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APPENDIX A Definitions of Abuse and Other Harmful Behaviour

Four categories of abuse

Physical abuse

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. This used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy but is now more usually referred to as Fabricated or Induced Illness (FI).

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only as far 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 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, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, 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.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

Indicators of abuse

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding, or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell.' It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the DSL.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused, neglected, or exploited may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures, or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships

- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school, arrive late, or leave the school for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their schoolwork
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

Additional examples of abuse are outlined below, with details provided in Appendix B of KCSiE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) 2023

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

It is very important that staff report their concerns – they do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.

Indicators of child sexual exploitation may include:

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

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

Potential vulnerabilities include:

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited.

Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues.

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

Child criminal exploitation: county lines

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market, and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and

- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Domestic Abuse

In April 2022, the Domestic Abuse Act 2022 received Royal Assent and introduced a statutory definition for the first time. Definition:

The Domestic Abuse Act 2022 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

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

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

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

(The definition can be found here:

["https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/part/1/enacted"/17/part/1/enacted](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/part/1/enacted))

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

Human Trafficking

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive appropriate care. A trafficking case may involve a range of agencies such as the police, local authorities, and charities and the NRM makes it easier for these agencies to work together.

If you think a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999. If you receive information on a potential trafficker or think a child is a victim of trafficking:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-how-to-identify-and-support-victims>

Honour Based Abuse

So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubt, staff should speak to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead). Professionals in all agencies, and

individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA

The national charity [Karma Nirvana](#) provides a range of resources and advice relating to HBA

Female genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in the UK.

FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that the majority of cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

Risk factors for FGM include:

- low level of integration into UK society
- mother or a sister who has undergone FGM
- girls who are withdrawn from PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Education)
- a visiting female elder from the country of origin
- being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman

Symptoms of FGM

FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter out-of-school to visit an 'at-risk' country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM. Staff should not assume that FGM only happens outside the UK.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

- difficulty walking, sitting, or standing and may even look uncomfortable.
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating.
- spending lengthy periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems.
- frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- prolonged or repeated absences from school or college, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (for example, withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.
- confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023), paragraph 44 says 'whilst **all** staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific **legal duty on**

teachers. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police'.

What is often less well-known is what a teacher should do next to make a report.

Below is a brief summary and must be read in conjunction with the mandatory reporting guidance. (See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information>)

The mandatory reporting procedures say: 'It is recommended that you make a report orally by calling 101, the single non-emergency number.' And 'where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, professionals should report the case immediately to police, including dialling 999 if appropriate'.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered 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 a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play a key role in safeguarding children from forced marriage. School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmv@fco.gov.uk and more information can be accessed using the following link

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/322307/HMG_MULTI_AGENCY_PRACTICE_GUIDELINES_v1_180614_FINAL.pdf

Recognising Extremism

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes
- glorifying violence, especially towards other faiths or cultures
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages like illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour, and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes, and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with groups may not be apparent.)
- secretive behaviour
- online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race, or sexuality
- graffiti, artwork or writing that displays extremist themes
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- advocating violence towards others

Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding has been developed by Carlene Firmin at the University of Bedfordshire over the past six years to inform policy and practice approaches to safeguarding adolescents. Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

Therefore, children's social care practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts

For more information check out the Contextual Safeguarding Network

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

APPENDIX B Local Authority & NCASP (Northumberland Children and Adults Safeguarding Partnership) contacts

| Advice Area | Contact |
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| For advice on making a referral or to make a referral for Children's Social Care or Early Help | OneCall: 01670 536400 Please note you may call to raise/discuss your initial concerns; however, they must then be submitted in writing. If you are submitting a referral, please use the link below Forms (northumberland.gov.uk) |

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| For further discussion about an open case or advice on the operation of child protection/safeguarding procedures of a specific case | <p>If known, contact the allocated social worker or early help worker or</p> <p>OneCall 01670 536400</p> |
| For generic advice on the operation of child protection/safeguarding procedures | <p>Justine Clephane - 07879 874168</p> <p>Vicky Kinneavy - 07966 325300</p> <p>Carol Leckie - 07584313178</p> |
| Allegations against people working with children | <p>Call: 07500 606174</p> <p>Email address - LADO@northumberland.gov.uk</p> <p>The Northumberland LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) is Louise Prudhoe, but please use the generic contact information to ensure you get a response</p> <p>The referral form can be accessed here</p> |
| Queries in relation to the model CP (Child Protection) policy for schools or other related guidance | <p>Carol Leckie - 07584313178</p> |
| HR (Human Resources) advice for schools | <p>SchoolsHR@northumberland.gov.uk</p> |
| MAPPA – Risk Management re individuals who may pose a risk to children | <p>Sharron Pearson Senior Manager Specialist Services</p> <p>07966323954</p> <p>Sharron.Pearson@northumberland.gov.uk</p> |
| MARAC | <p>Sarah Wintringham, Principal Education Welfare Officer</p> |

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|---|---|
| This is the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference, a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases | 07584273772 sarah.wintringham@northumberland.gov.uk Jenny Mollon, Lead Education Welfare Officer 07592272944 Jenny.mollon@northumberland.gov.uk |
| Advice re Prevent or Prevent Referrals | Referral Form northumberland-prevent-referral-form-updated-July-2022.docx (live.com) |
| Attendance & Elective Home Education | Sarah Wintringham, Principal Education Welfare Officer 07584273772 sarah.wintringham@northumberland.gov.uk |
| Children Missing Education | Sarah Wintringham, Principal Education Welfare Officer 07584273772 sarah.wintringham@northumberland.gov.uk Dawn Westerby, Lead Education Welfare Officer 07795450751 dawn.westerby@northumberland.gov.uk |
| Education Support for Looked After Children | Tara Prescott, Deputy Virtual School Head Teacher Tara.Prescott@northumberland.gov.uk |
| Early Help | Emma Walker, Early Help Team Manager Emma.Walker@northumberland.gov.uk Or Emma Foote, Early Help Education Team Emma.foote@northumberland.gov.uk |
| CPVA (Child to Parent Violence and Abuse) | Emma Walker, Early Help Team Manager Emma.Walker@northumberland.gov.uk |

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| Monitoring/Quality Assurance re operation of schools safeguarding arrangements | <p>Jane Walker: Jane.Walker@northumberland.gov.uk</p> <p>Carol Leckie: Carol.Leckie@northumberland.gov.uk</p> <p>Dorothy Chambers: dorothy.chambers@northumberland.gov.uk</p> |
| NCASP Business Managers | <p>Children's - Saira Park: saira.park@northumberland.gov.uk</p> <p>Adult's – Emma Beniams: emma.beniams@northumberland.gov.uk</p> |

Appendix C - School Paperwork for recording concerns – to be added

This could be details of your paperwork or guidance on using an electronic system if you have one (e.g., CPOMs)

APPENDIX E Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

In line with the latest guidance the Governing bodies and proprietors will ensure that the school has

- procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse;
- the systems in place (which are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible) for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously;
- how allegations of child-on-child abuse will be recorded, investigated, and dealt with;
- clear processes as to how victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by child-on-child abuse will be supported;
- a recognition that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported;

Child on Child abuse is also clearly referenced in the school's Behaviour policy.

Flow chart for dealing with allegations attached as a PDF

APPENDIX F Standards for effective child protection practice in schools

A school should measure its standards regarding safeguarding against the expectations of the Ofsted Framework

[Ofsted handbooks and frameworks - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

and

and the arrangements of the Northumberland Childrens and Adults Safeguarding Partnership

<https://www.proceduresonline.com/northumberlandcs/index.html>

In best practice, schools:

- operate safe recruitment practices including ensuring appropriate DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) and reference checks are undertaken according to DfE (Department for Education) guidance on safer recruitment, including the maintenance of a single central register of all staff (including volunteers) with DBS numbers and training record;
- have an ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, and they are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- provide suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults to whom they can turn if they are worried or in difficulty;
- work with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children and a recognition that this may occasionally require children to be referred to investigative agencies as a constructive and helpful measure;
- are vigilant in cases of suspected child abuse, recognising the signs and indicators, have clear procedures whereby teachers report such cases to senior staff and are aware of local procedures so that information is effectively passed on to the relevant professionals;
- monitor children who have been identified as at risk, keeping, *in a secure place*, clear records of pupils' progress, maintaining sound policies on confidentiality, providing information to other professionals, submitting reports to case conferences, and attending case conferences;
- provide and support child protection updates regularly to school staff and to designated teachers every two years to ensure their skills and expertise are up to date;
- contribute to an inter-agency approach to child protection by developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies;
- use the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness and build confidence so that pupils have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others, considering sex and relationships guidance. [08]
- provide clear policy statements for parents, staff and children and young people on this and on both positive behaviour policies and the school's approach to bullying;
- have a clear understanding of the various types of bullying - physical, verbal, and indirect, and act promptly and firmly to combat it, making sure that

- pupils are aware of the school's position on this issue and who they can contact for support;
- take particular care that pupils with additional needs in mainstream and special schools, who may be especially vulnerable to abuse, are supported effectively with particular attention paid to ensuring that those with communication difficulties are supported to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communicative skills;
- have a clear policy about the handling of allegations of abuse by members of staff, ensuring that all staff are fully aware of the procedures and that they are always followed correctly, using the guidance
- have a written whole school policy, produced, owned, and regularly reviewed by schools' staff and which clearly outlines the school's position and positive action in respect of the standards.

Appendix G - Frequently Asked Questions

What do I do if I hear or see something that worries me?

- *Report to the designated safeguarding lead or head teacher. Please remember all reports must be recorded, reporting verbally is not enough*
- *If that is not possible, telephone Children's Services (OneCall 01670 536400) as quickly as possible. (In an emergency call 999 for the police)*

What are my responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection?

- ***To know the name of your designated safeguarding lead and who to contact if they are not available***
- ***To respond*** appropriately to a child and ensure the child/young person knows you are taking their concerns seriously
- ***To report*** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or directly to Social Care if that is not possible
- ***To record*** your concerns, using your school's agreed paperwork
- ***Do not do nothing***

Can I go to find someone else to listen?

- *No! You should never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events; however, you may want to have a colleague with you who is recording the child's disclosure while you actively listen, giving them 100% of your attention*

Can I promise to keep a secret?

- *No! The information becomes your responsibility to share to protect. As an adult, you have a duty of care towards a child or young person*

Can I ask the child questions?

- *You should never ask probing questions*
- *However, you **can** ask a child to repeat a statement or for clarification*
- *Do not make judgements or say anything about the alleged abuser; it may be construed as contriving responses.*
-

Do I need to write down what was said?

- *Yes, as soon as possible, exactly what was said. Use your school's agreed paperwork and make sure you date and sign the record*
- *Make sure you record facts and not opinions*

Appendix H - E-safety Social Media Guidance

Northumberland Children's and Adults Safeguarding Partnership Procedures can be found at the following link - [E-Safety: Children Exposed to Abuse through the Digital Media \(proceduresonline.com\)](https://www.proceduresonline.com)

Appendix I Dealing with allegations against people who work with children Allegations or concerns about an adult working in the school whether as a teacher, supply teacher, other staff, volunteers, or contractors

At [name of school] we recognise the possibility that adults working in the school may harm children, including governors, volunteers, supply teachers and agency staff. Any concerns about the conduct of other adults in the school should be taken to the headteacher without delay; any concerns about the headteacher should go to the Chair of Governors who can be contacted by [state method of contact].

Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff, supply teachers, volunteers or contractors should be reported to the headteacher/principal.

Concerns may come from various sources, for example, a suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent, or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or because of vetting checks undertaken.

The headteacher/principal must decide whether the concern is an allegation or low-level concern. The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (see below).

Allegations

It is an allegation if the person* has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or

- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (also includes behaviour outside the school).

(*Person could be anyone working in the school or a college that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors.)

Allegations should be reported to the LADO 'without delay'.

Before contacting the LADO, schools and colleges should conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation.

LADO's role is not to investigate the allegation, but to ensure that an appropriate investigation is carried out, whether that is by the police, children's social care, the school or college, or a combination of these.

Low-level Concerns

Concerns may be graded Low-level if the concern does not meet the criteria for an allegation; and the person* has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. Example behaviours 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; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language.

[Schools should ensure that their Code of Conduct is clear about what low-level concerns are and why it is important that such concerns are shared.]

If the concern has been raised via a third party, the headteacher/principal should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
- to the individual involved and any witnesses.

Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Staff should be encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear

compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

Low-level concerns should be recorded in writing, including:

- name* of individual sharing their concerns
- details of the concern
- context in which the concern arose
- action taken

(* if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible)

Records must be kept confidential, held securely, and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. Schools and colleges should decide how long they retain such information, but it is recommended that it is kept at least until the individual leaves their employment.

Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

If a concerning pattern of behaviour is identified and now meets the criteria for an allegation, then the matter should be referred to the LADO.

The records' review might identify that there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the behaviour to occur. This might mean that policies or processes could be revised, or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

What is a Local Authority Designated Officer or LADO?

The role of LADO was initially set out in the HM Government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 and continues in Working Together 2018.

The LADO works within Children's Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

This role applies to paid, unpaid, volunteer, casual, agency and self-employed workers and all adults outside the school workforce. They capture concerns, allegations, or offences; this can include concerns about their own personal life, e.g., incidents of domestic violence or child protection concerns relating to their own family.

If there is an allegation against the Headteacher then concerns should be reported directly to the Chair of Governors and LADO.

The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case. They will provide advice, guidance and help to determine whether the allegation sits within the scope of the procedures. **Schools should seek advice from the LADO as soon as an allegation is made.**

The LADO coordinates information-sharing with the right people and will also monitor and track any investigation, with the aim to resolve it as quickly as possible – the LADO for Northumberland is **Louise Prudhoe**

lado@northumberland.gov.uk 01670 623979

For safeguarding information for professionals, including LADO contact details, please follow this link:

[lado-information-and-flowchart.pdf \(proceduresonline.com\)](#)

To make a referral use this form

[LADO Agency Referral Form \(office.com\)](#)