

Best Foot Forward - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy KCSIE 2026

This is a core policy that forms part of the induction for all staff. It is a requirement that all members of staff have access to this policy and sign to say they have read and understood its contents.

This version is prepared for implementation from 1 September 2026, when Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 comes into force.

Date written: November 2024

Date of last update: August 2026

Agreed and ratified by Andrew Russell & Bethany Russell: August 2026

Date of next full review: September 2027

Effective from: 1 September 2026

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures.

Key Contacts

	Name	BEST FOOT FORWARD Contact Information
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Bethany Russell	beth@bestfootforward.org.uk 07394 950803
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Andrew Russell	andrew@bestfootforward.org.uk 07538 719783

Contents

• Steps to take if you have a welfare or safeguarding concern.
1. Child Focused Approach to Safeguarding
2. Key Responsibilities
3. Child Protection Procedures
4. Specific Safeguarding Issues
5. Supporting Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm
6. Online Safety
7. Staff Engagement and Expectations
8. Safer Recruitment and Allegations
9. Opportunities to teach safeguarding
10. Physical Safety
Appendix 1: Categories of Abuse
Appendix 2: Support Organisations

Act immediately and record your concerns if you believe that a child may be at risk of immediate or imminent significant harm. If urgent, speak to the DSL first.

Follow the BEST FOOT FORWARD procedure

- Reassure the child.
- Inform the DSL or Safeguarding Consultant.
- Clarify concerns, using open questions if necessary (TED: Tell, Explain, Describe).
- Use the child's own words, record facts, not opinions.
- Sign and date your records.
- Seek support for yourself if required from DSL or DDSL (Bethany Russell and Andrew Russell).

Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Bethany Russell, 07394950803)

Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Consider whether the child is at immediate risk of harm, e.g. unsafe to go home.
- Contact the referring agency (e.g. school, Local Authority, School) to discuss and jointly risk assess the situation.
- Refer to other agencies as appropriate in the event of not being able to speak to the referring agent, e.g. Internal or community services, universal services, community-based early help or targeted Family Help, LADO, Police or Request for Support for integrated children's services.
- If further advice is needed, then consult with:
 - The External Senior Safeguarding Advisor (Chris Tapley 07827 441659) or
 - Best Foot Forward DSL for BCP (Kathie Sweeney 07851 685318).

NB: Safeguarding is a shared responsibility. The commissioning school or referring agency retains responsibility for oversight of the child's education and wider safeguarding arrangements, while BEST FOOT FORWARD remains directly responsible for acting on concerns arising within its provision. Staff must not delay a referral or other protective action while awaiting contact with a referrer. Where a child is at immediate risk, BEST FOOT FORWARD will contact children's social care and/or the police without delay and inform the referring agency as soon as practicable.

It should be noted that the importance of mutual information-sharing is paramount in safeguarding any young person we are working with. BEST FOOT FORWARD are committed to information sharing with all relevant parties whilst working with a young person. The school or referring agent has an obligation to share any information pertinent to the safeguarding of any young person prior to BEST FOOT FORWARD working with them. Furthermore, the school or referring agent has an obligation to share any information pertinent to the safeguarding of a young person with BEST FOOT FORWARD on an ongoing basis. This information-sharing should include how any concerns that have been reported by BEST FOOT FORWARD will be actioned or escalated so that BEST FOOT FORWARD can be assured that best safeguarding practices are being adhered to.

If you are unhappy with the response

Staff:

- Follow local escalation procedures.
- Follow whistleblowing procedures.

Learners and Parents:

- Follow BEST FOOT FORWARD complaints procedures: email admin@bestfootforward.org.uk with details of events or contact the Local Authority directly or referring agent.
- At all stages, the child's circumstances will be kept under review.
- The DSL/Staff will request further support if required to ensure the child's safety is paramount.

Record decision-making and action taken in the learner's confidential safeguarding file and liaise with the referring agent's DSL for consultation, supplying all information.

Review and request further support if necessary.

Why are you concerned?

For example:

- Something a child has said – e.g. allegation of harm. It should be noted that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused.
- Child's appearance – may include unexplained marks as well as dress.
- Behaviour change
- Witnessed concerning behaviour

What to do if you have a welfare concern

Monitor

Be clear about:

- What you are monitoring, e.g. behaviour trends, appearance, etc.
- How long will you monitor.
- Where, how and to whom you will provide feedback and how you will record.

1. Child Focused Approach to Safeguarding

1.1 Introduction

- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognise our statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility, and all those directly connected (staff, volunteers, leaders, parents, families, and learners) are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children and have an essential role to play in making this community safe and secure.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD believe that the best interests of children always come first. All children (defined as those up to the age of 18) have a right to be heard and to have their wishes and feelings considered, and all children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal protection rights.
- In line with the Equality Act 2010, BEST FOOT FORWARD staff:
 - must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their protected characteristics.
 - must consider how they are supporting pupils with protected characteristics.
 - must take positive action, where proportionate, to deal with the disadvantages these pupils face. For example, by making reasonable adjustments for disabled children and supporting girls if there is evidence they are being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment.
- In addition, BEST FOOT FORWARD staff must be aware that pupils with protected characteristics may be more at risk of harm.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD staff will recognise the importance of providing lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) and gender-questioning children with a safe, respectful space in which to speak or share concerns. Staff will respond sensitively, consider individual safeguarding needs and follow current statutory guidance.
- Staff working with children at BEST FOOT FORWARD will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff will always act in the best interests of the child, and if any member of our community has a safeguarding concern about any child or adult, they should act immediately.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises the importance of providing an ethos and environment within BEST FOOT FORWARD provision that will help children to be safe and to feel safe. In BEST FOOT FORWARD, children are respected and are encouraged to talk openly. We will ensure children's wishes and feelings are considered when determining what safeguarding action to take and what services to provide.

- Our core safeguarding principles are:
 - **Prevention**
 - positive, supportive, safe culture, curriculum and pastoral opportunities for children, safer recruitment procedures.
 - **Protection**
 - following the agreed procedures as outlined above, ensuring all staff are trained and supported to recognise and respond appropriately and sensitively to safeguarding concerns.
 - **Support**
 - for all learners, parents and staff, and where appropriate, specific interventions are required for those who may be at risk of harm.
 - **Working with parents and other agencies**
 - to ensure timely, appropriate communications and actions are undertaken when safeguarding concerns arise.
- The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, including any temporary or third-party agency staff and volunteers, and are consistent with those outlined within KCSIE 2026.

1.2 Policy Context

- This policy is implemented in accordance with our compliance with the statutory guidance from the Department for Education, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2026 (KCSIE), which requires individual schools, colleges and educators to have an effective child protection policy.
- This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and related guidance. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE)
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, as updated
 - Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and relevant alternative provision guidance
 - Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000
 - Hampshire and Dorset Safeguarding Children Procedures
 - Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, where applicable
 - The Education Act 2002
 - The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
 - The Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015
- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires school governing bodies, local education authorities and further education institutions to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children who are pupils at a school, or who are students under 18 years of age. Such arrangements will have to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

1.3 Definition of Safeguarding

- In line with KCSIE 2026, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as:
providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
 - protecting children from maltreatment, whether 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, and
 - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD acknowledges that safeguarding includes a wide range of specific issues, including (but not limited to):
 - Abuse and neglect.
 - Bullying, including cyberbullying.
 - Children with family members in prison
 - Children Missing Education (CME)
 - Child missing from home or care.
 - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
 - Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
 - Contextual safeguarding (risks outside the family home)
 - County lines and gangs
 - Domestic abuse: can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional. Can impact children through seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse and/or experiencing it through their own intimate relationships.
 - Drugs and alcohol misuse
 - Fabricated or induced illness
 - Faith abuse
 - Gender based abuse and violence against women and girls
 - Hate
 - Homelessness
 - Human trafficking and modern slavery
 - Mental health
 - Making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes, including content that is digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence
 - Online safety
 - Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence)
 - Preventing radicalisation and extremism
 - Private fostering
 - Relationship abuse
 - Serious violence
 - Sexual violence and sexual harassment
 - So-called 'honour-based' abuse, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.
 - Upskirting

(Also see Part One and Annex A within 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2026)

1.4 Related Safeguarding Policies

- This policy is one of a series in the BEST FOOT FORWARD integrated safeguarding portfolio and should be read and actioned in conjunction with the policies as listed below:
 - Code of conduct/Behaviour policy
 - Anti-bullying
 - Data protection and information sharing
 - Health and safety procedure
 - Attendance
 - Risk assessments.
 - Managing allegations against staff
 - Safer recruitment procedure
 - Whistleblowing

1.5 Policy Compliance, Monitoring and Review

- BEST FOOT FORWARD will review this policy at least annually (as a minimum) and will update it as needed, so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt. The policy will also be revised following any national or local updates, significant local or national safeguarding events and/or learning, and/or any changes to our own procedures.
- All staff, including temporary staff, contractors and volunteers, will be provided with this policy and will read Part One of KCSIE 2026 in full. The DSL, DDSL, leaders and staff who work directly with children will also read Annex A. The DSL and DDSL will understand and follow Annex B, which sets out the role of the designated safeguarding lead.
- Parents/carers can obtain a copy of the BEST FOOT FORWARD Child Protection Policy and other related policies on request.
- The policy forms part of our BEST FOOT FORWARD development plan and will be reviewed annually by the leadership team and the Local Authority, who have responsibility for oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure regular reporting on safeguarding activity and systems to the correct referring agent and the Local Authority. The Local Authority will not receive details of individual learner situations or identifying features of families as part of their oversight responsibility.

2. Key Responsibilities

2.1 Governance and Leadership

- The Best Foot Forward leadership team has strategic responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements and will comply with applicable legislation, statutory guidance, local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and commissioning requirements.
- The leadership team will have regard to KCSIE 2026 and will ensure that policies, procedures, safer recruitment arrangements and training remain effective and legally compliant.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD has two nominated external Safeguarding Professionals for safeguarding. The nominated external Safeguarding Professionals will support the DSL and have oversight in ensuring that BEST FOOT FORWARD has an effective policy which interlinks with other related policies, that locally agreed procedures are in place and being followed, and that the policies are reviewed at least annually and when required.
- The leadership team will ensure that the DSL is supported, has sufficient time and resources, and has reliable cover arrangements so that safeguarding concerns can always be discussed and acted upon promptly.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD will ensure that our child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are understood and followed by all staff.

2.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- BEST FOOT FORWARD has appointed Bethany Russell, a member of the senior leadership team and CEO, as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- The DSL has overall responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of safeguarding and child protection systems (including online safety) in BEST FOOT FORWARD. Whilst the activities of the DSL may be delegated to the deputy, the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the DSL, and this responsibility will not be delegated.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD has also appointed a Deputy DSL who will have delegated responsibilities and act in the DSL's absence.

The DSL or DDSL will be available during provision hours to discuss safeguarding concerns. Cover arrangements will include access to the secure safeguarding system and a confidential shared safeguarding mailbox/telephone route, with clear escalation arrangements where neither is immediately available. Lack of availability must never delay appropriate action.

- Andrew Russell, CEO. 07538 719783

- It is the role of the DSL to carry out their functions as identified in Annex B of KCSIE 2026. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Acting as the central contact point for all staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
 - Maintaining a confidential recording system for safeguarding and child protection concerns
 - Coordinating safeguarding action for individual children
 - When supporting children with a social worker or looked-after children the DSL should have the details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child. This information should be provided by the referring agency/school, and it remains their responsibility to ensure this information is provided to BEST FOOT FORWARD as part of good working practice and information-sharing obligations.
 - Liaising with other agencies and professionals in line with KCSIE 2026 and WTSC 2018
 - Ensuring that locally established procedures, as put in place by any Local Authority through which we are providing provision and the Children Multi-Agency Partnership procedures, including referrals, are followed, as necessary.
 - Representing, or ensuring BEST FOOT FORWARD is appropriately represented at multi-agency safeguarding meetings (including child protection conferences), if required.
 - Managing and monitoring BEST FOOT FORWARD's role in any multi-agency plan for a child.
 - Being available during term time (during BEST FOOT FORWARD hours) for staff in BEST FOOT FORWARD to discuss any safeguarding concerns.
 - Helping promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and BEST FOOT FORWARD leadership staff.
 - Ensuring adequate and appropriate DSL cover arrangements in response to any closures and out-of-hours and/or out-of-term activities.
 - Ensuring all staff have access to appropriate safeguarding training and relevant updates in line with the recommendations within KCSIE.
 - Informing the CEOs of any significant safeguarding issues.
- The DSL will undergo appropriate and specific training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. Deputy DSLs will be trained to the same standard as DSL. The DSLs training will be updated formally at least every two years, but their knowledge and skills will be updated through a variety of methods at regular intervals and at least annually.

2.3 Members of Staff

- All members of staff have a responsibility to:
 - Provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
 - Be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect so that they can identify cases of children who may need help or protection.
 - Know what to do if a child tells them that he or she is being abused or neglected, and understand the impact abuse and neglect can have upon a child.
 - Be able to identify and act upon indicators that children are, or at risk of developing, mental health issues.
 - Be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help.
 - Understand the early help process and their role in it.

Family Help and support before statutory intervention

Staff will distinguish between universal services and community-based early help, and the targeted early help level of Family Help. The DSL will use local threshold documents and referral pathways, contribute to inter-agency assessments, and keep cases under review. Where support is not improving the child's circumstances, or risk increases, the DSL will consider referral to local authority children's social care.

- Understand BEST FOOT FORWARD safeguarding policies and systems.
- Undertake regular and appropriate training which is regularly updated.
- Be aware of the local process of making referrals to children's social care and statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.
- Know how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality.
- Reassure children who report concerns that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

2.4 Children and Young People

- Children and young people (learners) have a right to:
 - Feel safe, be listened to, and have their wishes and feelings taken into account.
 - Confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.
 - Contribute to the development of BEST FOOT FORWARD safeguarding policies.
 - Receive help from a trusted adult.
 - Learn how to keep themselves safe, including online.

2.5 Parents and Carers

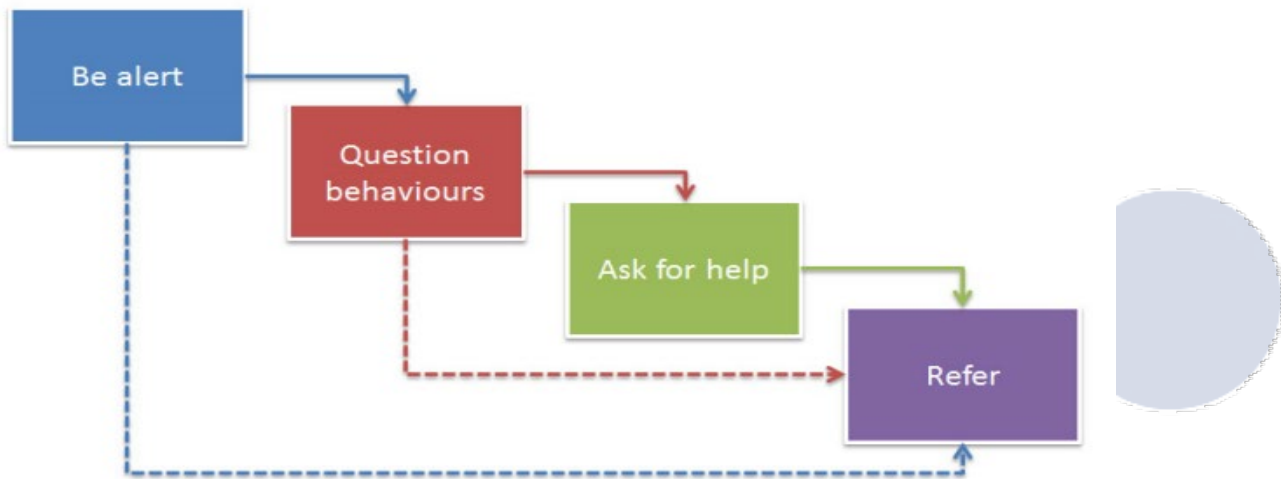
- Parents/carers have a responsibility to:
 - Understand and adhere to the relevant BEST FOOT FORWARD policies and procedures.
 - Talk to their children about safeguarding issues and support BEST FOOT FORWARD in their safeguarding approaches.
 - Identify behaviour which could indicate that their child is at risk of harm, including online.
 - Seek help and support from BEST FOOT FORWARD or other agencies.

3. Child Protection Procedures

3.1 Recognising Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

- All staff are made aware of the definitions and indicators of abuse and neglect as identified by Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. This is outlined locally on the appropriate Local Authorities' own websites.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognise that when assessing whether a child may be suffering actual or potential harm, there are four categories of abuse:
 - Physical abuse
 - Sexual abuse

- Emotional abuse
 - Neglect
 - For further information, see Appendix 1.
-
- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognise that concerns may arise in many different contexts and can vary greatly in terms of their nature and seriousness. The indicators of child abuse and neglect can vary from child to child. Children develop and mature at different rates, so what appears to be worrying behaviour for a younger child might be normal for an older child. It is important to recognise that indicators of abuse and neglect do not automatically mean a child is being abused; however, all concerns should be taken seriously and will be explored by the DSL on a case-by-case basis.
 - BEST FOOT FORWARD recognise that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot always be covered by one definition or one label alone. In many cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another; therefore, staff will always be vigilant and always raise concerns with a DSL.
 - Parental behaviours can indicate child abuse or neglect, so staff will be alert to parent-child interactions or concerning parental behaviours; this could include parents who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if there is a sudden change in their mental health.
 - Children may report abuse happening to themselves, their peers or their family members. All reports made by children to staff will be taken seriously and will be responded to in line with this policy.
 - Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors and risks outside BEST FOOT FORWARD. Children can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families; extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms, and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms, including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual abuse, serious youth violence and county lines.
 - Technology can be a significant component in many safeguarding and well-being issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face-to-face, and in many cases, abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life. Children can also abuse their peers online.
 - By understanding the indicators of abuse and neglect, we can respond to problems as early as possible and provide the right support and services for the child and their family.
 - All members of staff are expected to be aware of and follow this approach if they are concerned about a child:



'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' 2015

- In all cases, if further advice is needed, staff will always speak to the DSL (or deputy).
- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises that some children have additional or complex needs and may require access to intensive or specialist services to support them.

3.2 Responding to Child Protection Concerns

- If staff are made aware of a child protection concern, they are expected to:
 - Listen carefully to the concern and be non-judgmental.
 - only use open questions to clarify information where necessary, e.g. who, what, where, when or **Tell, Explain, Describe (TED)**.
 - not promise confidentiality as concerns will have to be shared further, for example, with the DSL and potentially Integrated Children's Services.
 - Be clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed.
 - record the concern in line with BEST FOOT FORWARD record-keeping requirements.
 - inform the DSL (or deputy) as soon as practically possible.
- The DSL or a deputy should always be available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If, in exceptional circumstances, a DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from the Education Safeguarding Service or via consultation with MASH/Children's Social Care. In these circumstances, any action taken will be shared with a DSL as soon as is practically possible.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD will respond to concerns in line with the Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership procedures (SCMP), if required to, through consultation with the school or referring agent. The exception to this would be in the case where BEST FOOT FORWARD cannot get hold of the school/referring agent and/or the child or an associate is at immediate risk of harm.

- Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger, a 'request for support' will be made immediately to the school or referring agent or Children's Service and/or the police, in line with procedures.
 - BEST FOOT FORWARD recognise that in situations where there are immediate child protection concerns for a child, as identified in line with Support Level Guidance, it is NOT to investigate as a single agency, but to act in line with Local Authority/school/referring agent guidance, which may involve multi-agency decision making.
 - The DSL may seek advice or guidance from their External Appointed Safeguarding Representatives.
 - They may also seek advice or guidance from a social worker at the appropriate Local Authority, who is the first point of contact for Integrated Children's Services (ICS).
- All staff are aware of the process for making requests for support referrals for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

3.3 Recording Concerns

- All safeguarding concerns, discussions and decisions, and reasons for those decisions, will be recorded in writing on BEST FOOT FORWARD safeguarding software, and passed without delay to the DSL.
- Safeguarding concerns logged on safeguarding software (CPOMS) are accessible by authorised personnel only, which requires the use of an authenticator code.
- Records will be completed as soon as possible after the incident/event, using the child's words, and will be signed and dated by the member of staff. Child protection records will record facts and not personal opinions. A body map will be completed if injuries have been observed.
- If there is an immediate safeguarding concern, the member of staff will consult with a DSL before completing the form, as reporting urgent concerns takes priority.
- If members of staff are in any doubt about recording requirements, they will discuss their concerns with the DSL.
- Child protection records will include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the concern was followed up and this will, in most cases, need to be provided by the referring agency/school.
- Child protection records will be kept confidential and stored securely. Child protection records will be kept for individual children and will be maintained separately from all other records relating to the child. BEST FOOT FORWARD child protection records are kept in accordance with data protection legislation and are retained centrally and securely by the DSL.
- Where BEST FOOT FORWARD receives child protection files, the DSL will ensure key staff will be made aware of relevant information as required.

3.4 Multi-Agency Working

- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises and is committed to its responsibility to work with any referring agent. The leadership team and DSL will work to establish strong and cooperative local relationships with professionals in other agencies in line with statutory guidance.

- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises the importance of multi-agency work and is committed to working alongside partner agencies to provide a coordinated response to promote children's welfare and protect them from harm. This includes contributing to Local Authority processes as required, such as participation in relevant safeguarding multi-agency plans and meetings, including Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups, Strategy Meetings, Child in Need meetings or other early help multi-agency meetings.

3.5 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises its duty and lawful powers to record, hold, use and share relevant information with appropriate agencies at the earliest opportunity in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and applicable data protection laws.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD has an appropriately trained Data Protection Officer (DPO) as required by the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) to ensure that BEST FOOT FORWARD is compliant with all matters relating to confidentiality and information sharing requirements.
- The Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 do not prevent information being shared for the purpose of safeguarding children. Fears about sharing information must not stand in the way of protecting a child. Records will include concerns, discussions, decisions, the reasons for decisions, action taken and outcomes, including where a referral was considered but not made. Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners
- The Senior Leadership Team and DSL will disclose relevant safeguarding information about a learner to staff on a 'need to know' basis.
- All members of staff must be aware that whilst they have duties to keep information confidential, in line with our confidentiality policy, they also have a professional responsibility to be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children; this may include sharing information with the DSL and with other agencies as appropriate. All staff are aware that they cannot promise confidentiality in situations which might compromise a child's safety or well-being.

3.6 Complaints

- All members of the BEST FOOT FORWARD community should feel able to raise or report any concerns about children's safety or potential failures in the BEST FOOT FORWARD safeguarding regime. BEST FOOT FORWARD has a complaints procedure available to parents, learners, members of staff and visitors who wish to report concerns or complaints. This can be requested by emailing admin@bestfootforward.org.uk.
- Whilst we encourage members of our community to report concerns and complaints directly to us, we recognise this may not always be possible. Children, young people, and adults who have experienced abuse can contact the NSPCC 'Report Abuse in Education' helpline on 0800 136 663 or via email: help@nspcc.org.uk

- Staff can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally.
 - Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.
- The leadership team at BEST FOOT FORWARD will take all concerns reported to BEST FOOT FORWARD seriously, and all complaints will be considered and responded to in line with the relevant and appropriate process.
 - Anything that constitutes an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with in line with section 8 of this policy.

4. Specific Safeguarding Issues

- BEST FOOT FORWARD is aware of a range of specific safeguarding issues and situations that can put children at greater risk of harm. In addition to Part One, the DSL and DDSL, BEST FOOT FORWARD leaders and staff who work directly with children will read Annex A of KCSIE 2026, which contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues.
- Where staff are unsure how to respond to specific safeguarding issues, they should follow the processes as identified in part 3 of this policy and speak with the DSL or a deputy.
- The Department for Education will be publishing guidance on supporting gender-questioning children. Once released, BEST FOOT FORWARD will follow the guidance, ensuring any approach remains child-centred, safeguarding-focused, and compliant with statutory expectations.

4.1 Child-on-Child Abuse

- All members of staff at BEST FOOT FORWARD recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers, and that it can happen both inside and outside of BEST FOOT FORWARD and online.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognise that child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to:
 - Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
 - abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.
 - physical abuse, which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm.
 - sexual violence and sexual harassment
 - consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery)
 - causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or engage in sexual activity with a third party.
 - upskirting (which is a criminal offence), 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.
 - initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals

- BEST FOOT FORWARD believes that abuse is abuse and it will never be tolerated or dismissed as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse is still likely to be taking place.
- All staff have a role to play in challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers and children. Staff recognise that some child-on-child abuse issues may be affected by gender, age, ability and culture of those involved, i.e. for gender-based abuse, girls are more likely to be victims and boys more likely to be perpetrators.
- Concerns about learners’ behaviour, including child-on-child abuse taking place offsite, will be responded to as part of a partnership approach with learners and parents/carers. Offsite behaviour concerns will be recorded and responded to in line with existing appropriate policies, for example, anti-bullying, acceptable use, behaviour and child protection policies.
- To minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, BEST FOOT FORWARD will:
 - **implement a robust anti-bullying policy.**
 - **provide an age/ability appropriate PSHE and RSE targeted support session.**
- BEST FOOT FORWARD want children to feel able to confidently report abuse and know their concerns will be treated seriously. All allegations of child-on-child abuse will be reported to the DSL and will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with in line with associated BEST FOOT FORWARD policies, including child protection, anti-bullying and behaviour. Learners who experience abuse will be offered appropriate support, regardless of where the abuse takes place.
- Alleged victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported by:
 - Taking reports seriously
 - Listening carefully
 - Avoiding victim-blaming
 - Providing appropriate pastoral support
 - Notifying the referring agent so they can implement their own procedures

4.2 Child-on-child harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence

BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises a progressive continuum from developmentally expected sexual behaviour through problematic and harmful sexual behaviour to sexual harassment and sexual violence. Responses will be proportionate, child-centred and informed by the needs and safety of all children involved. Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator and may be preventable through timely, evidence-based support.

- When responding to concerns relating to child-on-child sexual violence or harassment, BEST FOOT FORWARD will follow the guidance outlined in Part Five of KCSIE 2026 and the DfE ‘Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges’ guidance. [Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges](#)

- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children, and can occur online and face-to-face (both physically and verbally). Sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises the importance of explaining to children that the law is in place to protect rather than criminalise them.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises the importance of understanding intra-familial harms and any necessary support for siblings following incidents.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises the need for schools, colleges and all other referring parties to be part of discussions with statutory safeguarding partners.
- All victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment or be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- When there has been a report of sexual violence or harassment, the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment which will be considered on a case-by-case basis which explores how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator (and any other children involved/impacted).
 - The risk and needs assessment will be recorded and kept under review and will consider the victim (especially their protection and support), the alleged perpetrator, and all other children, and staff and any actions that are required to protect them.
- Reports will be managed internally by BEST FOOT FORWARD but will also be referred to the referring agent's DSL as a matter of priority and/or Integrated Children's Services and/or the Police if necessary.
 - The decision making and required action taken will vary on a case by case basis, but will be informed by the wishes of the victim, the nature of the alleged incident (including whether a crime may have been committed), the ages and developmental stages of the children involved, any power imbalance, if the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse, if there are any ongoing risks to the victim, other children, or BEST FOOT FORWARD staff, and, any other related issues or wider context.
- If at any stage the DSL is unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from the Education Safeguarding Service or the appointed external safeguarding representatives.

4.3 Nude and/or Semi-Nude Image Sharing by Children

- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises that consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as youth-produced/involved sexual imagery or "sexting") can be a safeguarding issue; all concerns will be reported to and dealt with by the DSL (or deputy).

- When made aware of concerns involving consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos by children, staff are advised to:
 - Report any concerns to the DSL immediately.
 - Never view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery, or ask a child to share or download it – this may be illegal. If staff have already viewed the imagery by accident, this will be immediately reported to the DSL.
 - Not delete the imagery or ask the child to delete it.
 - Not say or do anything to blame or shame any children involved.
 - Explain to child(ren) involved that they will report the issue to the DSL and reassure them that they will receive appropriate support and help.
 - Not ask the child or children involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery and do not share information about the incident with other members of staff, the child(ren) involved, or other children's parents and/or carers. This is the responsibility of the DSL.
- DSLs will respond to concerns as set out in the non-statutory UKCIS guidance: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people, and the local KSCMP guidance. When made aware of a concern involving consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos:
 - The DSL will hold an initial review meeting with the referring agent to explore the context and ensure appropriate and proportionate safeguarding action is taken in the best interests of any child involved. This may mean speaking with relevant staff and the children involved as appropriate.
 - Parents and carers will be informed at an early stage and be involved in the process to best support children, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put a child at risk of harm.
 - All decisions and actions taken will be recorded in line with our child protection procedures and/or the referring agent's child protection procedures.
 - a referral will be made to ICS and/or the police immediately if:
 - The incident involves an adult (over 18).
 - There is reason to believe that a child has been coerced, blackmailed, or groomed, or there are concerns about their capacity to consent, for example, the age of the child, or they have special educational needs.
 - The image/videos involve sexual acts and a child under the age of 13, depict sexual acts which are unusual for the child's developmental stage, or are violent.
 - A child is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.
 - The DSL may choose to involve other agencies at any time if further information/concerns are disclosed later.
 - If DSLs are unsure how to proceed, advice will be sought from the Education Safeguarding Service or their external safeguarding professional.

4.4 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises that CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for exploitation.

- If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of CSE or CCE, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or a deputy.

4.5 Serious Violence

- All staff are made aware of the indicators which may signal children are at risk from or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include unexplained gifts or new possessions, increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries.

- Any concerns regarding serious violence will be reported and responded to in line with other child protection concerns.

Staff will report concerns about a child carrying, using or expressing an intention to use a weapon. The DSL will assess risk to the child and others, consider peer conflict and exploitation, and put in place a safety and support plan. Particular attention will be given to children with disrupted education, suspensions, exclusions or experience of alternative provision, who may face increased risk.

- The initial response to child victims is important, and staff will take allegations seriously and work in ways that support children and keep them safe.

4.6 So-called honour-based abuse

- So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.
- All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and concerns should be responded to in line with section 3 of this policy. Staff will report any concerns about HBA to the DSL (or a deputy).

4.7 Preventing radicalisation

- BEST FOOT FORWARD is aware of our duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism", also known as the Prevent duty and the specific obligations placed upon us as an education provider regarding risk assessments, working in partnership, staff training, and IT policies.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises that children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation, and staff will be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may need help or protection.
- Staff will report any concerns to the DSL (or a deputy), who is aware of the local procedures to follow.

4.8 Cybercrime

- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises that children with particular skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen offline but are enabled at scale and at speed online) or 'cyber-dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer/internet-enabled device) cybercrime.
- If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of becoming involved in cyber-dependent cybercrime, the DSL will be informed.
- Where there are concerns about 'cyber-enabled' crime, such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs online, child sexual abuse and exploitation, or other areas of concern such as online bullying or general online safety, they will be responded to in line with this and other appropriate policies.

5. Supporting Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm Alternative provision safeguarding

BEST FOOT FORWARD will work with commissioners to ensure that safeguarding information, risk assessments, attendance expectations, emergency contacts and reporting routes are agreed before provision starts and reviewed as needs change. The commissioning school or local authority should satisfy itself that the placement is safe and suitable; this does not reduce BEST FOOT FORWARD's responsibility to safeguard children during its provision, act directly on concerns, maintain accurate attendance and safeguarding records, and cooperate with multi-agency processes.

- Whilst all children should be protected, some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm.

5.1 Safeguarding Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)

- BEST FOOT FORWARD acknowledges that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and barriers to recognising abuse and neglect.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises that children with SEND may face additional communication barriers and experience difficulties in managing or reporting abuse or challenges. Children with SEND will be appropriately supported to communicate and ensure that their voice is heard and acted upon.
- All members of staff will be encouraged to appropriately explore possible indicators of abuse, such as behaviour, mood changes or injuries, and not to assume that they are related to the child's disability. Staff will be mindful that children with SEND or certain medical conditions may be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.

- Members of staff are encouraged to be aware that children with SEND can be disproportionately impacted by safeguarding concerns, such as exploitation, peer group isolation or bullying, including prejudice-based bullying.
- In line with the SEND Code of Practice, we will use the term “autism” instead of “autism spectrum disorder (ASD)” in all documentation and practice. Our commitment remains to ensure inclusive, tailored support for all pupils with SEND.

5.2 Children Requiring Mental Health Support

- All staff will be made aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Staff are aware that children’s experiences, for example, where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, can impact their mental health, behaviour and education.
- Staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL or a deputy.

Children with medical conditions

Children with medical conditions may be at increased risk if their health needs are not understood or safely managed. BEST FOOT FORWARD will obtain relevant information before provision begins, agree individual healthcare and risk-management arrangements with parents/carers and the commissioning setting, and ensure staff understand emergency procedures, medication arrangements and when a health concern may also require a safeguarding response.

Where a child is in immediate danger, staff will call 999 or arrange urgent attendance at A&E with a parent/carer or other suitable adult. Where urgent mental health help is needed but the situation is not an emergency, staff will seek support through NHS 111 and select the mental health option.

5.3 Children Missing from Education

- Children missing from education, particularly persistently, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse, and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Where BEST FOOT FORWARD have concerns that a child is missing from their educational programme, we will respond in line with our statutory duties and local policies, and attendance will be reported back to their referring agent.

- In line with the statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2022, statutory from September 2025)*, BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises that absence and persistent lateness can be indicators of safeguarding concerns. Staff will monitor attendance patterns closely, share information with relevant safeguarding leads, and take prompt action where attendance issues raise concerns for a child's welfare.

5.4 Children who need a Social Worker

- The DSL will seek to hold details of social workers working with children in BEST FOOT FORWARD (where possible and where the referring agent/school have upheld their responsibility to provide this information) so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes.
- Where children have a social worker, this will inform BEST FOOT FORWARD decisions about their safety and promoting their welfare, for example, responding to unauthorised absence and provision of pastoral and/or academic support.

5.5 Looked after children, previously looked after children and care leavers.

- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises that the common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect, and a previously looked after child also potentially remains vulnerable.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD will ensure appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked-after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after them.
- Where a child is looked after, BEST FOOT FORWARD will hold details of the social worker or appropriate contact who looks after the child.

6. Online Safety

- It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate material or behaviours online. BEST FOOT FORWARD will adopt a whole-staff approach to online safety, which will empower, protect, and educate our learners and staff in their use of technology, and establish mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD will ensure online safety is reflected as required in all relevant policies. Online safety is considered a running and interrelated theme when devising and implementing our policies and procedures, and when planning our curriculum, staff training, the role and responsibilities of the DSL and parental engagement.
- Our online safety approach considers the risks of **misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories**, as well as harmful or age-inappropriate content. Online safety is embedded in the curriculum and reinforced through staff training.

The approach also recognises risks arising from generative artificial intelligence, including synthetic sexual imagery, deepfakes, impersonation, manipulation, harmful misinformation and the use of AI to facilitate grooming, harassment or exploitation.

- BEST FOOT FORWARD identifies that the breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:
 - Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content. For example, pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism.
 - Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users. For example, child to child pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
 - Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm. For example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
 - Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and financial scams.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises that technology, and the risks and harms related to it, evolve and change rapidly. BEST FOOT FORWARD will carry out periodic reviews of our approaches to online safety, supported by risk assessments on an individual basis, which consider and reflect the risks a child faces.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD's Senior Leadership Team will be informed of online safety concerns by the DSL, as appropriate.

6.1 Policies and Procedures

- The DSL has overall responsibility for online safety within BEST FOOT FORWARD but will liaise with other members of staff, for example tutors, mentors, referring agents, schools, and Local Authorities, as necessary.
- The DSL will respond to online safety concerns reported in line with our child protection and other associated policies, including our anti-bullying and behaviour policies.
 - Internal sanctions and/or support will be implemented as appropriate.
 - Where necessary, concerns will be escalated and reported to relevant partner agencies in line with local policies and procedures.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD uses a wide range of technology. This includes computers, laptops, tablets and other digital devices, the internet, purchased learning platforms, and email systems.
 - All BEST FOOT FORWARD-owned devices and systems will be used in accordance with our acceptable use policies and with appropriate safety and security measures in place.

- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises the specific risks that can be posed by mobile and smart technology, including mobile/smart phones, cameras and wearable technology. In accordance with KCSIE 2026, BEST FOOT FORWARD has appropriate mobile and smart technology and image use policies in place, which are shared and understood by all members of the community. These policies can be found on the staff internal drive or requested through admin@bestfootforward.org.uk.

6.2 Appropriate Filtering and Monitoring

- BEST FOOT FORWARD will do all we reasonably can to limit children's exposure to online risks.
 - Any access to material believed to be illegal will be reported immediately to the appropriate agencies, such as the [Internet Watch Foundation](#) and the police.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD acknowledges that filtering and monitoring are an important part of BEST FOOT FORWARD's online safety responsibilities; it is only one part of our approach to online safety.
 - Learners will use appropriate search tools, apps and online resources as identified following an informed risk assessment.
 - Learners' internet use will be supervised by staff according to their age and ability.
 - Learners will be directed to use age-appropriate online resources and tools by staff.
 - The BEST FOOT FORWARD leadership team and relevant staff are:
 - aware of and understand the systems in place.
 - manage them effectively.
 - know how to escalate concerns when identified.

6.3 Information Security and Access Management

- BEST FOOT FORWARD is responsible for ensuring an appropriate level of security protection procedures are in place to safeguard our systems as well as staff and learners.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD will review the effectiveness of these procedures periodically to keep up with evolving cybercrime technologies.

6.4 Staff Training

- BEST FOOT FORWARD will ensure that all staff receive online safety training and that ongoing online safety training and updates for all staff will be integrated, aligned and considered as part of our overarching safeguarding approach.

6.5 Working with Parents/Carers

- BEST FOOT FORWARD will build a partnership approach to online safety and will support parents/carers to become aware and alert of the potential online benefits and risks for children.

- BEST FOOT FORWARD will use communications with parents and carers to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. BEST FOOT FORWARD should share information with parents/carers about:
 - what systems they have in place to filter and monitor online use
 - what they are asking children to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access
 - who from the organisation (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

6.6 Remote Learning

- BEST FOOT FORWARD will ensure any remote sharing of information, communication and use of online learning tools and systems will be in line with privacy and data protection requirements.
- All communication with learners and parents/carers will take place using BEST FOOT FORWARD-provided or approved communication channels; for example, BEST FOOT FORWARD-approved emails or virtual meeting platforms such as Teams or Staff work mobile phones.
- Staff and learners will engage in remote teaching and learning in line with existing behaviour principles as set out in BEST FOOT FORWARD Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct.
- Staff and learners will be encouraged to report issues experienced at home, and concerns will be responded to in line with our child protection and other relevant policies.
- Parents/carers will be made aware of what their children are being asked to do online if there is a remote learning session planned, including the sites they will be asked to access. BEST FOOT FORWARD will continue to be clear who from BEST FOOT FORWARD their child is going to be interacting with online.
- Parents/carers will be encouraged to ensure children are appropriately supervised online and that appropriate parental controls are implemented at home.

7. Staff Engagement and Expectations

7.1 Awareness, Induction and Training

- All members of staff have been provided with a copy of part one or annex A of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2026, which covers safeguarding information for staff.
 - BEST FOOT FORWARD leaders, including the DSL, will read KCSIE in its entirety.
 - BEST FOOT FORWARD leaders and all members of staff who work directly with children will read Annex A.
 - All members of staff have signed to confirm that they have read and understood the national guidance shared with them. Confirmation that this has been done will be a signed form provided by all members of staff and attached to their personnel files.

- The DSL will ensure that all new staff and volunteers (including agency and third-party staff) receive safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety), including information to ensure they are aware of BEST FOOT FORWARD's internal safeguarding processes, as part of their induction. This will be done by providing a webinar delivered by the leadership team on induction and refresher webinars /training completed annually.
- All staff members (including agency and third-party staff) will receive appropriate child protection training (including online safety) to ensure they are aware of a range of safeguarding issues; this training will be updated at least annually.
- Safeguarding training for staff, including online safety training, will be integrated, aligned and considered as part of the whole organisation's safeguarding approach and wider staff training and curriculum planning.
- In addition to specific child protection training, all staff will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. This will be done by all staff training sessions and e-learning.
- Staff will be encouraged to contribute to and shape BEST FOOT FORWARD safeguarding arrangements and child protection policies. Staff will be invited to leadership meetings and are welcome to contribute ideas at any time via email.
- The DSL and DDSL will maintain an up-to-date register of who has been trained.

7.2 Safer Working Practice

- All members of staff are required to work within our clear guidelines on safer working practice as outlined in BEST FOOT FORWARD's Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct.
- The DSL will ensure that all staff and volunteers (including agency and third-party staff) have read the child protection policy and are aware of BEST FOOT FORWARD's expectations regarding safe and professional practice via the staff Behaviour Policy Code of Conduct.
- All staff will be made aware of the professional risks associated with the use of social media and electronic communication (such as email, mobile phones, texting, social networking). Staff will adhere to relevant BEST FOOT FORWARD policies, including the Staff Behaviour Policy and Acceptable Use Policies.
- Where pupils are accessing our provision, the governing body, such as Local Authorities and school leadership, retain overall responsibility for ensuring the child's safety. BEST FOOT FORWARD will establish clear protocols for daily registration, safeguarding oversight, communication, and regular review of the child's progress and welfare with the referring agent, for example, the Local Authority or School.
- Effective safeguarding requires collaboration. We work closely with local safeguarding partners, children's social care, and early help services, and follow agreed local escalation pathways where concerns are not addressed. Staff are trained in how and when to escalate concerns beyond the school if necessary.

7.3 Supervision and Support

- The induction process will include familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if members of staff have any concerns about a child's safety or welfare.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD will provide appropriate supervision and support for all members of staff to ensure that:
 - All staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
 - All staff are supported by DSL in their safeguarding role.
 - All members of staff have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time.
- Any member of staff affected by issues arising from concerns for children's welfare or safety can seek support from the DSL.
- The DSL will also put staff in touch with outside agencies for professional support if they wish. Staff can also approach organisations such as the Education Support Partnership or other similar organisations directly.
- The role of the Virtual School Head (VSH) is statutory for children with a social worker, children in kinship care, and looked-after children. BEST FOOT FORWARD will work with the VSH to promote educational outcomes for these groups, ensuring that designated staff have the time, knowledge and resources to provide effective support.

8. Safer Recruitment and Allegations

8.1 Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding Checks

- BEST FOOT FORWARD is committed to ensuring that they develop a safe culture and that all steps are taken to recruit staff and volunteers who are safe to work with our learners and staff.
 - BEST FOOT FORWARD will follow Part Three of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and current Disclosure and Barring Service guidance. Checks will be proportionate to the role and recorded on the Single Central Record where required.
 - The leadership team are responsible for ensuring that BEST FOOT FORWARD follows safe recruitment processes as outlined within guidance.
 - BEST FOOT FORWARD will ensure that at least one of the people who conduct an interview has completed safer recruitment training.
 - A curriculum vitae (CV) should only be accepted alongside a full application form and is not sufficient on its own to support safer recruitment.
 - BEST FOOT FORWARD should consider online searches as part of their due diligence checks on shortlisted candidates.
- We advise all staff to disclose any reason that may affect their suitability to work with children, including convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands, and warnings.

For self-employed tutors, mentors and contractors, BEST FOOT FORWARD will ensure that the appropriate enhanced DBS and barred list checks are obtained through an eligible commissioning or umbrella body and that identity, right to work, qualifications, employment history, references and suitability are verified before work begins.

The removal of the supervision exemption means that a volunteer who teaches, trains, instructs or supervises children on more than three days in a 30-day period, or overnight, is in regulated activity. BEST FOOT FORWARD will obtain the appropriate enhanced DBS certificate with children's barred list information for volunteers and workers engaged in regulated activity.

8.2 Allegations/concerns raised in relation to staff, including supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors.

- Any concerns or allegations about staff will be recorded and dealt with appropriately in line with national and local guidance. Ensuring concerns are dealt with effectively will protect those working in or on behalf of BEST FOOT FORWARD from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.
- Where a worker is supplied, trained or employed by a third-party organisation, BEST FOOT FORWARD will share relevant information and cooperate with that organisation while retaining responsibility for safeguarding action within its own provision. Concerns will not be passed back to an employer without appropriate internal action and consideration of LADO referral.
- Where senior leadership are unsure how to respond, for example, if BEST FOOT FORWARD is unsure if a concern meets guidance 'thresholds', advice will be sought via the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Enquiry Line and/or the Education Safeguarding Service.

8.2.1 Concerns that meet guidance threshold.

- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises that it is possible for any member of staff, including volunteers, contractors, agency and third-party staff and visitors, to behave in a way that indicates a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children in a school or college. This includes when someone has:
 - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
 - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- Allegations against staff which meet the guidance threshold will be referred immediately to the senior leadership team, who will contact the LADO to agree on further action to be taken in respect of the child and staff member. In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the senior leadership team, staff are advised that allegations should be reported to the Local Authority of the Referring Agent, who will contact the LADO.

8.2.2 Concerns that do not meet the guidance threshold

- BEST FOOT FORWARD may also need to take action in response to 'low-level' concerns about staff, which typically would be behaviours which are inconsistent with our staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and concerns that do not meet the allegations threshold.
- Where low-level concerns are reported to BEST FOOT FORWARD, the senior leadership team will share or liaise with the LADO enquiries officer via the LADO Enquiry Line.
- Low-level concerns will be recorded in writing and reviewed so potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern is identified, BEST FOOT FORWARD will implement appropriate action, for example, consulting with the LADO enquiry line and following our disciplinary procedures.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognise that learning lessons applies to all cases, not just those which are concluded and found to be substantiated.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD understands that low-level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers; and schools and colleges should consult with their LADO if unsure whether low-level concerns shared about a member of staff meet the harm threshold.
- We promote a transparent culture where all staff feel confident to share any concerns—no matter how small—about the conduct of colleagues or adults working with children. All low-level concerns will be recorded and monitored to identify patterns or emerging risks, in line with KCSIE expectations.

8.2.3 Safe Culture

- As part of our approach to safeguarding, BEST FOOT FORWARD has created and embedded a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which our values and expected behaviour as set out in our staff behaviour policy/code of conduct are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) and where all concerns are dealt with promptly and appropriately.
- All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise any concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the BEST FOOT FORWARD safeguarding regime. The leadership team at BEST FOOT FORWARD will take all concerns or allegations received seriously.
- Safeguarding responsibilities extend beyond the provision and school hours, including off-site activities, online interactions, and community contexts. Staff will remain vigilant to potential risks outside the classroom and report concerns in accordance with this policy.

- All members of staff are made aware of the BEST FOOT FORWARD Whistleblowing procedure. It is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk.
- Staff can access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of several listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person.
 - If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at BEST FOOT FORWARD, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO.

9. Opportunities to teach safeguarding

- BEST FOOT FORWARD will ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of providing a broad and balanced character curriculum.
- We recognise that BEST FOOT FORWARD plays an essential role in helping children to understand and identify the parameters of what is appropriate child and adult behaviour, what is 'safe', to recognise when they and others close to them are not safe, and how to seek advice and support when they are concerned. Our curriculum provides opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, social and emotional understanding, assertiveness and decision making so that learners have a range of age-appropriate contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and that of others.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD recognises that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be appropriate for all children, and a more personalised or contextualised approach for more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some SEND children might be needed.
- BEST FOOT FORWARD systems support children to talk to a range of staff. Children will be listened to and heard, and their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate.
- **Physical Safety**
 - Use of 'reasonable force'
- There may be circumstances when it is appropriate for staff to use reasonable force in order to safeguard children from harm. Further information regarding our approach and expectations can be found in our Behaviour Policy.

Appendix 1: Categories of Abuse

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. It should be noted that abuse can be carried out both on and offline and be perpetrated by men, women, and children.

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, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Signs that MAY INDICATE Sexual Abuse

- Sudden changes in behaviour and performance
- Displays of affection which are sexual and age-inappropriate
- Self-harm, self-mutilation or attempts at suicide
- Alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal
- Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance
- Regression to younger behaviour, for example, thumb sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby
- Distrust of familiar adults, e.g. anxiety of being left with relatives, a childminder or a lodger
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Depression and withdrawal
- Fear of undressing for PE
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Fire setting

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which 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 that MAY INDICATE physical abuse

- Bruises and abrasions around the face
- Damage or injury around the mouth
- Bilateral injuries such as two bruised eyes
- Bruising to the soft area of the face, such as the cheeks
- Fingertip bruising to the front or back of the torso
- Bite marks
- Burns or scalds (unusual patterns and spread of injuries)
- Deep contact burns such as cigarette burns
- Injuries suggesting beatings (strap marks, welts)
- Covering arms and legs even when hot
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts.
- Injuries need to be accounted for. Inadequate, inconsistent, or overly plausible explanations, or a delay in seeking treatment, should signal concern.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of 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 a child's developmental capabilities, as well as overprotection and limitations on exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interactions. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children to frequently 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, although it may occur alone.

Signs that MAY INDICATE emotional abuse

- Overreaction to mistakes
- Lack of self-confidence/esteem
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self-harming
- Eating Disorders
- Extremes of passivity and/or aggression
- Compulsive stealing
- Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Unwillingness or inability to play
- Excessive need for approval, attention, and affection

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because 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 caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs that MAY INDICATE neglect.

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Inadequate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems
- Poor relationship with peers
- Compulsive stealing and scavenging
- Rocking, hair twisting and thumb sucking
- Running away
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Low self-esteem

Appendix 2: Support Organisations

Local Organisations

Emergency services provided by Hampshire County Council
To contact child protection services, please call 0300 555 1384 or email childrens.services@hants.gov.uk. If it's an emergency and a child is in immediate danger, please call 999. There is also an out-of-hours service; please call 0300 555 1373.

Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Out of Hours Service: 01202 738256
childrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Dorset Out of Hours Service: 01305 228558

Police Non-Emergency: 101

Police Emergency: 999

NSPCC 'Report Abuse in Education' Helpline

- [0800 136 663](tel:0800136663) or help@nspcc.org.uk

National Organisations

- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- Barnardo's: www.barnardos.org.uk
- Action for Children: www.actionforchildren.org.uk
- Children's Society: www.childrenssociety.org.uk

Support for Staff

- Education Support Partnership: www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk
- Professional Online Safety Helpline: www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service: <https://swgfl.org.uk/harmful-sexual-behaviour-support-service>

Support for Learners

- ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk
- Papyrus: www.papyrus-uk.org
- The Mix: www.themix.org.uk
- Shout: www.giveusashout.org
- Fearless: www.fearless.org
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Support for Adults

- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Crime Stoppers: www.crimestoppers-uk.org
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- The Samaritans: www.samaritans.org
- NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood): www.napac.org.uk

Bethany Russell 07394 950803
beth@bestfootforward.org.uk

Andrew Russell 07538 719783
andrew@bestfootforward.org.uk

Website: www.bestfootforward.org.uk
Contact: admin@bestfootforward.org.uk

- MOSAC: www.mosac.org.uk
- Action Fraud: www.actionfraud.police.uk
- Shout: www.giveusashout.org
- Advice now: www.advicenow.org.uk

Support for Learning Disabilities

- Respond: www.respond.org.uk
- Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk
- Council for Disabled Children: <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk>

Contextual Safeguarding Network

- <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>

Substance Misuse

- We are with you (formerly Addaction): www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/
- Talk to Frank: www.talktofrank.com

Domestic Abuse

- Domestic abuse services: www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk
- Refuge: www.refuge.org.uk
- Women's Aid: www.womensaid.org.uk
- Men's Advice Line: www.mensadvice.org.uk
- Mankind: www.mankindcounselling.org.uk
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- Respect Phoneline: <https://respectphoneline.org.uk>

Criminal and Sexual Exploitation

- National Crime Agency: www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are
- It's not okay: www.itsnotokay.co.uk
- NWG Network: www.nwgnetwork.org

Honour-Based Abuse

- Forced Marriage Unit: www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage
- FGM Factsheet:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496415/6_1639_HO_SP_FGM_mandatory_reporting_Fact_sheet_Web.pdf
- Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information

Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence), including bullying, sexual violence and harassment

- Rape Crisis: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk>
- Brook: www.brook.org.uk
- Disrespect Nobody: www.disrespectnobody.co.uk
- Upskirting – know your rights: www.gov.uk/government/news/upskirting-know-your-rights

- Lucy Faithfull Foundation: www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk
- Stop it Now! www.stopitnow.org.uk
- Parents Protect: www.parentsprotect.co.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Diana Award: www.antibullyingpro.com/
- Bullying UK: www.bullying.co.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk

Online Safety

- CEOP: www.ceop.police.uk
- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF): www.iwf.org.uk
- Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- Childnet: www.childnet.com
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- Report Harmful Content: <https://reportharmfulcontent.com>
- Marie Collins Foundation: www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk
- Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk/online-safety
- Get Safe Online: www.getsafeonline.org
- Parents Protect: www.parentsprotect.co.uk
- Cyber Choices: <https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/cyber-crime/cyberchoices>
- National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC): www.ncsc.gov.uk

Mental Health

- Mind: www.mind.org.uk
- Moodspark: <https://moodspark.org.uk>
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- We are with you (formerly Addaction): www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/
- Anna Freud: www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/

Radicalisation and hate

- Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
- Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit: www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
- True Vision: www.report-it.org.uk

Children with Family Members in Prison

- National Information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO): <https://www.nicco.org.uk/>

Staff Acknowledgement Form

<https://www.cognitoforms.com/BestFootForward2/BestFootForwardSafeguardingPolicy2026>

