support proactive activity to disrupt criminal activity in relation to sexual exploitation. [Report Learner sexual exploitation | Avon and Somerset Police](#)
- If the learner is at risk of CCE information should be shared with the police [Tell us about vulnerable or exploited people, exploiters, or organised crime | Avon and Somerset Police](#). Targeted support may be available to disrupt learners from getting involved with criminality.
- Agencies will share 'Missing persons' notifications (when a learner is reported missing from home or care) with education settings with a view to support them to take proactive action and reasonable adjustments in relation to behaviour management and achieving positive educational outcomes. These should be stored securely on the learner's Safeguarding/Child Protection file.

Further support and information can be found here: [Preventing Learner Sexual Exploitation | The Learners' Society](#)

Domestic Abuse

All Learners can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on Learners. In some cases, a Learner may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of Child-on-Child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any Learner under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, Child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

Operation Encompass is a national operation where local police forces notify education settings when the police are called to an incident of domestic abuse. Education Settings will be notified when the police have responded to a domestic abuse incident. This will enable the education setting to take proactive action and reasonable adjustments in relation to behaviour management and achieving positive educational outcomes. When a setting is concerned about the amount of police notifications they receive or disclosures of domestic abuse, they should consider seeking further advice and completing an Early Help Assessment or DASH to support the family.

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. [Homepage - National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#) provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked.

Female Genital Mutilation

There is a legal duty for all professionals undertaking teaching work to report known cases of FGM to the police via 101. This is when they:

1. are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
2. observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on.

These cases must be referred to the DSL who will support staff to carry out their duty. It is also advised any referrals made to the police under the mandatory reporting duty is followed up with Children's social care, so an assessment of need and support is concurrently considered.

Learner Sexual Abuse

Mandatory reporting duty:

There is a legal duty for those taking part in regulated activity to report if they:

- are told that a Learner (person under the age of 18) has been sexually abused, either by a Learner or an adult involved
- witness Learner sexual abuse in person
- see or hear it in the form of images, videos or audio recordings.

These cases must be referred to the DSL who will support staff to carry out their duty. It is also advised any referrals made to the police under the mandatory reporting duty is followed up with Children's social care, so an assessment of need and support is concurrently considered.

Generative AI

Wessex Learning Trust schools recognises the safeguarding, data protection and intellectual property considerations arising from the use of Generative AI (whether teacher-facing or pupil-facing) in education. Staff will have regard to the Department for Education's guidance on [Generative artificial intelligence in education](#), and to related sector resources on identifying and mitigating the associated safeguarding risks, when considering the use of AI tools in the setting (KCSIE 2026, paras 165-166). Staff should also be aware that images or videos of a sexual nature generated using AI are treated in the same way as other nudes and semi-nudes for safeguarding purposes.

The Prevent Duty.

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard" to the need to "prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools/academies wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the revised [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales](#), especially paragraphs 57-76, which are specifically concerned with schools.

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a Learner:

- under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled)

- by someone other than a parent or close relative (*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.)
- with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

Cases of private fostering arrangements must be reported to children's social care to ensure that needs are adequately made.

Statutory guidance states that this should be done at least 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to start or as soon as you are made aware of the arrangements. Not to do so is a criminal offence.

Further support and reasonable adjustments should be made by the education setting to promote achievement of positive educational outcomes.

Young Carers

A young carer is a person under 18 who regularly provides emotional and/or practical support and assistance for a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally unwell or who misuses substances. Support for Young Carers can be accessed by completing an EHA.

Sport and single-sex provision

KCSIE 2026 sets out that schools may separate Learners by biological sex for single-sex sport and competitive activity where physical strength, stamina or physique would otherwise create a safety or fairness disadvantage. Some sports may need to be single sex from a certain age for safety reasons, in which case there must be no exceptions. Requests relating to how a Learner participates will be considered against the guidance on 'considering requests for support with social transition', taking into account the best interests of the Learner, the impact on other Learners, and the aim of creating a safe and fair environment (KCSIE 2026, paras 95-98).

Toilets, changing rooms and boarding/residential accommodation

Wessex Learning Trust schools will not allow Learners into toilets, changing rooms or overnight/boarding accommodation designated for the opposite biological sex, including in response to a request to support social transition.

Separate toilets are provided for boys and girls aged 8 and over. Some Wessex schools will have toilets that are individual in one room and can be secured from the inside which is intended for use by one pupil at a time. Separate changing accommodation is provided for pupils aged 11 and over, in line with the School Premises (England) Regulations 2012 and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Where a gender-questioning Learner does not wish to use the facilities designated for their biological sex, schools will consider whether an alternative, self-contained facility can be provided without compromising single-sex provision for other Learners. Any such arrangements will be recorded, communicated appropriately, and reviewed regularly.

Wessex Learning Trust DSL (Designated Safeguarding) List 2026

Name of School	DSL	Contact Number
Axbridge	Dom Shillabeer	01934 732391
Brent Knoll	Chris Burman	01278 760546
Central Safeguarding Services	Dawn Tomkies	01934 745363
Cheddar	Suzi Smith	01934 742546
Crispin	Sam Harvey	01458 442714
Croscombe	Chris Partridge	01749 343114
Draycott	Sarah Netto	01934 742052
East Brent	Katie Whiting	01278 760490
Elmhurst	Fiona Airey	01458 442979
Fairlands	Rebecca Bennett	01934 743186
HSMS	Roberta Adair	01934 712211
Kewstoke	Niel Champs	01934 623430
Kings	Kaye Lowis	01934 742604
Lympsham	Katie Whiting	01934 750473
Mark	Oliver Laken	01278 641262
Nailsea	Dom Graffagnino	01275 852251
Sandford	Oliver Laken	01934 852602
Shipham	Sarah Netto	01934 643485
St Cuthberts Infants	Sheryl Cooper	01749 672591
St Cuthberts Junior	Fiona Airey	01749 678066
Stoke St Michael	Chris Partridge	01749 840470
Weare	Chelsey Dover	01934 732270
Wedmore	Shelley Kent	01934 712643
Winscombe	Paula Baker	01943 843407

Reporting Concerns About Professional Behaviour

Staff must report any concern, allegation or incident relating to the behaviour of a professional directly to the Headteacher or Executive Headteacher in the first instance. This includes concerns relating to members of staff, supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, contractors, visitors and individuals working for organisations using school or academy premises.

The following reporting and escalation routes must be followed:



Somerset Emergency Contact Numbers

If you are worried about a child or young person or need some advice, please reach out:

Children's social care – **0300 123 2224** (Mon – Fri 8:30am – 5pm)

Emergency Duty Team – **0300 123 2327** (Out of hours)

Police (Non-Emergency) - Dial **101** to report non-urgent concerns or to discuss a situation that requires Children's Social Care involvement

Emergency 999 – If a child is at immediate risk of danger

North Somerset Emergency Contact Numbers

If you are worried about a child or young person or need some advice, please reach out:

Concerns for possible abuse or general advice contact Care Connect by either phone on **01275 888 808** or email care.connect@n-somerset.gov.uk