Where Learning Blossoms

Thorney Close Primary School

2025-26
Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Person responsible for this policy:	Mrs C. Jones
Governor with responsibility for this policy:	Mrs L. Scott
Date of last review:	September 2025
Ratified by:	Full Governing Body
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Document Control

Date changes made	Changes Made by	Details of substantive changes
October 2020		New policy
August 2021	TFC- SIO	Updated in line with legislative updates.
July 2022	TFC – SIO	Updated in line with statutory guidance updates.
August 2023	TfC – SIO	Updated in line with statutory guidance updates.
August 2024	TfC – SIO	Updated in line with changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 and DfE Data Protection Guidance.
August 2025	TfC - SIO	Updated in line with changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and EYFS Framework 2025

Who's who?

The following people are responsible for child protection and safeguarding at Thorney Close Primary School, their roles and responsibilities are identified throughout this policy.

2025-26 – At this school

Role	Name	Contact details
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Jones	catherinejones@thorneycloseprimaryschool.co.uk 0191 5250808
Chair of Governors	Mrs Lorraine Scott	info@thorneycloseprimaryschool.co.uk 0191 5250808
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Catherine Jones	catherinejones@thorneycloseprimaryschool.co.uk 0191 5250808
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Mrs Nicola Leyland	nicolaleyland@thorneycloseprimaryschool.co.uk 0191 5250808
Link Governor for Safeguarding	Mrs Lorraine Scott	info@thorneycloseprimaryschool.co.uk 0191 5250808
Designated Teacher for (Cared for and Care Experienced)	Mrs Nicola Leyland	nicolaleyland@thorneycloseprimaryschool.co.uk 0191 5250808
Senior Mental Health Lead	Mrs Nicola Leyland with the support of Mrs Donna Hargreaves Early Help	nicolaleyland@thorneycloseprimaryschool.co.uk donnahargreaves@thorneycloseprimaryschool.co.uk 0191 5250808
Prevent SPOC (School)	Mrs Catherine Jones	catherinejones@thorneycloseprimaryschool.co.uk 0191 5250808

2025-2026 – Other significant agencies

Role	Name	Contact details
Children's Social Care	Integrated Contact and Referral Team	0191 520 5560
Early Help	Early Help Allocations and Advice Team	0191 561 4084
Your Locality Child Protection Team	Coalfields North Central Washington	0191 561 6635 0191 561 7088 0191 561 7129 0191 561 3147
Designated Officer (formerly LADO)	Danielle Rose	0191 561 7198 0191 561 3901
PREVENT SPOC and Channel Chair (TfC)	Lisa Punn Deputy: Cheryl Thomas	0191 520 5560
Strategic Lead for Education	Ronnie Lynn	07557 801 273
School Improvement officer – Safeguarding	Vacant	

We believe

At Thorney Close Primary School ('the school') we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children from harm and promote their welfare – children who feel safe can achieve more.
- to provide governors, staff, children and their families with the overarching principals and our approach to keeping children safe.
- to support our understanding and implementation of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and other statutory guidance like Working Together to Safeguard Children.

The welfare of all children is paramount regardless of age, gender, culture, language, race, ability, sexual identity, or religion.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of the school including those commissioned to deliver services on the school's behalf, peripatetic and supply staff and students.

We take our responsibility to keep children safe seriously.

We define

Safeguarding as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children.
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes.

Effective safeguarding means practitioners should understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact children and families' lives.

"Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It includes a wide range of issues relating to pupil's welfare, health and safety."

(Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills, Ofsted 2022)

Child Protection as:

- Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined for the purpose of this guidance as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

Abuse as:

- A form of maltreatment involving causing harm or failing to protect a child from harm.

Neglect as:

- 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.

Children as:

- Everyone under the age of 18.

Parents as:

- Birth parents and other adults in a parenting role e.g. stepparents, foster carers, adoptive parents.

Staff as:

- All staff onside including; ancillary, peripatetic, supply, self-employed, contractors, volunteers, students, governors and trustees.

We will achieve

A culture of safety, equality and protection

We will do this by:

- Recognising that all children have the right to grow up free from abuse and harm.
- Having conversations with and listening to children and families as early as possible.
- Empowering our families, recognise their strengths and support them to build resilience.
- Promoting joint working with parents and carers in the interest of children's welfare.
- Ensuring those who have been harmed are never given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual harassment or violence.
- Following safe recruitment procedures to ensure that staff are carefully selected, vetted and have the relevant qualifications and experience.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of child.
- Having a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) who takes ultimate responsibility for children's protection, safety and well-being including online.
- Supporting all staff to identify concerns and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Responding quickly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse using the Sunderland Safeguarding Partnership's Multi Agency Threshold Guidance (2025). sscp_multi_agency_guide_to_our_thresholds_of_need_jan_2025_v2.pdf
- Providing parents, carers and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have. This includes having knowledge of, and ensuring children have access to their preferred methods of communication and that staff are trained in a variety of communication tools.
- Adopting positive behaviour management strategies.
- Regularly reviewing the effectiveness of the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures, including this procedure.
- Working in partnership with external organisations and professionals to ensure that children are protected.
- Creating a culture of learning and reflection by reviewing what we do well, what we could do better and what we can learn from any "near misses."

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025and Working Together to Safeguard Children (WTTSC 2023) and the Maintained schools governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

We comply with this guidance and the procedures set out by Sunderland Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

Our safeguarding priorities

We firmly believe all safeguarding issues are significant and each issue will be dealt with using the same rigor and tenacity. We have highlighted the following issues are a priority for Thorney Close Primary School

1. Preventing Neglect and Low Attendance – due to the large numbers of referrals we have had past years we have employed our own Early Help worker. The Early Help will support families at the right time and working with partners such as the Magic Breakfast we will support families before they reach crisis point.
2. Domestic abuse – due to high levels of domestic abuse in Sunderland, and the large number of Operation Encompass notifications we receive, it's important that we work closely with partners such as Children's Social Care, Early Help and Wearside Women in Need. As well as ensuring our PHSE & RHSE curriculum is effective in teaching children about appropriate relationships and offering support to victims/those who experience domestic abuse.
3. PREVENT – due to recent incidents in Sunderland and across the UK, it is important we recognise, support and PREVENT children from being vulnerable to radicalisation.

Our roles and responsibilities

Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.' (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023).

Roles and responsibilities are further detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

The Governing Body will:

The whole Governing Body will ensure they facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding where safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all aspects of policy and process development with the best interests of children at heart. They will do this by:

- Ensuring the school meets its statutory obligations to keep children safe including ensuring policies and procedures are in place to manage safeguarding concerns and allegations against staff.
- Appointing a governor/senior board level member to take overall responsibility for safeguarding and act as a link between the Governing Body, Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Ensuring the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has the appropriate level of authority, additional time, funding, training, resources and supervision to be effective in their role
- Reading and understand KCSIE 2025 – and ensure all staff do the same.
- Ensuring children are kept safe online – we will do this by ensuring we have the appropriate filtering and monitoring in place.
- Ensure that the induction, training and learning for the school community is robust and effective by ensuring all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.
- Ensuring that pupils are taught about safeguarding on the curriculum including online safety in compliance with statutory guidance Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- Ensuring teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors have appropriate checks carried out in line with statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe In Education (2025, Part 3).
- Ensuring there are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns or allegations against teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers, and contractors who may not be suitable to work with or pose a risk to pupils, this includes having a process to manage low level concerns.
- Ensuring that systems are in place for pupils to effectively share a concern about a safeguarding issue they are experiencing, express their views and give feedback.
- Ensuring that the setting has systems in place to prevent, identify and respond to child on child harm (including sexual abuse and sexual harassment), mental health concerns, and review the effectiveness of the setting's online safety practices.
- Appointing a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement for cared for children and children who have ever had a social worker.
- Ensure all governors and trustees receive the appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) training that will enable the whole governing body to hold senior leaders to account for safeguarding.
- All children should be protected but Governors recognise the following groups are at greater risk of harm; children who have a social worker, children who are absent from education, children who are electively home educated, children requiring mental health support, cared for and care experienced children, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning/Queer (LGBTQ+).

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure this policy and all other related policies are reflective of the school, fully understood and applied by all staff.
- Ensure the DSL and any deputies have appropriate time, funding, training, resources and supervision to be effective in their role.
- Ensure any allegations against staff or low level concerns are dealt with promptly and promptly and will liaise with the Designated Officer (DO) where appropriate.
- Inform Together for Children of any changes to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025, Annex C.)

- Is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety, filtering and monitoring) at this school.
- Is able to provide support and advice to all school staff in relation to safeguarding matters and Information Sharing.
- Is able to take part in Strategy meetings, Child Protection Conferences and other multi-agency meetings.
- Will ensure all concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions are recorded in writing, including when referrals were or were not made, using the CPOMs system.
- Will undertake training to ensure they have the appropriate skills and knowledge to undertake this role. This will include Experienced DSL training delivered every two years but will also ensure they attend training at least annually.
- Will keep up to date with the latest information through newsletters, briefings, conferences and other meetings and will share relevant learning with other staff.
- Will liaise with the headteacher to inform them of any issues – especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.

For a full list of the DSL's responsibility, please see Annex C - Role of the designated safeguarding lead in KCSIE 2025.

Here's a summary of some of the DSL's responsibility:

- Ensure cases of suspected abuse are referred to Children's Social Care and/or the Police.
- Support staff to make referrals to Children's Social Care and/or the Police.
- Refer cases to the Channel / PREVENT programme where children are susceptible to radicalisation.
- Refer cases where a member of staff has left due to safeguarding worries to the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Act as a single point of contact for the three safeguarding partners (Police, Health and Local Authority/Together for Children).
- Be aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult and guidance in PACE Code C 2019.
- Liaise with the 'case manager' and Designated Officer (DO) for child protection concerns involving a member of staff.
- Liaise with all staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and maintain a good working relationship with those staff.
- Develop and maintain a good working relationship with Locality Team Managers, EHAAT and other staff from Together for Children.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff.
- Ensure all staff know how to make a referral including to Early Help.
- Work closely with other professionals involved with individual children.
- Maintain an up to date list of those pupils who are vulnerable and / or open to multi-agency working or who have ever had a social worker. .
- Ensure all staff have read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and have had the appropriate safeguarding training.
- Provide termly updates to the Governing Body on safeguarding.
- Undertake an annual audit of safeguarding compliance and lead on the SSCP Sec 157/175 Audit ensuring it's submitted on time.
- Promote the education of those children who have ever had a social worker.
- Take lead responsibility for online safety (including filtering and monitoring) as well as undertaking an annual review of the school's approach to online safety and regularly updating the school's filtering and monitoring risk assessment.

It is not the Designated Safeguarding Leads role to investigate or decide if a child has been abused. It is the DSL's role to refer suspected abuse to Children's Social Care and/or the Police.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):

- Are trained to the same standard as the DSL which enables them to undertake this role.
- Deputises for the Designated Safeguarding Lead but cannot take lead responsibility for safeguarding – that's the DSL's role.
- Can attend Strategy Meetings, Child Protection Conferences and other multi-agency meetings on behalf of the DSL

Children need all school staff and volunteers to:

- All staff will read and understand Part 1 of statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025). Those working directly with children will also read Annex B.
- In addition to this all staff will be aware of the systems in place which support safeguarding including reading this Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy; the Behaviour Policy; the Staff Behaviour Policy (code of conduct); the low-level concerns policy; safeguarding response to children who are absent from education; the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and how to respond to child-on-child abuse.

- Know who and how to contact the DSL and any deputies, the Chair of Governors and the Governor responsible for safeguarding.
- Be able to identify vulnerable pupils and take action to keep them safe. Information or concerns about pupils will be shared with the DSL where it includes those:
    - who may need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect.
    - may require mental health support.
    - may benefit from early help.
    - who may be susceptible to radicalisation
    - where a crime may have been committed.
    - who are absent from education regularly or for prolonged periods of time.
- Be clear as to the setting's policy and procedures about child-on-child abuse, children who are absent from education, those requiring mental health support, and the impact of technology in relation to online safety.
- Be involved where appropriate, in the implementation of individual plans to further safeguard vulnerable pupils and understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.
- Record concerns appropriately and in a timely manner by using the school's safeguarding systems.
- To be aware of the need to raise to the senior leadership team any concerns they have about safeguarding practices within the school.
- Be aware that children might not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences s as being harmful.

This means that all staff and volunteers will:

- Create a culture of safety, equality and protection.
- Provide a safe environment for children to learn.
- Identify children who may need additional help / early help.
- Identify children who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing abuse or neglect and if you're not sure, speak to the DSL.
- Provide appropriate help and support to children at the right time.
- Share all safeguarding concerns with the DSL and record the concern on the CPOMs system.
- Take appropriate action when they are concerned about unsafe practice or have concerns about a member of staff's behaviour.
- Always think **"it could happen here"**.
- Always listen to the child and act in their best interests.
- Maintain confidentiality where necessary but understand this should not be a reason to prevent sharing information with the DSL.
- Never promise a child confidentiality.
- Read, understand and adhere to Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings (2022).
- Know how to make a referral to Children's Social Care and Early Help directly, if required.
- Show professional curiosity and speak to the DSL if you have concerns about a child.
- Understand the schools filtering and monitoring procedures and their role with this.

When to be concerned

All staff should be aware of the definitions, signs and indicators of abuse. Abuse and neglect is often a complex issue. Often abuse, signs and indicators will crossover and interlink. Concerns for children may arise in many different situations – it' important that if you notice something, you check it out and share it. **NOTICE. CHECK. SHARE.**

What is abuse and neglect (as defined in KCSIE 2025)?

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. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

Physical abuse is 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.

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 overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

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 online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

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. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children experience of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Abuse and neglect can be a one-off incident or can happen over time. Abuse and neglect can take place inside and outside of the family home. Adults and children can abuse children.

Children who need early help

Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018) describes how providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later.

KCSIE (2023) identifies that any child may benefit from early help, but all staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled,
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care (EHC) plan),
- is a young carer,
- is bereaved,
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime,
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home,
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised,
- is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online,
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse,
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves,
- is suffering from mental ill health,
- has returned home to their family from care,
- is a privately fostered child,*
- has a parent or carer in custody,
- is missing education, or persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education,
- has experienced multiple suspensions and is at risk of, or has been permanently excluded.

* WTTSG 2023 identifies children who are privately fostered and children at risk of 'honour' based violence as children who would benefit from Early Help. In Sunderland, these children should be referred to Children's Social Care initially.

Signs and indicators of abuse and neglect

The signs and indicators of abuse can be different for each child. By noticing small changes in how a child behaves or presents can identify early any potential concerns. Parental behaviour can also be a sign or indicator of abuse or neglect.

It's important to recognise that a sign or indicator does not automatically mean a child is being abused.

It's important to remember that children might not always verbally 'disclose' abuse and any worries should be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Examples of signs and indicators (this list is not exhaustive):

Physical abuse

- bruising, lacerations, abrasions or scars

Neglect

- Inappropriate clothing or footwear (size, condition, suitability)

- bite marks that are potentially from a human or dangerous animal
- when an injury is not consistent with the explanation given
- burns or scars where you would not normally touch a hot object
- fractures (frequent or where medical attention is not sought)
- bruising or any other injury on an immobile baby
- repeated injury's
- failure to seek medical attention
- Fabricated induced illness (FUI)

- Persistently dirty or smelly
- Poor personal hygiene
- Poor dental hygiene (tooth decay)
- Persistent infections such as headlice
- Failure to grow due to malnutrition
- Frequent accidents due to a lack of supervision
- Not to report as missing
- Not taken to medical appointments
- Stealing, hiding or scavenging for food
- Constantly tired
- Poor attendance / punctuality at school
- Child's basic needs are not met
- Parents unwilling to protect from other types of abuse

Emotional abuse

- Harmful interactions observed e.g. name calling
- Low self-esteem
- Inappropriate response to pain
- Neurotic behaviour
- Fearful of individuals
- Emotional immaturity
- Disturbances in speech e.g. stuttering
- Trust issues
- Developmental Delay
- Anxious about doing something wrong
- Parents blaming their problems on a child
- Humiliation, name calling, negative comparisons

Sexual abuse

- soreness in the genital or anal areas
- poor personal hygiene or changes in weight
- marks and bruises
- pregnancy
- frequent Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)
- Mental health issues including self-harm and eating disorder
- Recurring unitary tract infections (UTIs)
- Unexplained gifts
- Associating with older peers or adults
- Age inappropriate behaviour or language

Behavioural changes

- Changes in behaviour
- Mental health issues including self-harm and eating disorder
- Avoiding the abuser
- Fearful of abuser / adults
- Giving clues
- Problems at school
- Drug/alcohol misuse
- Risk taking behaviours

- Going missing
- Wetting / soling
- Withdrawn or seeking additional attention from adults who they feel may be able to create safety
- Anger, frustration or distress
- Excessive clinginess
- Changes to eating

Children with additional needs

Research shows that children with additional needs are more at risk of abuse and neglect. This can be due to several reasons:

- Attitudes and assumptions that result in the denial or failure to report abuse.

- Misplaced empathy – reluctance to challenge carers or seeing abuse as attributed to stress or difficulties in caring for a child with additional needs.
- Not believing abuse effects children with additional needs in the same way.
- Unsatisfactory lowering of standards for those with additional needs.
- Dependency – exposure to wide range of carers for intimate care.
- Isolation – it's easier for the abuse or neglect to remain hidden.
- Lack of participation in decision making children less likely to feel able to complain.
- Especially vulnerable to bullying, intimidation and exploitation.
- Behaviours may be mistaken as part of the child's disability.
- Communication barriers.

The following are possible signs of abuse and neglect for those with additional needs:
- Bruising on areas that might not be of concern to a non-disabled child.
- Not getting help with feeding.
- Over or under medicating.
- Poor hygiene or personal care.
- Rough handling / excessive restraint.
- Lack of stimulation.
- Unwillingness to learn a child's preferred method of communication.
- Ill-fitting or inappropriate equipment.
- Procedures that are unnecessary and carried out against the child's permission.

What to do if you suspect a child is at risk

All staff maintain the attitude **"it could happen here"**. When staff have concern for a child's safety or welfare we expect them to act immediately.

At Thorney Close Primary School we follow Sunderland Safeguarding Partnership's child protection procedures.

If you notice something, check it out and share it. **NOTICE, CHECK, SHARE.**

The DSL is best placed to have a complete picture of a child's safeguarding needs (KSCIE 2025) and be the most appropriate person to advise on the response to any concerns. The DSL will receive, collate and coordinate information about a child and make immediate and ongoing judgements about the risk and what needs to happen next. The DSL, in most cases, will work with parents to decide what to do next.

The DSL may need to seek advice from the Early Help Allocations and Advice Team (EHHAT) or refer the concern to Children's Social Care by making a referral to the Integrated Contact and Referral Team (ICRT). In the most serious cases, this will be done urgently by a phone call then followed up with a completed referral form. In most cases, the DSL will seek consent from parents to make the referral unless this would potentially put the child in further danger or delay support for a child.

All staff will be made aware of the Early Help process and their role within it. We recognise it's much more effective and useful to help children and families at an early stage rather than waiting until concerns escalate.

What to do if a child discloses

When a child makes a disclosure, it can sometimes be scary for the member of staff. Whilst it may be scary for the member of staff, think about how scared the child must feel.

When a child makes a disclosure, staff should always:
- Listen carefully to the child and give them your full attention.

- Never promise confidentially. Explain to the child what you have to do with the information any why.
- Only ask open questions to seek calcification like Who? What? Where? When? How?
- Reassure the child they haven't done anything wrong – abuse is not their fault.
- Ask what you can do to make them feel safer now.
- Don't express any panic or emotion to the child.
- Use the child's language and vocabulary or their preferred method of communication.
- Don't be tempted to give false promises or assurances – promises you can't keep.
- Make a record of what the child said, including their words. Record the date and time, who was there and what was shared. Sign and date any handwritten notes.
- It is better to give the child your full attention and write notes following the conversation than to appear distracted.
- It's not your job to investigate or make any decision if the child has been abused. Do not ask the child to remove any clothing to see any injuries and do not take photos of any injuries.
- Share the disclosure immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff should then record the concern on CPOMS. Staff should be aware they can make a referral directly to Early Help or Children's Services if require. If you are worried that the DSL has not taken your concerns seriously enough, you should follow the whistleblowing procedure.

Ensure you seek support. Dealing with disclosures can be distressing. It's important you speak to the right people for help and not discuss the child openly with friends or in the Staff Room for example.

Children who harm other children (Child-on-child abuse)

It is widely recognised that children are able to harm other children.

At Thorney Close Primary School

- All staff have a responsibility to prevent, recognise and respond to this type of abuse.
- We have a 'zero tolerance' approach to abuse. Incidents are taken seriously. These will never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter,' just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up.' Banter and teasing can and should be acknowledged and recognised as bullying behaviour and may require proportionate intervention.
- Even with a zero-tolerance approach, we take steps to educate and take action to ensure and to mitigate the risk of contributing to a culture of unacceptable behaviours or a culture that normalises abuse.
- It is understood that child on child harm may reflect equality issues in terms of those who may be targeted are more likely to have protected characteristics.
- Early identification of vulnerability to child on child harm is made by reviewing attendance, behaviour, attainment and safeguarding records at least on a termly basis.
- We recognise child on child abuse can happen inside and outside of school including online.

Child on child abuse can involve (this list is not exhaustive):

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.

- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery).
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm; and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

It is important that incidents of abuse and harm are treated under safeguarding policy in conjunction with the school's behaviour policy. Concerns regarding the welfare of pupils requires records to be kept on the child's safeguarding/child protection file. At Thorney Close Primary School we use CPOMs for all child concerns, police notifications, attendance and behaviour. We regularly evaluate its use and change categories accordingly.

We will try to minimise the risk of child on child abuse by teaching children about appropriate behaviour. We will use assemblies, PHSE, tutor time and external speakers to promote appropriate relationships.

The school recognises that upskirting is a criminal offence under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 and matters will be referred to Police.

The school will use the Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) guide when dealing with youth produced sexual imagery.

The school will use its behaviour policy to apply sanctions where appropriate this includes, in the most extreme circumstances, the use of exclusion.

Thorney Close Primary School will handle initial reports of harm by:
- Securing the immediate safety of pupils involved in an incident and sourcing support for other young people affected.
- Listening carefully to the child, being non-judgmental, being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed, not asking leading questions and only prompting the child where necessary with open questions – where, when, what, etc;
- Ensuring that those who have been harmed will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. They will never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.
- Ensuring the child's wishes are taken into consideration in any intervention and any action is taken to ensure safety of the target and other members of the wider peer cohort.
- Not promising confidentiality as it is highly likely that information will need to be shared with others.
- Consider making a referral to Police and or Children's Social Care or liaising with the Early Help Advice and Allocations Team to secure appropriate support e.g. from TfC's Relationship Sex and Health Team.

Actions to take in relation to sexual violence and sexual harassment

Thorney Close Primary School will take the following actions when responding to incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment:
- Incidents will be reported immediately to the DSL/ Deputy DSL who will undertake further assessment of what action should be taken proportionate to the factors that have been identified. The school will use an assessment tool (Gender Based Violence Continuum and

will refer to the Brooke Toolkit as well as the more detailed Aim Resource) to inform assessment of risk and what actions to subsequently take. This may include seeking specialist advice and guidance from Together for Children.

- DSLs/Deputies will take proportionate action and consider whether a case can be managed internally, through early help, or should involve other agencies as required in line with the Multi-Agency Threshold Guidance.
- When an incident involves an act of sexual violence (rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault) the starting point is that this should be passed on to police regardless of the age of criminal responsibility (10 years old). This must be reported directly via 101 for recording purposes and accountability. A concurrent referral to social care must also be made.
- When a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger a referral to Children's Social Care. This would normally be made by the DSL but if the DSL is unavailable, any member of staff can make this referral.
- Where the report includes an online element, the setting will follow Searching, screening and confiscation at school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child. The highlighted advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable.
- Risk assessments and or safety plans will be developed for individual children who have been involved in an incident. This should be reviewed at least every 3 months. These should involve the child and parents/carers and address contextual risks.

Contextual safeguarding approach to child on child harm

Thorney Close Primary School will minimise the risk of child on child abuse by taking a contextual approach to safeguarding by increasing safety in the contexts of which harm can occur – this can include the school environment itself, peer groups and the neighbourhood.

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

Keeping Children Safe Online

Our children (and adults) are spending more time online than ever before. The internet provides children with more opportunities to learn and keep in touch with others however, the internet is a risky place. Technology can facilitate child exploitation (both sexual and criminal), sexual predation, radicalisation and child on child abuse. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead takes overall responsibility for online safety.

We will ensure children are protected from harmful content when using school equipment by ensuring we have the right level of filtering and monitoring. The "right level" of filtering and monitoring will block any potentially harmful content but will not over block.

KCSIE 2025 categorises online safety into three risk areas:

- **content:** exposure to illegal or harmful material such as pornography, hate speech, self-harm, radicalisation, misinformation, and conspiracy theories.
- **contact:** harmful online interactions like peer pressure, misleading advertising, or adults pretending to be children for exploitation.
- **conduct:** actions that may cause harm, including sharing explicit images (consensual or not), other explicit content, or cyberbullying.

- **commerce:** risks include online gambling, inappropriate ads, phishing, and financial scams. If you have concerns about students or staff.

We recognise that whilst we can apply filters and monitoring processes to our equipment and technology provision, children who have their own internet enabled devices will have access to 4G and 5G, this cannot be monitored by the school. Mobile phones are able to be brought to school by children who travel independently to school. They are handed into school office before entering school and they are given back at the end of the school day.

Teaching children to keep themselves safe

We have an essential role in teaching children to keep themselves safe. We will maximise any opportunity to tech children what is appropriate and inappropriate adult and child behaviour, what is 'safe' and 'safety', how to recognise when themselves and others are safe and are not safe and what to do when they are worried.

We will maximise curriculum time to provide children with opportunities to feel safe, equal and protected. We will use support children's social, emotional and mental health by maximising opportunities to increase self-awareness, self-esteem, social and emotional understanding, assertiveness and decision making.

We will deliver effective personal, social and health education (PHSE) and relationship and sex education (RSE) that is age and ability appropriate. This will include (but not limited to) bullying, online bullying, radicalisation, child exploitation (sexual and criminal), strange danger, road safety, sexual abuse, neglect, online safety, gender-based violence, sexual assaults and youth produced sexual imagery.

For more information about our Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum, please read our policy. Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

Thorney Close Primary School has a dedicated mental health practitioner who works in school to support children's wellbeing. The practitioner delivers a 5-week 'Healthy Heads' course to KS2 pupils, helping them understand feelings and recognise the link between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. In addition, the practitioner also delivers the Decider programme, 'Friends Group,' and individual pupil sessions to further support children's mental health and emotional resilience.

When children are absent from education

When a child misses' school, this is a sign or indicator that the child might be at risk of harm. Children who are frequently absent from school are at increased risk. Schools have a statutory duty to investigate and unexplained absences (Education Act 2002 and Children missing education: Statutory Guidance for local authorities 2016).

Please see our attendance policy for what action we will take when a child doesn't arrive at school. In summary, we chase up each child who is absence by 9.30am and will also conduct welfare checks.

When children are frequently absent from school, we will work with Sunderland City Council – Attendance Team, TfC's Locality Attendance Officers and TfC's Child Missing Education (CME) Coordinator.

When children who are vulnerable don't attend school and after reasonable attempts are made to contact the family, if the whereabouts of the child is still unknown, the DSL will be informed to take appropriate action. When children are absent from school and we are unable to contact parents, or we feel the child is vulnerable, we may ask Police to undertake a Safe and Well

Visit on our behalf or jointly with us. This means it's really important that parents communicate with us effectivity to let us know where the child is and that the child is safe.

No child will be removed from the school roll without the DSL and Headteacher's explicit permission – under any circumstances.

Children who are absent for a period of 10 school days will be reported immediately as a Children Missing From Education - Together for Children

We will ensure we have at least two emergency contact numbers for the parents/carers of each child. If we are unable to contact a child's parent when they are absent, we will use any contact details we have available to us to speak to an adult about the child's absence this may include contacting relatives we know have a connection to the child e.g. an aunt or uncle who has a child in the school.

When parents decide to Electively Home Educate their child

When a parent expresses their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, the school will coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. Ideally, this would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. The school will work with parents and partners (social workers, early help workers, attendance officers, Virtual School, SEND team etc.) to ensure this is in the best interests of the child.

The school will have due regard to DfE Guidance on EHE
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education

When children go missing from home or care

We are part of Northumbria Police and Together for Children's Operation Endeavour. When a child is reported as missing from home, the school will receive notification of the missing episode the following day. The purpose of this notification is to enable the school to support the child practically and emotionally.

When children go missing, they are offered a Return Home Interview. In Sunderland, Together for Children undertake those interviews. We will facilitate those interviews where it is appropriate for the child and in their best interests.

When children experience domestic abuse or violence

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. (KCSIE, 2025). When we become aware of or suspect a child has experienced domestic abuse, we will follow Sunderland SSCP Threshold Guidance.

As an Operation Encompass School, when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, the police will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) via Together for Children the next school day. This ensures the DSL has the most up to date and relevant information about the child's circumstances to be able to support their needs.

When we are worried about radicalisation and extremism

The Prevent duty requires all education providers 'to help prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism'. This includes safeguarding learners from extremist ideologies and radicalisation. Exploitation and radicalisation are safeguarding concerns and will be dealt with in the appropriate way.

Extremist influences could include, but are not limited to:

- family members having direct contact or involvement with extremist or terrorist groups.

- staff members of an education or community setting promoting an extremist ideology
- peers promoting an extremist ideology or sharing extremist material.
- access or exposure to online extremist material via social media or the internet - for example, propaganda including pictures, videos, blogs and fake news.
- exposure to extremist, terrorist or other violent activity in overseas settings.
- access or exposure to extremist leaflets, magazines or stickering.
- exposure to extremist groups hosting marches, protests or stalls.

All staff should look out for concerning changes in behaviour and report them to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

The Headteacher and DSL will assess the level of risk for pupils who attend the school considering the wider community and the context of the school. Some of the risks will be reduced when considering the school's RE & PHSE curriculum, SEND policy, assembly and external speakers policy, anti-bullying policy and the wider school's ethos and values.

We will identify a PREVENT Single Point of Contact (SPOC) who will lead the schools' work on protecting children from radicalisation. This person is named on Page 5.

The school will monitor online activity and ensure the appropriate filtering and monitoring takes place. The school will make referrals to the Channel panel following the local procedures.

When we are worried about exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) are both forms of abuse. CSE and CCE occur when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, or manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity.

For a full definition of CSE and CCE, see KCSIE 2025.

CSE and CCE can take place with or without any signs or indicators. If there are indicators, this is what staff should look out for:

- Unexplained money or gifts.
- Frequently absent or for prolonged periods
- Going missing (for short or long periods), or during the course of the school day.
- Being distressed or withdrawn on return.
- Disengaging from existing social networks.
- Secrecy around new associations.
- Additional mobile phones or concerning use of technology.
- Sexual health problems/ unplanned pregnancies.
- Disclosure of rape/sexual assault (and reluctance to report).
- Changes in temperament/emotional wellbeing.
- Drug or alcohol misuse.
- Involvement in criminal activity.
- Secretive behaviour.
- Unexplained physical injuries.

CSE and CCE are a safeguarding issue. When we become aware or suspect a child is at risk of CSE or CCE we will make a referral to Children's Social Care and follow the MSET (Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked) procedures
https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p_ch_sexual_exploit.html

When we are worried about mental health

From time to time, children may display signs of mental health problems. Our Senior Mental Health Lead will ensure all staff are trained in recognising signs and indicators of a mental health problem. We recognise that mental health is a safeguarding issue and will be recorded in the same way as any other safeguarding concern. The DSL and the Senior Mental Health Lead (if these aren't the same person) will work jointly to support children where a concern is raised. The DSL takes ultimate responsibility in all safeguarding cases.

We recognise that children who suffer abuse and neglect, and other trauma / adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) often have a long-lasting effect on the child that can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education. Our DSL working with the Senior Mental Health Lead will champion the education of these children to try to mitigate any future problems.

We are not able to diagnose mental health problems only observe children whose behaviour may suggest they're at risk of or experiencing a mental health problem and signpost to the most appropriate organisations.

When we are worried about Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is illegal. FGM is extremely harmful and is a form of abuse and violence against women and girls. FGM is a term to describe all procedures that involve a partial or total removal of external female genitalia for cultural or other non-medical reasons. It is typically performed on girls aged 4-15 or on older girls before marriage or pregnancy.

Signs and indicators to be aware of:

- If the family are from a community that are known to practice FGM.
- A child who has a lot of bladder or menstrual problems.
- Long term absence from school (planned or unplanned).
- Changes in behaviour, emotional wellbeing / mental health.
- Not taking part in physical exercise without medical explanation.

Children might make direct or indirect disclosures. They might be worried about a 'special procedure' or 'special ceremony' taking place especially around a family holiday. A family member might be concerned for a child.

There is a legal duty on staff to report FGM if they suspect or become aware of FGM to Police.

Children should feel safe, secure and listened to

Supporting children who have a Social Worker

Children may need a social worker for lots of different reasons, often due to safeguarding or welfare issues. Children who have been abused or neglected or live in complex family circumstances need additional support to feel safe and achieve. Children who experience adversity and trauma will often need additional support to their peers.

The DSL will be informed of all children who receive support from a social worker. This makes the DSL the best person to coordinate support for those children in school. Where a child has a social worker, the DSL is best placed to make decisions about the safety of this child, promote their welfare and best interests. When a child has an unauthorised absence, the DSL will be informed. The Headteacher will discuss any exclusions of children who have a social worker with the DSL before deciding to ensure it's in the child's best interests.

The DSL will champion the education attainment and achievement for all children with a social worker and promote their attainment and achievement at every opportunity.

Children who attend alternative provision (AP)

From time to time, some children might benefit from attending an alternative provision (AP). Where children attend alternative provision, we accept it's our responsibility to ensure their safety. We will do this by receiving written confirmation that the alternative provider has undertaken all the same vetting and barring checks we would complete. We will also review their risk assessments, insurance documents and plans.

We will share a risk assessment of the child with the AP to ensure the provider is aware of how to keep the child safe whilst in their care. We will require the AP to contact us daily to let us know if the child has attended or not. We will require the AP to share any safeguarding concerns with our DSL immediately. We require regular updates about how the placement is going, how the child is engaging and what they are learning. We reserve the right to visit the child in the provision at any time.

Keeping records and sharing information

All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions are recorded in writing including when referrals are or are not made. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the Information Asset Owner for all safeguarding and child protection records and it's their responsibility to ensure records are kept confidential, secure, up-to-date and accurate.
At Thorney Close Primary School we use CPOMs to store child protection records. All concerns and disclosures will be recorded in this way.

This means that child protection record are:

- kept securely and confidential.
- kept accurate with clear distinction between fact, observation, allegation and opinion.
- contain an up-to-date chronology of concerns and actions taken including referrals and other correspondence.
- transferred by the DSL when a child moves school.
- routinely audited to ensure quality – if an external person had to read the records, would they be able to make sense of the child's journey, what we have been worried about and what we have done about it? Would an external person be able to see evidence of the impact of our effective culture of safeguarding?
- Recorded in writing within 24 hours.

Children (age appropriate) and parents have the right to see what information is held about them if they request it.

Safe Staff, Safe Children

A workforce who are highly trained and competent

We will ensure that our children benefit from having a highly trained and competent workforce ('workforce' refers to Governors, staff, students and volunteers) that always keeps them safe. We will follow safer recruitment practices and ensure the workforce reads, understands and adheres to Safer Recruitment Consortium's – Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings.

The workforce will be given a copy of and asked to read the school's child protection policy, staff behaviour policy (code of conduct) and Keeping Children Safe in Education at induction. Should any member of the workforce have any queries about any of these documents, they should raise them ASAP with the DSL or through their Line Manager.

We may carry out an online search for any shortlisted candidates to identify any potential issues that may arise due to information available publicly (open-source checks.) We will tell shortlisted candidates that we will do this check.

The workforce will receive child protection training at least once every two years. The workforce will receive regular updates on child protection and training through staff meetings, via email and bulletins – at least annually.
The Headteacher and DSL will ensure safer recruitment processes are followed throughout including at application, vetting, recruitment and induction stages.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the school keeps an accurate Single Central Record (SCR). The SCR includes all staff, trainee teachers on salaried routes, agency and third-party supply staff and the checks and balances that have been made as part of the recruitment process. The SCR will include all of the statutory requirements as outlined in KCISE 2025.

The workforce should disclose any issues that may affect their suitability to work with children including arrests, convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings, to the Headteacher.

A workforce who behave professionally

We expect all staff to follow the school's Code of Conduct Policy and the Safer Recruitment Consortium's – Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings. All staff should ensure they have read and understood both of those documents and raise any questions with their Line Manager of Headteacher immediately.

New staff will be made aware of the expectations as part of their induction.

Mobile Phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities

The use of mobile phones and personal electronic devices by staff, volunteers, visitors, and contractors is strictly controlled within the setting. Personal devices must be stored securely and out of reach during contact time with children. They must never be in 'contact areas.'
Electronic devices (including school issued devices) are prohibited in sensitive areas such as toilets and changing rooms.

Staff must not use personal devices to take photographs or videos of children under any circumstances.

Only school-owned devices (e.g. tablets, cameras) may be used to capture images or videos of children for educational purposes, such as developmental records or displays. All images must be stored securely on password-protected school servers or devices and deleted once no longer required. Devices must not leave the premises unless authorised by the Headteacher for specific activities such as trips, and must be returned immediately after use.

Images and videos must never be shared via personal social media accounts or messaging platforms. Any breach of this policy will be treated as a serious safeguarding concern and dealt with under the school's behaviour and disciplinary procedures.

In the case of a personal emergency, staff may use their mobile phones in designated non-contact areas with prior permission from the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Safeguarding Training

- All staff will be made aware of our systems and procedures on induction.

- All staff will receive safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety, filtering and monitoring) at least once every two years. In addition to this, staff will receive regular CPD/updates in the form of briefings, meetings and news bulletins.
- All staff will be made aware of how to make a referral to Children's Social Care and the Early Help Service.
- All staff must complete FGM awareness training and will understand their legal duty under the Mandatory Reporting Duty.
- All staff must complete PREVENT awareness training. This is to ensure that they can comply with the legal expectations under the PREVENT duty.
- All staff must be aware of our procedures for those children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions.

Safer Recruitment

- Thorney Close Primary School pays full regard to the safer recruitment practices detailed in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2025; Part 3)
- Members of the Governing Body and SLT will be trained in safer recruitment practices. There will be a trained person on each interview panel.
- We will be forensic when scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history, and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. References are always obtained, scrutinised and concerns resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.
- It also includes undertaking appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the barred list checks and prohibition checks (and overseas checks if appropriate), dependent on the role and duties performed, including regulated and non-regulated activity.
- All recruitment materials will include reference to Thorney Close Primary School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils.
- Our Recruitment and Selection Policy is on the Sunderland Hub
- Our policy reflects the requirements as set out in KCSIE 2025 Part Three.
- The Headteacher has responsibility for ensuring the Single Central Record (SCR) is kept up to date.

Responding to concerns and allegations against staff

Staff must report any concerns or allegations about a professional's behaviour (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors) where they may have:

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

This includes when we received an allegation about an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using the school premises for a purpose of running activities not directly commissioned by school e.g., community groups, sports organisations etc.
Immediate action must be taken:

- Do not speak to the individual it concerns.
- Allegations or concerns about colleagues and visitors must be reported directly to the Head Teacher/Principal who will follow guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025, Part four: Allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff).
- If the concern relates to Headteacher it should be reported to the Chair of Governors, who who will liaise with the Designated Officer and they will decide on any action required.

- If there is a conflict of interest which inhibits this process of reporting, staff can report directly to the DO.
- If allegations are regarding a member of supply staff, the school will take the lead and progress enquiries with the DO, whilst continuing to engage and work with the employment agency.
- Allegations regarding foster carers or anyone in a position of trust working or volunteering with children should be referred to the DO on the day that the allegation is reported. The allocated social worker should also be informed on the day. The school should not undertake any investigation unless the DO advises this.

Low level concerns

This should be read in conjunction with the staff code of conduct and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025, Part 4).

It is essential we have a culture where all concerns about adults are shared with the right person so they can be recorded and dealt with appropriately.

A low level concern is not insignificant. This process should be used in events where a concern about professional conduct does not meet the threshold set above. Low level concerns, no matter how small should be shared with the DSL as soon as possible. This incudes when a member of staff:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, inside or outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the DO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children.
- having favourites.
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone.
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door.
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Reports should be made to the DSL/Deputy DSL (or the head teacher/principal if it is regarding the DSL).

Thorney Close Primary School creates an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer where they have found themselves in a situation.

The DSL will address unprofessional behaviour and support the individual to correct it at an early stage providing a responsive, sensitive, and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised. Review and correct any deficits in the setting's safeguarding system.

Low level concerns will be addressed on a staff counselling form after seeking advice from HR in most cases.

Whistleblowing

Governors and the Senior Leadership Team are committed to creating a culture of 'it could happen here' and welcome challenge, when required. We also want the best outcomes for all our children. When a member of staff is concerned that we are not dealing with safeguarding appropriately or feel children are unsafe at this school, those staff have a duty to do something about it.

When staff are concerned about a child's safety and feel the school is not acting appropriately, the member of staff should follow the school's whistleblowing policy. Doing nothing is not an

option. Speak to your Line Manager, the Headteacher, the DSL, the Chair of Governors or the Link Governor for Safeguarding.

When staff don't feel able to raise the issue within school, they are able to contact the NSPCC's Whistleblowing Hotline by calling 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday or emailing: help@nspcc.org.uk

Supervision

Responding to child protection concerns can affect anyone. Any member of staff who is affected by issues arising from child protection concerns can seek support from the DSL.

The school will provide appropriate supervision and support for all members of staff to ensure that:

- All staff are able to carry out their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection
- Staff are able to create an environment where everyone is able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role
- All staff have regular reviews of their own practice, so they can improve over time.
- We broker the School Improvement Service Advisor

When supervision is provided to the DSL/DDSL in relation to a specific case, details of this supervision are recorded within the child's case file.

Thorney Close Primary School seek supervision through Together for Children.

How we will work with others

Children

We want children to:

- feel safe, equal and protected
- fell listen to
- contribute to the development of school policies and be aware of why we have a child protection policy and what it means
- seek help from a trusted adult when things go wrong
- tell a trusted adult if they are worried about someone else
- take responsibility for keeping themselves safe (age and ability appropriate)
- keep themselves and other safe online

Parents

We want parents to:

- read and understand school policies - if you have any questions, please contact the school directly
- encourage their children to follow to school policies
- discuss safeguarding issues with their children and teach them how to keep themselves safe
- support the school in all of its safeguarding approaches and activities
- reinforce the keeping safe messages at home
- identify any changes in behaviour
- ensure their children are safe online
- seek support form school or other agencies when required
- understand the school staff have a duty to protect children and MUST follow procedures

Police

- When a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, if it's appropriate, we will inform the Police immediately

- We will develop good positive working relationship with our local Neighbourhood Policing Team and share intelligence where appropriate.
- We will report all suspected / disclosed cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FMG) to Police
- We will use the NPCC 'When to call the police – Guide for Schools and colleges' to identify other situations where it is appreciate/necessary to call Police.

Children's Social Care

- When we suspect a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse we will contact Together for Children's – Social Care.
- We will refer all concerns to the Initial Contact and Referral Team (ICRT). In the most urgent cases, this will be done by phone. All referrals to ICRT will be followed by a written referral.
- The DSL is responsible for recording all referrals and recording the outcome of any referrals.
- We will have a positive professional relationship with Children's Social Care and work together to safeguard pupils. When we have a dispute, we will follow the SSCP Resolving Professional Disagreements Escalation Protocol.

Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership

- The DSL will act as the Single Point of Contact for the three statutory safeguarding partners (police, health and the local authority/Together for Children). We will work closely with the SSCP who coordinates the work of the three statutory partners.
- We will take part in forums and consultations led by the SSCP and when required, make suggestions around how practice can be improved.
- We will complete and submit the Section 157/175 audit when requested.

School Improvement Officer (Safeguarding)

- The TfC School Improvement Service will provide the school with high quality safeguarding support, advice and guidance that meets the needs of the school and its pupils.

Letting other organisations use our premises

- When other groups wish to use our premises, we will seek written assurances that the organisation have the appropriate policies and procedures in place regarding safeguarding and child protection and that the relevant safeguarding checks have been made in respect of staff and volunteers.
- When services or activities are provided by the school this child protection will apply. When services or activities are provided separately by another body the governing body will seek assurance that the organisation concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed); and ensure that there are arrangements in place to liaise with the school or college on these matters where appropriate.
- The governing body will ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.
- The guidance on Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings details the safeguarding arrangements that schools and colleges should expect these providers to have in place.
- Allegations against those involved in running activities on our school site but who are not employed or commissioned by the school will be referred to the DO by the Headteacher following our allegations management procedures.

What's the statutory framework?

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils

The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one person on a school interview/appointment panel to be trained in safer recruitment techniques

Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff (2012)
Child Sexual Exploitation – definition and guide (2017)
Children Act 2004
Children's Act 1989
Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults (2018)
Early years foundation stage statutory framework (EYFS)
Education Act 2002
Education Inspection Framework
FGM (Multi-agency statutory guidance on FGM)
General Data Protection Legislation (2018)
Information Sharing
Keeping children safe in education 2025
Mental Health & Behaviour in Schools.
PREVENT Duty Guidance for England and Wales (2023)
Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education (2019)
Safeguarding disabled children
Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006,
Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings (2022)
Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care
What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015)
When to call the police – Guidance for schools and colleges (NPCC – 2020)
Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
Working together to improve school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)
Youth Produced Sexual Imagery Guidance (Sexting in schools and colleges)

Where to go for further information

Policy	Review cycle	Approval level
Data protection	Recommended annually	Governing body, individual governor or headteacher
Register of pupils' admission to school and attendance	Live document	Governing body, individual governor or headteacher
School complaints	Recommended annually	Governing body, individual governor or headteacher
Staff discipline conduct and grievance (procedures for addressing)	Recommended annually	For local-authority-maintained schools: governing body. For academies: governing body, individual governor or headteacher
Statement of procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff	Recommended annually	Governing body, individual governor or headteacher
Children with health needs who cannot attend school	Recommended annually	Governing body
Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children	Recommended annually	Governing body
Special educational needs and disability	Annually	Governing body or proprietor
Supporting pupils with medical conditions	Recommended annually	Governing body
Sex and relationships education	Recommended annually	Governing body, individual governor or headteacher
Behaviour in schools	Recommended annually	Headteacher can delegate
School exclusion	Recommended annually	Governing body, individual governor or headteacher
Health and safety	Annually	Employer
First aid in schools	Recommended annually	Employer
Premises management documents	Recommended annually	Governing body, individual governor or headteacher
Equality information and objectives (public sector equality duty) statement for publication	Every 4 years	Governing body, individual governor or headteacher