



BIRCHWOOD

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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Child Protection and Safeguarding

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1. Introduction and Context

BIRCHWOOD SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY to be read in conjunction with:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Physical Intervention Policy
- Online Safety Policy

1.1 Birchwood School vision & ethos.

Birchwood School believe that everyone has the right to live in a safe environment. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure this right is adhered to. We believe in opening eyes, hearts and minds. In this context this means encouraging tolerance and acceptance of everyone. Helping children and young people to learn about risk and to be able to embrace opportunities with confidence and realism.

1.2 Role of the Proprietor

The Proprietor of Birchwood School endorses this policy and has delegated responsibility for its effective operation to the Head Teacher and will ensure that all Child Protection policies and procedures are reviewed annually. They will also ensure that all leaders receive appropriate and regular training. They will also ensure that this policy and procedure are in line with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

The school has a legal responsibility to protect pupils under the Equality Act.

1.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead

- DSL and DDSL – Deb Chappel, Dan Griffiths, Lucy Seddon, Jess Heesom
- Designated Person for SEND – Deb Chappel
- Designated Teacher for LAC – Lucy Seddon
- Trusted person for LGBT+ - Dan Griffiths

1.4 Our responsibilities

Birchwood School fully recognise its responsibilities for Child Protection and Safeguarding, this Policy sets out how Birchwood School will deliver these responsibilities. This is an overarching policy.

Child as written in this policy includes everyone under the age of 18.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (December 2023) which is statutory guidance to be read and followed by all those providing services for children and families, including those in education.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025)
- Independent School Standards and Associated Guidelines
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (March 2015)
- Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (May 2024)
- Protecting children from radicalisation: the prevent duty (September 2023)
- Data Protection act (May 2018) and the UK GDPR.

Furthermore, we will follow the Procedures set out by Warrington Safeguarding Children's Board.

1.5 Our Principles

Safeguarding arrangements at Birchwood School are underpinned by three key principles:

- **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:** all Staff/anyone who has contact with a child or young person including supply teachers, visitors and volunteers should play their full part in keeping children (Includes vulnerable adults when in their setting)
- **Safety:** We will aim to protecting children using national, and local child protection procedures; We aim to work in partnership and have an important role in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements as set out by Working Together to Safeguard Children;
- **Reporting:** That all Staff-/anyone who has contact with a child or young person including visitors and volunteers have a clear understanding regarding abuse and neglect in all forms; including how to identify, respond and report. This also includes knowledge in the process for allegations against professionals. Staff, (supply teacher, visitors, contractors and Volunteers) should feel confident that they can report all matters of Safeguarding to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The information will be

dealt with swiftly and securely, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the children is kept in mind at all times. That we operate a child-centred approach: a clear understanding of the needs, wishes, views and voices of children. All staff should understand that the work of safeguarding takes precedence over GDPR concerns.

Our Policy

There are 4 main elements to our policy, which are described in the following sections:

1. Types of abuse
2. Signs of abuse
3. Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities
4. Creating a safe environment

At Birchwood School all staff are appropriately trained; this includes, receiving regular updates and undertaking annual training/refresher training in safeguarding. All staff are thoroughly checked for their suitability to work within the service. Through implementation of this policy we will ensure that our service provides a safe environment for children to learn and develop. We will cross reference to other policies relevant to our safeguarding in Birchwood School and make reference to them in this policy where relevant.

2 Types of Abuse

2.1 Children who may require early help.

All Staff, supply teacher, visitors and volunteers working within the school and home should be alert to the potential need for early help for children, considering following the procedures identified for initiating early help using the Thresholds Document for a child who:

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- Has special educational needs;
- Is a young carer;
- Is a privately fostered child;
- Has returned home to their family from care;
- Is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour;
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic abuse; and/or
- Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect; Is showing signs of displaying behaviour or views that are considered to be extreme;
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- Not attending school or are at risk of exclusion from school;
- Frequently going missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, exploitation, radicalised;
- Not in education, training or employment after the age of 16 (NEET);

2.2 Contextual Safeguarding:

All children who attend Birchwood School have a neurodiversity diagnosis and may have associated Learning Difficulties and Social and Communication difficulties.

These children are therefore more vulnerable and may present unintended behaviours; this service will identify who their vulnerable children are, ensuring all Staff and Volunteers know the processes to secure advice, help and support where needed. The role of the curriculum including Relationships and Sex Education, is to enable pupils to feel safe and adopt safe practices. Staff at Birchwood School recognise that lessons in RHE/SRHE can lead to pupils disclosing matters of child protection and our staff are vigilant to this.

We recognise that school 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.

Staff at Birchwood School will not just consider the presenting behaviour as linked to an individual's SEND but that it could be related to a form of abuse.

All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or home and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding leads should consider whether children are 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, and serious youth violence. All staff should also safeguard children who are absent from education.

2:3 Child Abuse

In relation to children safeguarding and promoting their welfare is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

There are four types of child abuse as defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023) which are defined as:

Physical Abuse - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning/scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse - is 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 capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Witnessing Domestic Violence including seeing, hearing or experiencing domestic violence is abuse.

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example as a result of maternal substance abuse. It may include a failure to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter.

- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- Respond to a child's basic emotional needs

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

Staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected.

2.4. Specific Safeguarding Issues include

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

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be the financial benefit or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunist to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

Specific forms of CCE

- Forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines
- Working in cannabis factories
- Shoplifting
- Pickpocketing
- Forced into committing vehicle crime
- Threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children become trapped by this type of exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten families and coerce them into debt or carrying weapons. Children involved in CCE often commit crimes themselves. Exploitation is different for boys than girls and the indicators may not be the same. It is important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Specific forms of CSE

- Physical contact
- Assault by penetration (rape or oral sex)
- Nonpenetrative acts (masturbation, kissing, rubbing or touching outside of clothes)
- Involve children in the production of sexual images
- Forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities
- Encourage children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in the preparation for abuse, including via the internet.

CSE can affect any child, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to sex. Some children may not realise that they are being exploited.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. This includes when they witness it at home and/or suffer it in intimate personal relationship.

Child on Child Abuse

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child on child abuse). It can happen both inside and outside of school or home or online. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyber bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- Sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing them to strip, touch themselves or engage in a sexual activity.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and or videos.
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

It is essential to challenge inappropriate behaviours between peers. Downplaying certain behaviours as 'just banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up', or 'boys being boys' can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours.

Serious Violence

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school or home, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant

decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries.

Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

All staff should be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

Female Genital Mutilation

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. There is a legal duty on teachers to report an act of FGM to the police.

Mental Health

All staff should be 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 should not attempt to make a diagnosis but 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. Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, education and physical health.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken.

The school should aim to protect and enhance pupil's physical and mental health as much as possible,

- Bullying including cyber bullying
- Domestic Abuse
- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Forced Marriage
- Gangs and Youth Violence
- Gender based violence/Violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Hate
- Mental Health
- Private Fostering
- Preventing Radicalisation
- On line abuse/Sexting Teenage Relationship abuse

- Trafficking Missing children and vulnerable adults
- Child sexual abuse within the family
- Poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children

3 Signs of Abuse (Child Protection)

3.1 Physical Abuse

Most children will collect cuts and bruises and injuries, and these should always be interpreted in the context of the child's medical/ social history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body, e.g. elbows, knees, shins, and are often on the front of the body. Some children, however, will have bruising that is more than likely inflicted rather than accidental.

Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given; these can often be visible on the 'soft' parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. cheeks, abdomen, back and buttocks. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern. The physical signs of abuse may include:

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Multiple bruises- in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh
- Cigarette burns
- Human bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds, with upward splash marks.
- Multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home.

3.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to identify as there are often no outward physical signs. Indications may be a developmental delay due to a failure to thrive and grow, however, children who appear well-cared for may nevertheless be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from

their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix or play with other children.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

- Neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking,
- hair twisting
- rocking
- Being unable to play or fear of making mistakes
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self-harm
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour
- Developmental delay in terms of emotional progress.

3.3 Sexual Abuse

It is recognised that there is under reporting of sexual abuse within the family. All staff and volunteers should play a crucial role in identifying / reporting any concerns that they may have through, for example, the observation and play of younger children and understanding the indicators of behaviour in older children which may be underlining of such abuse.

All Staff and volunteers should be aware that adults, who may be men, women or other children, who use children to meet their own sexual, needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages. Indications of sexual abuse may be physical or from the child's behaviour. In all cases, children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Bruising or bleeding near genital area
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection or stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia

- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.

3.4 Neglect

It can be difficult to recognise neglect, however its effects can be long term and damaging for children.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Being constantly dirty or 'smelly'
- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children.
- Losing weight, or being constantly underweight.
- Inappropriate or dirty clothing.

Neglect may be indicated by changes in behaviour which may include:

- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.
- Not having many friends.
- Complaining of being tired all the time.
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments.

Additional signs that a child may be at risk of harm.

- Behaviours linked to issues such as drugs or alcohol misuse
- Deliberately missing education, unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.

3.5 Specific Safeguarding Issues

In understanding the signs and indicators of specific issues listed earlier in this policy, this service will incorporate the signs of abuse and specific safeguarding issues on safeguarding into briefings, staff induction training, and ongoing development training for all Staff/anyone who has contact with a child or young person including visitors and volunteers

All staff should reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. The school has a legal responsibility to protect pupils under the Equality Act.

Birchwood School will also access broad Government guidance, local procedures, strategies and tools through the Warrington Safeguarding Children's Board

The Designated Leads and those with responsibility for safeguarding will use the information available to them in the Working Together to Safeguard Children to help all staff develop the knowledge and understanding pertaining to national and local emerging concerns. The nominated Designated Safeguarding Leads for Birchwood School are:

- Terry McKenzie – Proprietor
- Deb Chappel – Head Teacher and DSL
- Lucy Seddon - DSL (school)
- Daniel Griffiths – DSL (school)

3.6 Prevent Duties

Birchwood School will ensure all staff including visitors and volunteers adhere to their duties in the Prevent guidance 2015 to prevent radicalisation. The DSLs will:

- Establish or use existing mechanisms for understanding the risk of extremism;
- Ensure staff understand the risk and build capabilities to deal with issues arising
- Communicate the importance of the duty;
- Ensure all Staff (visitors and volunteers) implement the duty.

The school will respond to any concern about Prevent as a Safeguarding concern and will report in the usual way using local Safeguarding Procedures. We will seek to work in partnership, undertaking risk assessments where appropriate and proportionate to risk, building our children's resilience to radicalisation. We will make referrals into CHANNEL where the risk is identified and the young person may need de radicalisation.

Birchwood School is committed to providing effective filtering and monitoring systems, this will include monitoring the activities of children when on-line in Birchwood School and actions taken relevant to the activity.

Birchwood School will use the relevant forms to record any concerns, keeping records which will be treated as a Child Protection Record, storing them as appropriately, ensuring that personal information is processed fairly and lawfully. Completed concern forms will be used to record, store and monitor any concerns.

3.7 Child Sexual Exploitation (Child Protection)

Risk factors may include; going missing, engagement in offending, disengagement from education, using drugs or alcohol, unexplained gifts/money, repeat concerns about sexual health, decline in emotional wellbeing.

All suspected or actual cases of CSE are a Safeguarding concern in which Child Protection procedures will be followed; this will include a referral to the police. If any staff are concerned about a young person, they will refer to the Safeguarding Designated Lead/s within the home

3.8 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 FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding on what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

Forced Marriages

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional or psychological. Child marriage can be referred to as slavery, if one or more of the following elements are present:

- If the child has not genuinely given their free and informed consent to enter the marriage
- If the child is subjected to control and a sense of "ownership" in the marriage itself, particularly through abuse and threats and is exploited by being forced to undertake domestic chores within the marital home or labour outside it, and/or engage in non-consensual sexual relations
- If the child cannot realistically leave or end the marriage, leading potentially to a lifetime of slavery.

Children are in a weaker position to give free, full and informed consent to marriage than adults, even if they appear to 'agree' or don't express refusal.

Many children have little or no control over their movements or person within marriage, including over sexual relations. Girls in particular are commonly controlled through violence, threats and humiliation, as well as experiencing isolation and loneliness.

It is a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their 18th birthday.

Children may not realistically be able to leave their marriage. For example, they may not be able to support themselves financially or may fear repercussions from in-laws and the wider community, as well as their own families.

Girls who leave their marriages without support are often vulnerable to other forms of slavery and exploitation.

Female Genital Mutilation (Child Protection)

Birchwood School recognises and understands that there is now a mandatory reporting duty for all staff to report to the police where it is believed an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 in the UK. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken. All suspected or actual cases of FGM are a Safeguarding concern in which Safeguarding procedures will be followed; this will include a referral to the police. If any staff are concerned about a young person, they will refer to the Safeguarding Designated Lead/s within the service.

Signs may include;

- Days absent from school
- Not participating in Physical Education
- In pain/has restricted movement/frequent and long visits to the toilet
- Broken limbs
- Confides that she is having a special procedure, cut or celebration
- Unauthorised and or extended leave, vague explanations or plans for removal of a female in a high risk category* especially over the summer period Plans to take a holiday which may be unauthorised, unexplained or extended in a country known to practice FGM
- parents from a country who are known to practice FGM

3.9 Allegations of abuse against other children/Child on Child abuse (Child Protection)

We recognise that some children abuse other children or their peers; therefore, the reasons for this are complex and are often multi-faceted. We understand that we need as a service to have clear mechanisms and procedures in place to identify and report incidents or concerns. We aim to reduce this behaviour and any related incidents with an expectation to eliminate this conduct in the school. Child on child abuse is a Safeguarding concern and will require a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will seek advice from agencies and professionals including reference to the Safeguarding procedures as outlined by the local authority. This will may a referral into the Police and Social Care. Birchwood School will offer support to a victim. We recognise child on child abuse can take some of these forms;

- Language seen as derogatory, demeaning, inflammatory;

- Unwanted banter;
- Sexual harassment;
- Sexual violence;
- Sexual harassment
- Hate;
- Homophobia; Based on gender differences and orientation; Based on difference
- Upskirting – which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm? This is now a criminal offence.

3.10 The sending of indecent images from one person to another through Digital Media Devices Birchwood School accepts that this is a Safeguarding concern and one that is increasing which requires a robust response. We will seek advice from agencies and professionals acknowledging that there are both national and local guidance that we need to adhere to in order to tackle the concerns and work in partnership with our agencies.

3.11 The criminal exploitation of children:

County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs. Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move and store drugs and money. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations, including schools and children’s homes.

Signs which may indicate criminal exploitation:

- Persistently going missing from school or home and / or being found out-of-area;
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- Excessive receipt of texts /phone calls
- Relationships with controlling /older individuals or groups
- Leaving home / care without explanation
- Suspicion of physical assault /unexplained injuries
- Parental concerns
- Carrying weapons
- Significant decline in school results / performance
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

Criminal exploitation of children is a Safeguarding concern and will require a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will seek advice from agencies and professionals;

including, reference to the Safeguarding procedures as outlined by the local authority. This will mean a referral into the Police and Social Care. Birchwood School will offer support to a victim.

3.12 Carrying knives/offensive Weapons & Gang Culture

Bringing and carrying a knife/offensive weapon onto Birchwood premises is a criminal offence and immediate action will be taken by calling the police and informing social services.

If a member of staff suspects a young person of being involved in gang culture, this is a safeguarding concern and will require a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will seek advice from agencies and professionals including reference to the Safeguarding procedures as outlined by the local authority. The young person may be an exploited child and victim to which Birchwood School will offer support.

4 Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

Staff at Birchwood School are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

4.1 All Staff / anyone who has contact with a child or young person including visitors contractors, agency staff and volunteers have responsibility for the following:

Where a child is suffering, or likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care and if appropriate the police, is made immediately.

<https://www.npcc.police.uk/>

To provide help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge, whether that is within or outside the home including online.

Being aware of Birchwood School and Warrington Borough Council Safeguarding Procedures, and ensuring these procedures are followed; Listening to, and seeking out, the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people, ensuring in this that the child's voice is heard and referred to; Knowing who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the service; Being alert to the signs of abuse, including specific issues in Safeguarding and their need to refer any concerns to the Safeguarding Designated Lead(s); To be aware of the 'Allegations Against Professionals' LADO procedures and feel confident in being able to use them including how to report concerns about other staff and the setting; that any concerns any staff have about a Head Teacher, should be referred to Proprietor, Terry McKenzie. Any concerns about the proprietor should be referred to Social Services. Staff to be aware of the company's "Whistle Blowing" procedures and where to obtain further information, advice and support.

In line with statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025, the harm test must be applied where there is a concern that an individual may pose a risk to children. The test considers whether the individual has caused harm, poses a risk of harm, or may be likely to cause harm to a child. Where the harm test is met, the school has a legal duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure unsuitable individuals are prevented from working with children. The Designated Safeguarding Lead

(DSL) will ensure that the harm test is applied in all relevant cases, and that the rationale for decisions and subsequent actions are clearly recorded in line with safeguarding procedures.

Be aware of the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education when working with Children and Young People. Ensuring that their Child Protection training is up to date, undertaking refresher/update training at least annually.

Staff are trained to share information and working together with agencies to provide children and young people with the help and support they need;

Birchwood School understands the importance of recording holding, using and sharing information effectively. It is important to ensure that information is shared, both within the school and with other schools on transfer, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners. All information will be kept within the guidelines and legislation of the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation.

They support young people who have been abused in accordance with his/her Child Protection Plan;

The school will seek early help where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one agency (e.g. education, health, housing, police) to prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment;

If at any time it is considered that the child may be a 'Child in Need' as defined in the Children Act 1989; or that the child has suffered significant harm or is likely to do so, a referral is made to Local Authority Children's Social Care (and if appropriate the police). It is important that school and home provided as much information as possible as part of the referral process. If Staff, Visitors and Volunteers have concerns regarding a child they should raise these with the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) who will normally decide to take the next step, (however, any member of Staff, Visitor or Volunteer can make a referral); If they feel unclear about what has happened to their concerns following a referral they can enquire further and obtain feedback; All Staff / anyone who has contact with a child or young person including visitors and volunteers are aware of the Warrington Safeguarding Children Board's Escalation Policy and Process, which may be followed if a staff member fears their concerns have not been addressed, and of the organisations Whistleblowing

All Staff / anyone who has contact with a child or young person including visitors and volunteers are aware of Extremism, which include the signs of, alerts to concerning behaviours, and ideologies considered to be extreme; as well as having an understanding of the British Values Agenda. This will include attendance at training on either Prevent/Wrap or training considered sufficient by the local authority which fulfils the requirements of the prevent Duty. All Staff / anyone who has contact with a child or young person including visitors and volunteers know about Prevent duties and will report any concerns to the Safeguarding Designated Lead in the school or home who has responsibilities under Prevent to take action, offer advice and support which may include a referral into Channel using the case pathway

process. The school utilizes operation encompass to allow sharing of information safely between the school and the police.

4.2 All Staff/anyone who has contact with a child or young person including visitors and volunteers have responsibility for the following: To share and report a concern, to know how to do this and who to report it to.

The Headteacher/Deputy DSL take leadership responsibility for the schools Safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements;

- Ensure there are robust safer recruitment procedures and a framework of checks, tracking and monitoring; That they are up to date with emerging issues in Safeguarding and recognise the strategies by the Local Authority in trying to keep children safe In Warrington;
- Ensuring that we have a nominated manager for Child Protection and Safeguarding who can also provide a link to the Local Authority on matters of Safeguarding liaising with other partners and agencies;
- Ensuring that we have in place designated Safeguarding Lead(s) for Child Protection, appointed from the Senior Management Team. That the service's DSLs are fully equipped to undertake the Safeguarding role and that they have access to the appropriate training and should update their skills and knowledge at regular intervals, but at least annually with certified training every two years.

That all Staff have regular reviews/supervision of their own practice to ensure ongoing personal/professional development; All Staff / anyone who has contact with a child or young person including volunteers receives the appropriate training which is regularly updated; That we have in place effective ways to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs for individual children and families; That important policy such as those for behaviour and bullying, are kept up to date;

That we understand the need to identify trends and patterns regarding Children Missing from Education and to respond to / refer where required; That we understand the updated definition of child sexual exploitation and expectations around identifying, reporting and responding to any potential or actual cases of; That we notify the Placing Authority if a young person is missing from home. That we use the Local Authority Case Referral Pathway on reporting concerns about extremism or views considered to be extreme which may include a referral to PREVENT/CHANNEL and/or Social Care.

That all Child Protection records are kept centrally, kept up to date, are secure and reviewed annually. All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely.

Records should include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern;

- Details of how the concern was followed up and resolves;
- A note of any action taken, decisions reached and outcomes.

Making sure that the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is available to parents and carers as appropriate.

5. Creating a safe environment:

We will ensure that All Staff / anyone who has contact with a child or young person including visitors and volunteers are competent to carry out their responsibilities for Safeguarding in promoting the welfare of children by creating an environment and an ethos whereby all Staff including volunteers feel able to raise concerns, along with being supported in their Safeguarding role. We will endeavour to create a culture of listening to children, taking account of their wishes, feelings and voices both in individual decisions and group decisions in the school, home or social setting. At Birchwood School we will ensure that the building; including its surroundings, are safe and one where children can feel safe. At Birchwood School we will ensure that parents/carers know about our principles in Safeguarding, who along with the local community are made familiar with the Safeguarding Policy. That the school and home has clear protocols for visitors and contractors with procedures in place to ensure the appropriate questions are asked and checks made before a visitor is given access to the young people.

5.1 Recruitment, Staffing:

We must prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check all staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required; We must check the identity of a person being considered for appointment and their right to stay in the UK; We must undertake overseas checks if a staff member being employed or has returned from a period of working abroad.

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK **must** undergo the same checks as all other staff in the home, schools or colleges. This includes obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity) even if the individual has never been to the UK. In addition, Birchwood School **must** make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. These checks could include, where available:

- criminal records checks for overseas applicants - Home Office guidance can be found on GOV.UK; and for teaching positions

Further information can be found in DfE Guidance: Recruit teachers from overseas.

Birchwood School and home will inform all shortlisted candidates that online searched may be completed as part of due diligence checks.

Appendix 1 - Birchwood School process for Reporting /notification of incidents and safeguarding concerns

Significant incidents and safeguarding notifications

Staff to complete Arbor notification and then complete the safeguarding concern form and give to the DSL on duty, please clearly record your concerns

- safeguarding concerns (CSE, Radicalisation, FGM,)
- Harm to self
- Harm to others
- Significant damage to property an escalating risk for harm to self or others

The incident form should be accompanied with the following documents where required:

- If there is any injury – complete body Map and accident forms.

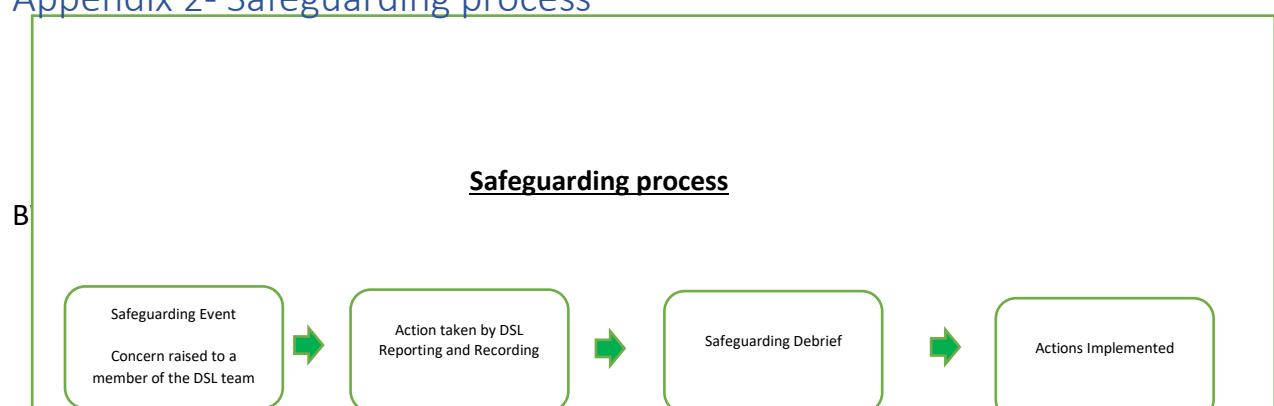
DSL must notify the:

- Proprietor
- Placing Social worker (office hours)
- LADO in the child's borough
- Warrington EDT (Out of hours)
- Child/young person's parents (where applicable)

The Safeguarding lead must notify

Warrington LADO if there are concerns about a particular member of staff's practice which may concern harm to a child.

Appendix 2- Safeguarding process



Appendix 3 – Safeguarding flow chart

Safeguarding Flow Chart

Before a referral is made

A staff member identifies a concern or potential concern. Is the young person at immediate risk of harm?

No

BW 01

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Is the DSL available to discuss the concern with? If the concern is about the Head Teacher contact a member of the DSL Team.

ember 2025

Yes

ersion 22

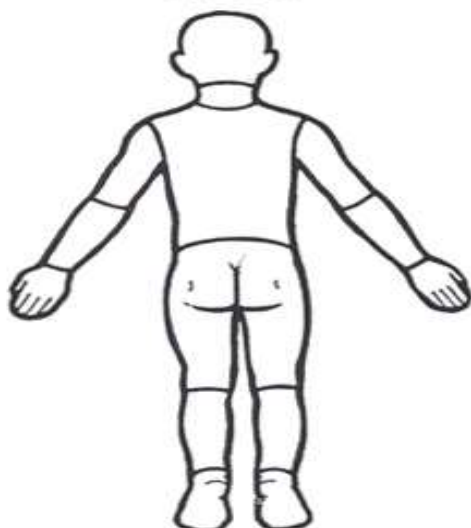
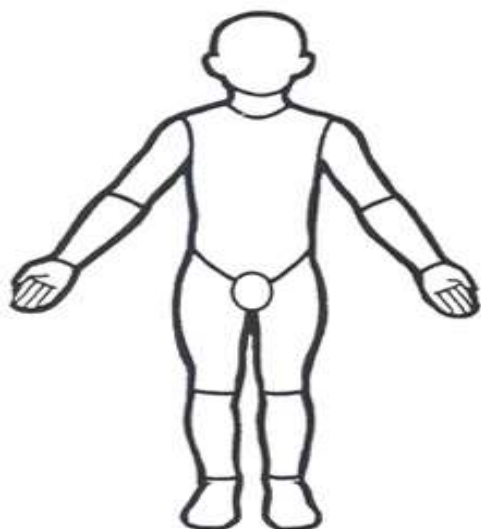
The staff member immediately notifies the Designated Safeguarding Lead and ensures the young person is safe



Appendix 4 - Incident Reporting Form for Safeguarding Concerns

Staff, volunteers and regular visitors are required to complete this form and pass it to the nominated **DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD** if they have a safeguarding concern about a child in our residential children's home or school before they leave site.

Indicate clearly on the picture where the injury was seen.



Time form received by DSL:

Action taken by DSL:

Rationale:

Referred to...?

Hospital

Police

Social worker

Children's
Services

Early Help

LA

Other (state)

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Date:

Time:

Parents informed? Yes / No (If No, state reason)

Feedback given to...?

☐☐☐☐☐

Pastoral team

Teacher

Child

Person who recorded disclosure

Other (state)

Further Action Agreed:

Full name:

DSL Signature:

Date:

Appendix 6 - Birchwood School Training List

All staff will complete the following training:

- Safeguarding training (with annual refreshers)
- FGM
- Prevent
- Channel Awareness
- CSE

All staff will receive training on the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to the filtering and monitoring of IT systems.

Designated Safeguarding Leads will complete the following training:

- DSL Level 3

Agency/supply staff will receive a basic safeguarding induction.

Contact Details

Warrington Safeguarding Children's Board – 01925 443126

Out of hours – 01925 444400

PREVENT

All referrals with respect to PREVENT should be directed to Prevent Police and Warrington Social Care Services in the first instance, highlighting any potential concerns.

Referrals should be sent to:

prevent@merseyside.police.uk

and

childreferral@warrington.gov.uk (if concerns regarding a child)

[Prevent duty guidance - .GOV.UK](#)

Department for Education – Prevent Helpline 0207 340 7264

Cheshire East

Levels of Need

We have four levels of need in Cheshire East. Early help covers services provided across the first three levels; universal, targeted and complex.



A quick reference guide is available on our thresholds to support practitioners to identify the holistic needs of children and young people.

Thresholds cannot entirely account for all the complexities of children's lives. Therefore, those involved, practitioners and families, must always consider the lived experience of the child, and whether the outcomes that child is experiencing are good enough, so we can take action as soon as possible to ensure their needs are met within their timescale.

Level 1: Children with No Unmet Needs

Children are achieving their expected outcomes. There are no unmet needs, or their need level is low, and can be met by universal services or with some limited additional guidance and support. Children, young people, parents and carers can access support directly.

Level 2: Children with Additional Needs

Children and young people are in need of coordinated help and support. The need cannot be met from universal services alone, but can be met from a single service or some limited additional support.

Level 3: Children with Multiple and Complex Needs

Children at this level have complex needs, and a targeted multi-agency approach is required, eg, through a group of services using the Early Help assessment process, supported by a coordinated and regularly reviewed multi-agency support plan.

Level 4: Children with Acute/Specialist Needs

These children are at risk of or may have suffered significant harm and in need of statutory services. Additionally, they may be children with very significant disabilities which contribute to a level of complexity necessitating a specialist social work Assessment.

<https://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/documents/s70150/Early%20help%20strategy%20draft%202019-22%20Final%2029.5.19%203%202.pdf>

Contact Details

Telephone:

Cheshire East Consultation Service: 0300 123 5012

Email:

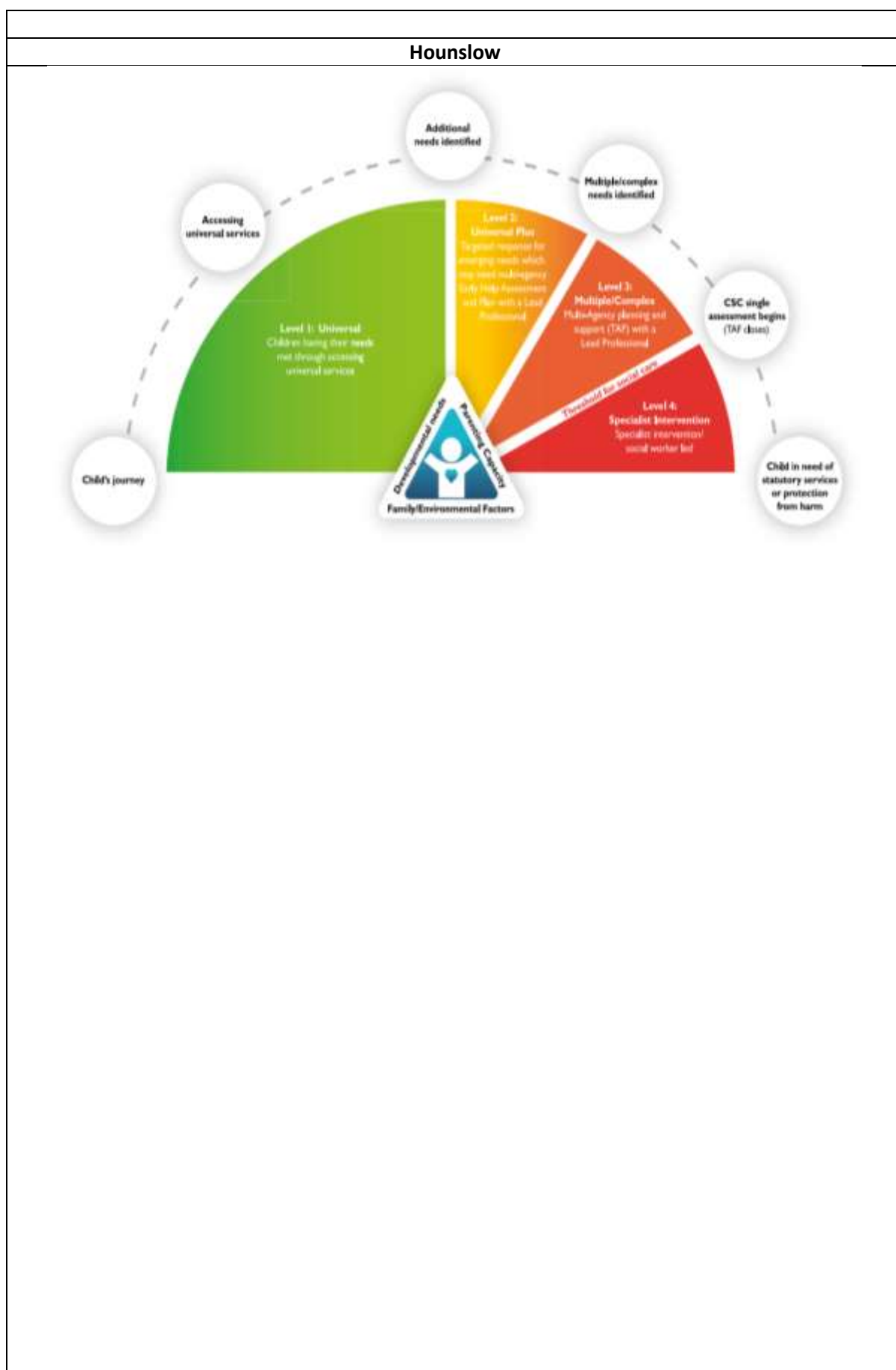
CESCP@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Telephone:

Out of hours: 0800 123 5022

Telephone:

01606 274302



Knowsley



Tier 2: Early help

These are children with additional needs, who may be vulnerable and showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect; their needs are not clear, not known or not being met. *These children may be subject to adult focused care giving.* This is the threshold for a multi-agency early help assessment to begin. These are children who require a lead professional for a co-ordinated approach to the provision of additional services such as family support services, parenting programmes and children's centres. These will be provided within universal or targeted services provision and do not include services from children's social care.

Tier 3: Children with complex multiple needs

These children require specialist services in order to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development or to prevent significant impairment of their health and development and/or who are disabled. They may require longer term intervention from specialist services. In some cases these children's needs may be secondary to the adults needs. This is the threshold for an assessment led by children's social care under Section 17, Children Act 1989 although the assessments and services required may come from a range of provision outside of children's social care.

Tier 4: Children in acute need

These children are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm. This is the threshold for child protection.

These children are likely to have already experienced adverse effects and to be suffering from poor outcomes. Their needs may not be considered by their parents. This tier also includes Tier 4 health services which are specialised services in residential, day patient or outpatient settings for children and adolescents with severe and /or complex health problems. This is likely to mean that they may be referred to children's social care under section 20, 47 or 31 of the Children Act 1989. This would also include those children remanded into custody and statutory youth offending services.

You can call us on [020 8583 6600](tel:02085836600)

https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20075/child_protection/2517/professionals_who_work_with_children

Sefton

Sefton's Level of Need - Guidance
HEARMYVOICE
PAGE 3

Safeguarding: Across the Continuum of Need

The safeguarding 'windscreen' illustrates that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and takes place across the continuum of need from universal services through to statutory interventions. Understanding needs across the continuum and how they relate to the appropriate action to be taken, ensures that the response to identified needs supports children to achieve their potential, at the right time and in the right way.

Universal LEVEL 1
Children whose needs are fully met and thrive

- aspire and achieve
- safe and secure
- happy and healthy
- resilient and ready for adulthood

Additional LEVEL 2
Children with additional needs

Multiple and complex LEVEL 3
Children with multiple and complex needs

Acute LEVEL 4
Children with acute needs including those in need of protection

Family are meeting their children's needs with support from universal services

Family who can meet their children's needs with some additional support, usually in the short term

Family with multiple complex needs who can meet their children's needs with targeted and co-ordinated support

Family need multi-agency response including specialist intervention from children's social care

Think Family

Child's developmental needs

Parenting capacity and commitment to change

Family and environmental factors

Share information

Child and family assessment section 17A/7 enquiries

If you are unsure whether to make a referral, please discuss your concerns with the designated child protection officer/ safeguarding lead within your organisation.

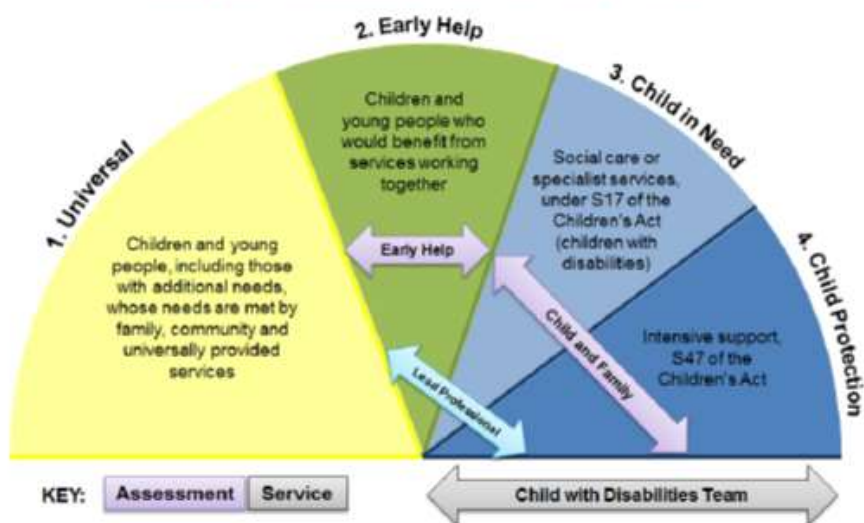
Prior to making a referral through to Children's Social Care, if you would like to have a consultation with a Social Worker please call Sefton's MASH Team on either 0151 934 4013/ 4481. Please note a Child Referral Form should be completed in all cases unless you deem the child to be at risk of immediate significant harm to which MASH Contact Officers will receive information via the telephone in the first instance but following this a Child Referral Form must be completed.

For any out of hours advice/ emergencies (Mon – Thurs from 5.30pm, Fri from 5pm, weekends and bank holidays) please contact Sefton's Emergency Duty Team on 0151 934 3555. If you think a child is in immediate danger please call the Police.

Please call the Sefton Contact Centre for all general enquiries on 0345 140 0845.

St Helens

Diagram 1: Summary of the four levels of need



Contact on 01744 676767

Warrington

Understanding the Levels of Need and an indication of the factors affecting need

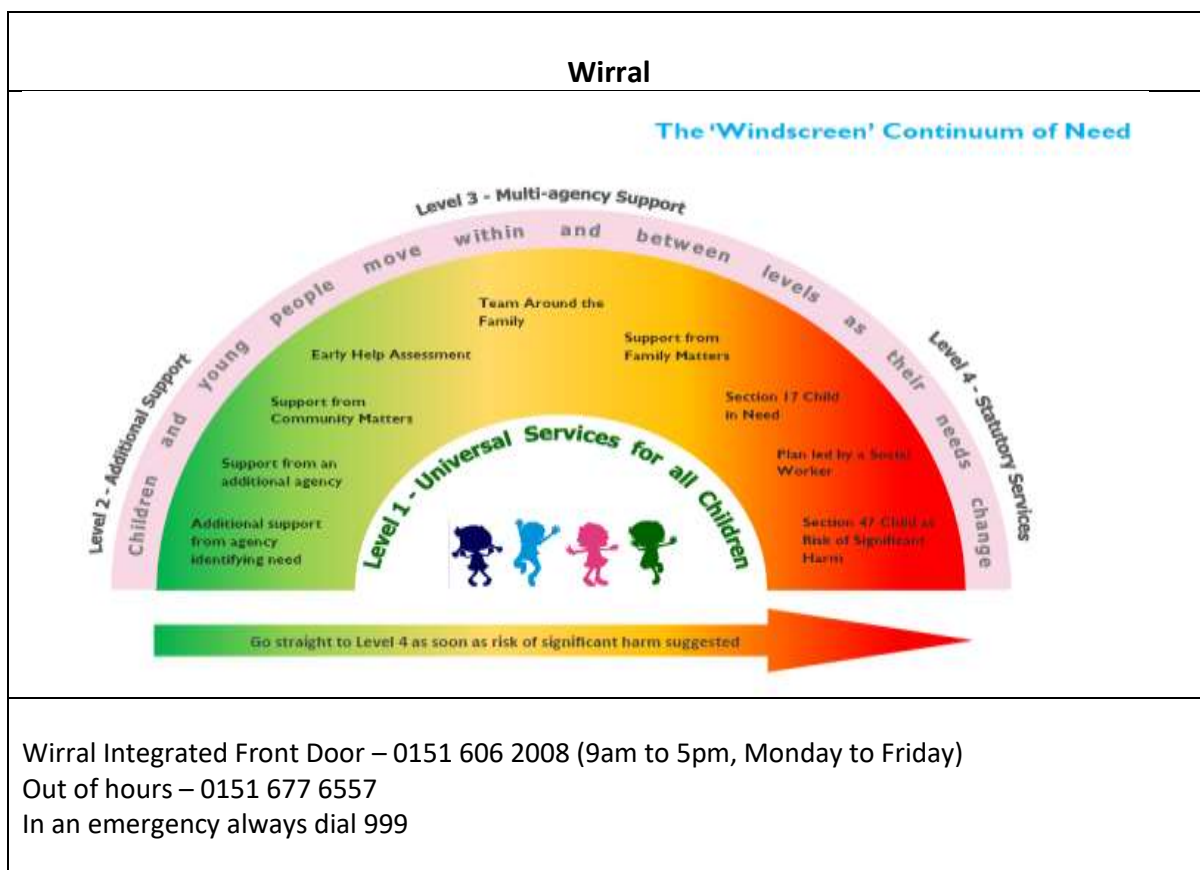
	Level of need 1 Universal (Community)	Level of need 2 Early Help Additional Needs (Universal Plus)	Level of need 3 Early Help Complex Needs (Universal Partnership Plus)	Level of need 4 Children at Need and Children in need of Protection
	Children, young people and families/ carers having all their needs met by universal services and are thriving. They require no additional support.	Children, young people and families/ carers who have additional unmet needs, who may need extra support to thrive.	Increasing level of complex and/or multiple unmet needs where coordinated support is required to prevent concerns escalating. A multi-agency team around the family will identify a lead professional and develop robust multi-agency early help plan to prevent escalation of concerns. Early help assessment is needed.	A child or young person living in circumstances where there is a significant risk of harm, abuse or neglect, whilst the young person themselves may pose a risk of serious harm to others or where there are complex needs in relation to disability.
Response	At this level, services are 'universal' meaning that they are available to all children and young people. Families and young people can use these services without the need for a referral or assessment for example Family Information Service, schools, GP surgeries, children's centres, libraries and leisure centres, health services and a range of services provided by private, voluntary and independent services.	In order to resolve these additional unmet needs, an agency needs to respond to offer support, advice, direction and planned intervention or additional resources. These needs can be identified through an Early Help Assessment. All Early Help Assessments must be logged with the EH support team.	Early Help assessment, plan and interventions are required if the situation is not to escalate into neglect, abuse or long term dysfunction.	
Procedure	Direct contact with universal services: Schools, GP surgeries, children's centres, libraries and leisure centres, health services and a range of services provided by private, voluntary and independent services. www.warringtonnorthyorkshire.org or 01925 443400 for information, advice and guidance for children and families.	Check out www.warringtonnorthyorkshire.org For information, advice and guidance. Undertake an Early Help Assessment (EHA). Log with the EH support team on earlyhelpsupport@warrington.gov.uk . Consider bringing the professionals together you feel could support the family and develop a plan. Undertake actions and review process.	Contact MASH and check family is already open. If open and there is already a Lead Professional make contact with the Lead Professional. If not already open undertake an Early Help Assessment (EHA). Log with the Early Help Support team on earlyhelpsupport@warrington.gov.uk . Bring the professionals together you feel could support the family and develop a plan. Undertake actions and review process.	Follow the Warrington Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub Referral & Decision Making Process (please refer to the diagram on page 13).

Children's Safeguarding

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The MASH can be contacted for safeguarding advice, guidance and support on:

Tel: 01925 443400/ 442468; Out of Hours: 01925 444400.



Reviewing History

Date	Changes made	Signature
December 20	Added SB	DC
09.12.20	Ratified by Proprietorial Body (V1)	GovCom
Jan 2021	Change of proprietor name (V2)	DC
April 2021	Change of RM name (V3)	DC
13.05.21	Edited to reflect changes to KCSiE January update (V4)	DC
July 2021	Edited to reflect changes to KCSiE 2021 (V5)	DC
March 2022	Flow chart of reporting procedure implemented (V6)	DC
May 2022	Added Level Thresholds for all placing authorities (V7)	DC
May 2022	Edited to reflect changes to KCSiE 2022 (V8)	DC
March 2023	Updated Deputy DSL, Wirral Level Threshold and Child on child terminology (V9)	DC
March 2023	New DSL added to the list – k.Stewart V10	RG
April 2023	Added Bury Level of Threshold V11	DC
August 2023	Updated DSL list Updated for KCSiE 2023 Added Hounslow level of Threshold – V12	DC

January 2024	Added St Helens, Halton and Bristol's level threshold V13	DC
January 2024	Safeguarding process updated, added in extra DSL's	RH
September 2024	Updated DSL names and updated for KCSIE V15	DC
October 2024	Updated date for Working together to safeguard children V16	DC
January 2025	Updated following TMC audit (V17)	DC
January 2025	Changed Gov Com to Proprietorial Body (V18)	DC
May 2025	Updated Level thresholds (V19)	DC
June 2025	Updated to include raising concerns via Arbor (V20)	DC
Sept 2025	Updated safeguarding form, removed Bury and Manchester details (V21)	DC
September 2025	Full policy review in line with KCSiE 2025 (V22)	TM

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