Derwentside College

POLICY

Document Title	**Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy**
Version	**6.0**
Equality Impact Assessment Status	**Low**
Approved by	**Board of Corporation**
Date approved	**13 October 2026**
Effective date	**14 October 2026**
Date of next review	**September 2027**
Lead responsibility	**Assistant Principal – Curriculum & Quality**

1. Purpose

1.1. This policy applies to all learners and particularly children and adults at risk who may need support.

1.2. Derwentside College recognises its legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to protect adults at risk. The College will have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), the Education Act 2002, the Education Act 2011, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Care Act 2014, the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation and other relevant legislation, statutory guidance and regulations, including requirements relating to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

1.3. The College wants to ensure that children and adults at risk are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions will be taken seriously and in accordance with this Policy.

1.4. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk is defined for the purposes of this Policy as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children and adults at risk as soon as problems emerge;
- protecting children and adults at risk from maltreatment, whether that occurs within our learning environments, at home, in the wider community, or online;
- preventing the impairment of children and adults at risks' mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children and adults at risk to have the best outcome.

2. Scope

2.1. The policy is relevant to all staff and learners.

3. Aim

3.1. This policy will enable Derwentside College to demonstrate its commitment to keeping children and adults at risk with whom it works, safe. It should be read in conjunction with all the associated College Policies and Procedures.

3.2. The College acknowledges its duty to act appropriately and immediately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Underpinning this aim is a series of objectives which once achieved will demonstrate the fulfilment of the stated aim of this policy.

3.3. This policy will fulfil the stated aim by ensuring that the College will:

- establish a safe environment in which its learners can learn and develop;
- ensure safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff to work with children and/or adults at risk;
- develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, suspected cases of abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and provide their name to all staff and learners;
- promote good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation and coercion occurring by providing training for all staff and learners, and raising awareness of safeguarding issues within the whole College;
- ensure that any allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and immediately, and that the person experiencing these is supported.

4. General Principles

4.1. Derwentside College fully recognises its legal and moral responsibility to promote and safeguard the welfare of its learners who are under the age of 18 or who are vulnerable adults.

4.2. Derwentside College is committed to ensuring that any safeguarding issues are dealt with promptly, sensitively and in line with statutory objectives, national and regional guidelines.

4.3. The College adopts a child-centred approach to safeguarding. Wherever possible, the wishes, feelings and lived experience of the child will be considered when determining support and protective action. This will not prevent necessary safeguarding action being taken where a child is at risk of harm.

4.4. Derwentside College recognises that maintaining appropriate professional boundaries is an important aspect of safeguarding. All staff are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which promotes trust, confidence and the welfare of learners and colleagues, and which avoids situations that could give rise to conflicts of interest, safeguarding concerns or allegations.

4.5. Key information for staff around recognising signs of abuse is included in Appendix 1 of this Policy.

4.6. The College's expected Code of Conduct is outlined in Appendix 5.

5. Key Definitions and Concepts

5.1. **Child/Children**
Those under the age of 18, that is, up until their 18th birthday.

5.2. **Children in need of protection and Family Help**
The College recognises that children could be in need because they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Where the Local Authority believes a young person is at risk, they have a duty to make enquiries to decide whether action should be taken, and the College would have a duty of care to ensure information is shared under this Policy.

5.3 **What College staff should be aware of**

5.3.1 Family Help is support provided to children and families where additional needs have been identified that are not currently meeting the threshold for statutory intervention. Family Help aims to improve outcomes, strengthen family resilience and prevent needs from escalation. Any child may benefit from Family Help services and early intervention support, but all College staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for Family Help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory EHCP);
- has a mental health need;
- is a young carer;
- is susceptible of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement; and association with organised crime groups or county lines;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is susceptible of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation;
- is susceptible of being radicalised or exploited;
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending;
- 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 alcohol and other drugs themselves;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is at risk of honour - based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;

- is a privately fostered child;
- has unexplained and/or persistent absences from education;
- has experienced multiple suspensions at school/college;
- were/are at risk of being permanently excluded;
- were in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.

5.3.2 All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation (Appendix 1), understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the College, inside and outside of the home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation so that staff can identify cases of children who may need help or protection.

5.3.3 All College staff must maintain a high level of vigilance, recognising that safeguarding concerns may involve colleagues. It is essential to reject the assumption that such issues "couldn't happen here", safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, regardless of the source of concern.

5.3.4 All College staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. All staff, but especially the Designated Safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation in situations outside their families (see Appendix 2 for further definitions).

5.3.5 All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. The College recognises that advances in technology, including smart technology and artificial intelligence (AI), may create new AI-generated sexual imagery, manipulated images, deepfake content, image-based abuse, online exploitation, misinformation and other harmful digitally generated material. Concerns involving AI generated content will be treated in the same way as concerns involving any other form of abuse, harassment or exploitation and will be managed through College safeguarding procedures.

5.3.6 Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non- consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

5.3.7 All staff should be aware that children and adults are at risk when they have unexplained and/or persistent absences from education. This can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities.

5.3.8 Staff should be aware that children or adults at risk with family members in prison are at increased risk. These families are at more risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health.

5.3.9 Staff should be aware that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that the child is more at risk than most learners.

5.3.10 If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following the reporting of a safeguarding concern procedure and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

5.3.11 In all cases, if staff are unsure, they should always speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy.

5.3.12 Children who are LGBT may need a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff. The College has a team of Student Progression Coordinators in place to support those children and staff should refer any child they have a concern for to the team (extension 915 or studentprogression@derwentside.ac.uk). Staff should also be aware that a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as

LGBT.

5.3.13 All staff should recognise that children may experience prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice, and other forms of discrimination. Such experiences may affect a child's welfare, wellbeing, mental health, and willingness to seek help. Staff should be alert to the signs and impact of prejudice-based harm and ensure that concerns are considered within safeguarding practice where appropriate.

5.4 **Adults at Risk (formerly referred to as Vulnerable Adults)**

5.4.1 It is recognised within this policy that any adult may be vulnerable or become a victim of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Specifically, an "adult at risk" is defined as any person who is 18 years of age or over and has a reduced capacity to give consent to disclosure of allegations or suspicions. As defined by the Law Commission (1995) the following definitions for the purpose of this policy have been used.

5.4.2 An individual may be at risk:

- if they may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness;
- if they may be unable to take care of themselves;
- if they are unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation.

5.4.3 Whilst not definitive, the main categories of people covered by the definition of "adults at risk" for the purpose of this policy include those who:

- have a learning disability;
- have a physical or sensory impairment;
- have a mental illness;
- are subject to domestic violence;
- are substance misusers;
- are considered vulnerable and who may experience abuse, neglect or exploitation due to problems with alcohol or drugs (or be vulnerable due to other circumstances such as being an asylum seeker).

5.4.4 Staff must be aware that simply having a disability, being 'vulnerable' or making an unwise decision does not automatically make someone a safeguarding case. The risk must directly link to an individuals inability to protect themselves due to their care and support needs.

6. Preventing Radicalisation and Terrorism (PREVENT)

6.1 Prevent is one of the four elements of CONTEST, the UK Government's counter-terrorism strategy, defined as:
"*Stopping people becoming or supporting terrorists or violent extremism. Violent extremism in the name of ideology or belief is defined as violence, incitement to violence, terrorism, incitement to terrorism, or other activities that may result in violent behaviour or terrorist activity in the name of an ideology or a set of beliefs."*

6.2 An integral element of the College's Safeguarding ethos is encouraging learners to respect the Fundamental British Values of:

- democracy;
- the rule of law;
- individual liberty;
- mutual respect;
- tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.

6.3 The College works with the Local Authority and partners, including the Contest Silver Board and our

Regional Prevent Lead to ensure that we are kept informed of any potential risks to our locality and to ensure that our staff and learners have the most up to date information that is available.

6.4 Children and adults at risk are more likely to be susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting from other forms of harm and abuse, protecting children and adults from this risk forms part of the College safeguarding approach which all staff have a responsibility for (see Appendix 3 for more information).

7. Contextual Safeguarding

7.1 Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the College and/or can occur between children outside the College. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) should be considering the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

7.2 The College takes a holistic approach to safeguarding our learners with concerns and incidents treated the same regardless of whether they took place inside College or outside of it. The safety and welfare of the learner is paramount. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats; including child on child abuse, exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as County Lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

7.3 The College assesses the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of its learners. Children can be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be susceptible to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation. It is recognised that hearing or seeing ill treatment or abuse of others can also be harmful to children.

8. Online Safety

8.1 The College works to ensure that learners are protected from potentially harmful and inappropriate material. Learners are taught how to keep themselves safe onli**n**e through a number of channels and which run concurrently, including induction, in class sessions, specific themed tutorials (including online gambling, digital footprint, radicalisation and extremism, consent, grooming and sharing of images).

8.2 Online safety is addressed under four areas of risk:

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.

Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: child on child pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

Conduct: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and

Commerce: - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

8.3 The College Online Safety and Remote Learning Policy is built upon the consideration of the 4Cs (above). Please see the policy for further details and guidance. It outlines and emphasises the College approach to

mobile and smart technology and the expectations we have. While recognising that such devices have huge potential for good in education, they can also prove extremely harmful if used inappropriately. Therefore, the College approach to the use of mobile devices and smart technology in College is that while in class or workshops we expect mobile devices to be turned off or silenced and placed out of sight in a bag or other safe place. They may on occasions be used in lessons if directed to by staff and under their direct supervision.

8.4 While on the College premises learners can use their devices safely within the terms set out in the ICT Acceptable Use Policy. Users must not:

- Use the internet, social media or email to access or share any material that may be considered to relate to terrorism or extremism, nor should such material be downloaded or stored on systems owned and controlled by Derwentside College.
- Use the internet, social media or email for the purposes of harassment, abuse or exploitation.
- Use the internet, social media or email to engage in or support the radicalisation or potential radicalisation of any individual, whether that person(s), known or unknown are within the College or not.
- Use profanity, obscenities, or derogatory remarks in communications.
- Access, download, send or receive any data (including images & videos) which Derwentside College considers offensive in any way. This includes, but is not limited to, sexually explicit, discriminatory, defamatory or libelous material.
- Use the internet or email to make personal gains or conduct a personal business.
- Use the IT system and account in a way that could affect its reliability or effectiveness.
- Place any information on the internet that relates to Derwentside College, alter any information about it or express any opinion about the College unless they are specifically authorised to do so.
- Share any sensitive or confidential information with unauthorised parties.
- Make official commitments through the internet, social media or email on behalf of Derwentside College unless authorised to do so.
- In any way infringe any copyright, trademarks or other intellectual property including downloading or accessing copyrighted material such as music and video files, books and publications (not an exhaustive list) without appropriate approval.
- Download, run or install any unauthorised code, scripts or executables or software.

8.5 The College has online filtering and monitoring programmes (Smoothwall) in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of learners and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn by limiting learners' exposure to risks from the College's IT system. This is monitored and reviewed regularly by the Information Technology Manager and the DSL to ensure its effectiveness in meeting the standards set out in the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards. The Information Technology Manager and the Designated Safeguarding Lead receive daily reports highlighting any suspicious or concerning activity online by learners and staff. More detail around specifics of monitoring and filtering are included in the ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

8.6 The College recognises that generative artificial intelligence can be used to create or alter harmful content, including sexually explicit images, deepfakes, misinformation, discriminatory material and content used to groom, harass, exploit or intimidate children. Staff and learners will be supported to understand the safeguarding risks associated with generative AI and the College will respond to concerns in accordance with this Policy and the Online Safety and Remote Learning Policy.

9. Child-on-child abuse

9.1 The College and staff will endeavour to ensure that there are no obstacles preventing learners raising a concern. All staff should be prepared to listen to and support learners and take their concerns seriously. A learner must never be made to feel that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

9.2 Children can abuse others. Child on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- 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 nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- up skirting, 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).

9.3 For most children there is no separation between 'real life' and the 'online world'. All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life.

9.4 Children can also abuse their peers online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.' All concerns/suspicion of any such abuse online should be reported in the same manner as face to face would be.

9.5 All learners will receive a full induction which will make it clear that abuse of others will not be tolerated and includes information on recognising abuse and the various options for reporting it and seeking support. This will be supported and expanded upon by the ongoing tutorial programme that will explore in more depth various themes such as consent, coercion, abuse, bullying, prevent and staying safe online.

10. Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

10.1 At Derwentside College we recognise the issue and scale of the problem of sexual violence and sexual harassment that many children in our society/community are experiencing (see Appendix 4 for wider definition). The College will not accept such behaviour and will respond to all signs, reports and concerns. We acknowledge that it is likely to be happening within our learner community either in College or outside of it. Staff at Derwentside College should at all times avoid complacency by adopting **'it could happen here attitude'**. It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers.

10.2 The College recognises the role education plays in preventing violence against women and girls. The College will actively challenge misogyny, harmful gender stereotypes and behaviours that contribute to abuse, harassment, exploitation or violence and will promote respectful relationships across the College community.

10.3 Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or morepeople of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single person or group. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable.

10.4 Staff need to recognise that although not always, it is likely that females will be victims and males'

perpetrators, but all peer-on-peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

10.5 It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows young female learners', SEND and LGBT learners are at greater risk. Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up.
- Recognising that misogynistic and misandrist attitudes can form part of a wider pattern of harmful behaviour and should be challenged where they contribute to a culture of harassment, intimidation or abuse;
- Considering the individual circumstances and wider context including SEND, disability, mental health, previous trauma, exploitation, power imbalance and any online element, when assessing risk and determining support;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys".
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting skirts (upskirting).
- not dismissing or tolerating such behaviours which risks normalising abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

10.6 Please refer to section 5 (Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment) of the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Procedure, for detailed guidance on responding to such incidents and allegations.

11. Children staying with host families (Homestay/Private Fostering)

11.1 Schools and Colleges quite often make arrangements for their children to have learning experiences where, for short periods, the children may be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to whom they are not related. This might happen, for example, as part of a foreign exchange visit or sports tour, often described as 'homestay' arrangements. In some circumstances the arrangement where children stay with UK families could amount to "private fostering". Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, a person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer.

11.2 Such arrangements may come to the attention of school/College staff through the normal course of their interaction, and promotion of learning activities with children and they should contact the DSL who will notify the local authority to allow the local authority to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.

12. Learner Entitlement

12.1 All learners are entitled to:

- be taught in environments which are safe, conducive to learning and free from disruption or threat of harm including online;
- expect appropriate action from the College to tackle any incidents of violence, threatening behaviour, abuse, exploitation, discrimination or harassment;
- have any report of safeguarding issues taken seriously by the College and investigated/resolved as necessary;
- be treated with respect;
- through the induction and ongoing tutorial programme learners will receive guidance and are encouraged to adapt safe practices, including online, to help keep themselves safe.

13 Learner Responsibilities

13.1 Providing a safe atmosphere which enhances a learner's College experience is a shared responsibility which also places responsibilities on learners.

13.2 Learner entitlements are most likely to be met fully when they:

- show respect to College staff, fellow learners, College property and the College environment;
- take a positive and proactive role within the College and online to keep themselves and others safe;
- follow the reasonable instructions of College staff and others involved with their learning;
- report any incidents of concern (and are encouraged to do so);
- appreciate that they are not allowed to increase safeguarding risks to themselves or others, or use the College identity online (or in other media) inappropriately;
- adhere to the learner responsibilities outlined in the Behaviour and Disciplinary Policy and the terms set out in the ICT Acceptable Use Policy;
- co-operate with, and abide by, any arrangements put in place to support their behaviour.

14. Staff Responsibilities

14.1 All College staff (including supply staff) and volunteers have a responsibility to abide by the code of conduct (Appendix 5) with particular emphasis to:

- complete mandatory safeguarding training on an annual basis and ensure that they read Keeping Children Safe in Education Part One annually to ensure that their knowledge relating to safeguarding is refreshed;
- complete an induction where our responsibility to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of our learners is outlined;
- be aware of and implement the College's Policy and Procedure on Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk;
- provide a safe, secure and supportive environment for Children and Adults at Risk;
- abide by the College Staff code of conduct (Appendix 5 of this policy) and associated policies designed to respond positively and effectively to KCSIE 2026
- listen to Children and Adults at Risk and respond in an appropriate way;
- protect Children and Adults at Risk from abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- make referrals, preferably via a Designated Safeguarding Lead, in accordance with the College, Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP),
- follow Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) procedures who oversee the process. (However, contact would normally be made to First Contact (16-19 learners) and Social Care Direct (Adults);

Contact details for the DSL and Deputies are:

Colleen Sawicki (DSL)
Head of Education Programmes for Young People
01207 585 928
Colleen.Sawicki@derwentside.ac.uk

Karen Hankey (Deputy DSL)
Curriculum Leader – Student Services
01207 585900 Ext. 728
Karen.Hankey@derwentside.ac.uk

Julie Eddy (Deputy DSL)
SEND Lead
01207 585900 Ext. 605
Julie.Eddy@derwentside.ac.uk

Contact details for the Safeguarding Link Governor:

Bill Fullen
Safeguarding Link Governor
Bill.Fullen@derwentside.ac.uk

14.2 Staff should share any concerns they have about a child with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy even if there has been no disclosure from the child. Staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child (KCSIE 2026 paragraph 19). Staff should also be aware of the College's arrangements for Family Help and should identify and act on emerging concerns at the earliest opportunity.

14.3 Whilst all staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) regarding any concerns, there is a specific legal duty on teachers with regard to female genital mutilation (FGM). If a staff member, in the course of their work or profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the staff member must report this to the police.

The mandatory reporting procedures;

- recommends that a report is made orally by calling 101, the single non-emergency number.
- Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, then report the case immediately to police, dialing 999 if appropriate.
- In most cases reports under the duty should be made as soon as possible after a case is discovered, ideally by the close of the next working day.

14.4 For all safeguarding issues, staff should:

- recognise that, if at any time there is a risk of serious harm to a person, a referral should be made to First Contact (03000 267 979) immediately, if the risk is immediate and serious then they should make a direct referral to the police (999). Anybody can make a referral in such circumstances. If the person's situation does not appear to be improving, the staff member with concerns should press for reconsideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the person at some point;
- understand that information sharing is an important part of safeguarding. Data protection legislation is not a barrier to lawful, proportionate and necessary information sharing where this is required to protect a child.
- undertake any additional Safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

14.5 Low-Level Concerns

- The College recognises that concerns about the behaviour of an adult working in or on behalf of the College may not meet the threshold for an allegation that they have harmed a child, but may still require appropriate action. A low-level concern is any concern, however small, or a concern that an adult may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including a concern that may be no more than a 'nagging doubt', without meeting the harm threshold.
- Low-level concerns may relate to adults who work in or on behalf of the College, including supply staff, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors. Examples may include being over-friendly with children, having favourites, taking photographs contrary to College policy, engaging in unnecessary one-to-one contact in secluded areas, or using inappropriate language or behaviour.
- All staff should feel able to report low-level concerns and are encouraged to self-refer where they recognise that their own behaviour may have fallen below the standards expected. Concerns should be reported to the DSL or, where appropriate, the Principal or another designated senior manager in accordance with the College procedure.
- The College will record low-level concerns confidentially and securely and will review them periodically to identify patterns or wider cultural or safeguarding issues. Where a pattern of concerns indicates that the behaviour may meet the harm threshold, the College will refer the matter through the appropriate LADO arrangements. Low-level concerns will not normally be included in employment references unless they

relate to substantiated misconduct or poor performance.

15. College Management Responsibilities

15.1 The Board of Corporation

"Governing bodies and proprietors have a strategic leadership responsibility for their school's or College's safeguarding arrangements and must ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. They must have regard to this guidance, ensuring policies, procedures and training in their schools or Colleges are effective and comply with the law at all times." [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026].

The Board of Corporation should ensure that:

- there are effective safeguarding policies and procedures that are in line with the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) and County Durham Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) procedures and that the policy is made available to learners or parents/carers on request;
- there is a member of the board appointed with direct responsibility for safeguarding.
- the College operates safer recruitment procedures and processes and remains compliant with current legislation and statutory guidance, including requirements relating to regulated activity, DBS checking, barred list checks and ongoing safeguarding responsibilities following appointment.
- that a comprehensive induction procedure for new staff is in place, covering key aspects of safeguarding including but not limited to, health and safety, online safety, risk assessments, safeguarding policy and procedure with reporting arrangements, College Values and Equality and Diversity expectations. The induction includes a probationary period with regular review meetings and the facility to extend the probationary period if deemed necessary;
- a staff code of conduct exists and reflects key obligations of staff;
- there are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns, or allegations against staff (including supply staff and volunteers) that might indicate they would pose a risk of harm to children;
- procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff or volunteers comply with the DSCP and SAB inter agency procedures;
- there are Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), including a Senior Manager who takes lead responsibility for dealing with safeguarding issues;
- Designated Safeguarding Leads undertake approved training to the standards agreed by the DSCP and SAB every 2 years and support other staff;
- the Principal and Chief Executive and other staff who work with Children and Adults at Risk undertake appropriate safeguarding training at least every two years. Temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the College's arrangements and their responsibilities for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk;
- members of the Governing Body of the College undertake mandatory safeguarding training as outlined in KCSIE (2026), that will, 'equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in College are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole College approach to safeguarding'. The training will be updated and completed annually.
- it monitors the College's compliance and undertakes an annual review of the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedures. It amends as soon as practicable any risk in arrangements as these are brought to its attention;
- the Chair of the Corporation takes responsibility for liaising with the local authority and/or partner agencies in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against the Principal and Chief Executive;
- they receive assurance regarding the effectiveness of online safety arrangements, including filtering and monitoring systems;
- ensure filtering and monitoring arrangements are reviewed at least annually and whenever significant changes to risk, technology or systems occur.

16. The Principal and Chief Executive

The Principal and Chief Executive ensures that:

- the policies and procedures adopted by the Corporation are implemented and followed by staff;
- sufficient resources and time are allocated to the Designated Safeguarding Leads to discharge their responsibilities;
- all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice with regards to Children and Adults at Risk and that such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Policy, where appropriate;
- cases are reported to the Secretary of State if a person ceases to work in education and there are grounds for believing that they may be unsuitable to work with Children and Adults at Risk.

17. Key College Managers/Committees

In addition to the Principal and Chief Executive, there are a number of College Managers/Committees which have key responsibilities under this Policy:

- The Heads of Department are responsible for overseeing the operation of this policy and its associated procedure in the Departments;
- Curriculum Leaders/Apprenticeship Managers/other supervisory staff are responsible for ensuring that course teams collaboratively address the requirements of this policy and its associated procedure. They ensure staff are aware of the policy and procedures and that they receive appropriate training and support to undertake their roles effectively;
- The College's Safeguarding Committee is a standing body which is accountable, amongst other activities for ensuring intelligence and information is shared to build a comprehensive picture of any Safeguarding issues/problems.

18. Everyone at Derwentside College has the responsibility to:

- embrace a whole College approach to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of Children and adults at risk;
- promote safeguarding best practice (including teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum, including covering relevant issues;
- ensure that all learners are in environments which are safe, conducive to learning and free from disruption or threat of harm;
- ensure this policy and its associated procedure are implemented across the College.

19. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

19.1 The Corporation should ensure that the College designates an appropriate senior member of staff to take lead responsibility for children and adults at risk. This person is currently the Head of Education Programmes for Young People and has both the status and authority within the College to carry out the duties of the post including committing resources and, where appropriate, supporting and directing other staff. The DSL will be available during College hours, where the DSL is absent, a deputy will take lead responsibility to maintain robust and reliable arrangements. When required, they have the responsibility for:

- liaison with the local authority, other agencies and schools, including those with Key Stage 4 pupils attending College;
- the referral of cases of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation to the relevant investigating agencies, contributing to assessment /case conferences as appropriate;
- acting as a source of support and expertise within the College when deciding whether to make a referral and liaising with relevant agencies;
- working closely with the Information Technology Manager with lead responsibility for online

safety;

- liaising with the Assistant Principal - Curriculum & Quality - to inform them of any issues and on-going investigations and ensure there is always cover for this role;
- undertaking child protection and inter-agency training, including refresher training every two years, to ensure roles and responsibilities are carried out effectively;
- ensuring staff who work with Children and Adults at Risk have information on the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy and its associated Procedure and they participate in appropriate induction and training;
- maintaining accurate, secure records of referrals or concerns;
- working with the Corporation to ensure that the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy and its associated Procedure are updated and that arrangements are reviewed annually;
- identifying appropriate methods to inform learners, parents and carers of the College's safeguarding and partnership arrangements;
- forwarding relevant information when Children and Adults at Risk who are subject to a Child Protection Plan move to another educational establishment;
- informing the local authority of any known private fostering arrangement that occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home;
- The DSL will promote the educational outcomes of children with a social worker by sharing relevant information with staff and ensuring appropriate academic and pastoral support is in place.

19.2 The Head of Education Programmes for Young People acts as the DSL and leads the student services team who offer mental health support to learners in the College. The DSL supported by the Curriculum Leader – Student Services, SEND Lead and Student Progression Coordinators will take lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at the College.

20. Standards by which the Success of this Policy can be Evaluated

The College will monitor the effectiveness of this policy notably via:

- Learner voice feedback received from surveys, focus groups, forums and during tutorials;
- Formal reflection of, and reporting on, operating safeguarding procedures through the recording, monitoring, and analysis of Safeguarding Concern forms submitted relating to learner behaviour;
- Self-Assessment and External Review;
- Staff responses to training and employing appropriate strategies.

21. Promoting and Safeguarding the Welfare of Children and Adults at Risk processes

Promoting and Safeguarding the Welfare of Children and Adults at Risk includes:

- ensuring the safe recruitment of staff (Safer Recruitment Policy);
- Children at Derwentside College are taught about how they can keep themselves and others safe, including online. To be effective, we present this information in an age-appropriate way. We are sensitive to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, abuse or exploitation, and children with special educational needs or disabilities.
- raising awareness of issues and equipping Children and Adults at Risk to keep themselves safe (opportunities through the curriculum, tutorial, preparing for work experience, through the relevant themes of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development and links with the Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) team);
- taking all measures to ensure that learners are suitably protected from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

22. The following legislation and regulations apply to this policy / procedure:

- The Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2014
- The Education Act 2002 and Education Act 2011
- The Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003;
- The Further Education (Providers of Education) (England) (Regulations) 2006;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006);
- The Care Act 2014;
- Children and Social Care Act 2017;
- Data Protection Act 2018;
- GDPR Act 2018;
- UK General Data Protection Regulations 2021;
- The Equality Act 2010;
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- The Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- The Crime and Policing Act 2026, where relevant to safeguarding and regulated activity
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021;
- Sexual Offences Act 2023.

22.1 The following government guidance is relevant to this policy:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026);
- The Prevent Duty Guidance: England and Wales 2023
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015);
- KCSIE 2026 guidance on children who are questioning their gender and single-sex spaces;
- Relevant current statutory guidance and legislation relating to mandatory reporting and child sexual abuse;
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (DfE, updated 2024);
- Statutory guidance relating to the information-sharing duty for safeguarding children (in force from September 2026).

22.2 The following related documents are relevant to this policy / procedure:

- Health and Safety Policy;
- Safe Use of IT Policy;
- Online Safety and Remote Learning Policy;
- Staff Development Policy;
- Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Procedure;
- Safe Recruitment of Staff Policy;
- Learner Behaviour and Discipline Policy;
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure;
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Relationships at Work Policy

23. Accountability

23.1 The Assistant Principal – Curriculum & Quality is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

23.2 He or she is also responsible for ensuring that this document is regularly reviewed and updated – and is the first contact point for managers seeking advice and guidance about the Safeguarding Children and

Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure or making enquiries about its interpretation.

23.3 All managers are responsible for ensuring that they and their team members follow the requirements set out in this document.

23.4 All employees are responsible for adhering to the requirements set out in this document.

24. Equality & Diversity

24.1 The College has paid due regard to equality considerations during the preparation and implementation of this Policy and Procedure.

24.2 These considerations included the potential for any differential negative effect on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership.

24.3 The College's judgement is that there is no such negative effect on those grounds and, consequently, no potential breach of the Equality Act 2010.

24.4 The operation of this Policy and Procedure will be monitored by the Director of Human Resources in order to establish that no unlawful discrimination is taking place and to identify opportunities for the College to enhance equality of opportunity and fair treatment.

25. Review

25.1 This document will be reviewed annually and no later than September 2027, or earlier where there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements or College practice

25.2 The Assistant Principal – Curriculum & Quality will undertake this review, taking into account the outcomes of the monitoring process, legislative changes and developments in good practice.

25.3 As part of the review, the Assistant Principal – Curriculum & Quality will seek and consider the views of the College's employees via the Safeguarding Committee.

25.4 The outcome of the review will be reported to the Executive Team.

26 Document Identification

Category [select ONE only]	☐ Programmes/courses ☐ Partnerships ☐ Finance ☐ Quality ☐ Governance ☒Health and safety ☐ Facilities ☐ IT and Innovation ☐ MIS ☐ Admissions ☐ Teaching and learning ☐ Human Resources

Audience [select ALL that apply]	☒Employees ☒Learners ☒Partners ☒Suppliers

Appendix Contents

Appendix 1 – Recognising signs of abuse, Information for staff (page 16)

- Including information about types of abuse and possible behaviours

Appendix 2 – Children and adults at risk in need of protection (page 19)

- Including information on risk factors

Appendix 3 – Preventing Radicalisation and Terrorism guidance (page 23)

- Including key definitions and information about possible radacalisation behaviours

Appendix 4 – Sexual Harassment (page 25)

- Including information about types of sexual violence

Appendix 5 – Derwentside College – Code of Conduct (page 27)

- Including information about the accountability of staff

Appendix 1

Recognising Signs of Abuse, Information for staff

Abuse

Abuse is 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. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the physical ill treatment of a person which may or may not cause physical injury. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. It can also occur when a person is not provided with adequate care and support, causing them unjustifiable physical discomfort. This can include inappropriate use of restraint or sanctions, withholding of food, drink or necessary aids to mobility or independence.

Possible Behaviour:

- explanation inconsistent with injury; refusal to discuss injuries;
- fear of going home or parents being contacted;
- arms and legs kept covered in hot weather or fear of undressing; aggressive bullying behaviour;
- frozen watchfulness/cowering/flinching at sudden movements; withdrawal from physical contact;
- fear of medical help;
- admission of excessive punishment; running away;
- self-destructive tendencies.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes acts which involve physical contact; it may also include those acts which do not. Non-contact sexual abuse may include voyeurism, (coerced into being photographed or filmed), being subjected to indecent exposure, serious sexual harassment and innuendo. It could also include showing sexual material to a person who does not consent to, or have the capacity to consent to, watching such material.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the person 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 encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Females can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child-on-child abuse) and all College staff should be aware of it and the procedures for dealing with it.

Sexual abuse can include an isolated incident of assault, or sexual acts within an on - going relationship where the person is unable to give consent, either because of impaired capacity or because the power imbalance in the relationship is too great for the consent to be considered important by the perpetrator.

Possible Behaviour:

- overly compliant behaviour;
- behaves in a sexually inappropriate way in relation to their age; withdrawn and unhappy, insecure and 'clingy';
- plays out sexual acts in too knowledgeable a way for their age; regresses to a behavioural pattern of much

younger children; say of themselves that they are bad or wicked;

- excessive masturbation – exposing themselves; drawings of a sexually explicit nature;
- attempts to sexually abuse another child; recurring nightmares and/or fear of the dark;
- had a 'friend who has a problem' and then tells about the abuse of 'a friend'

Emotional Abuse

This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying 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 person opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or deriding 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, though it may occur alone.

It may include a calm but destructive attitude towards an adult, intimidation, threats of harm or abandonment, indifference, isolation or withdrawal from services/support, humiliation, blaming, controlling, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, emotional blackmail, the denial of basic human rights, denial of sexuality and the treatment of adults as children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Possible Behaviour:

- overreaction to mistakes;
- obsessive behaviour (e.g. rocking, twisting hair, sucking thumb); withdrawal from relationships with other children;
- fear of parents being contacted; extremes of passivity or aggression; attention seeking;
- chronic running away;
- compulsive stealing, scavenging for food or clothes; impaired capacity to enjoy life.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a person's basic physical and/or psychological needs and a necessary level of care and support, likely to result in the serious impairment of the person's health and/or development. Neglect can be deliberate or unintentional. Neglect can be:

- medical or physical care needs being ignored to such an extent that a person's health and well-being is impaired;
- administering too much, too little, or the wrong type of medication;
- a failure to allow the person access to appropriate health, social care or education services;
- withholding of the necessities of life, e.g. adequate nutrition, heating or clothing;
- a failure to intervene in situations assessed to be dangerous to the person or others around them, especially when the person lacks capacity to assess risk;
- 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 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.

Possible Behaviour:

- chronic running away; compulsive stealing; scavenging of food and clothes; low self-esteem;
- neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, thumb sucking, hair twisting); inability to make social relationships;
- tendency to destroy things.

Financial and Material Abuse

Financial and material abuse involves an individual's funds, resources or possessions being taken or inappropriately used by a third party. With adults at risk, this may include theft, fraud, or extortion through threat, exploitation, misuse or misappropriation of property or possessions by someone trusted to handle the adult's finances, preventing the adult's access to their funds. Risks of financial abuse may increase if the adult lacks capacity or numeracy skills, lives alone and is regarded as "vulnerable" within the local community and where there is a dependence on other people with the management of finances.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. 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.

Legislation in England states that "seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person" is a form of harm (Section 120. Adoption and Children Act 2002)

In England, "controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship" is an offence (Section 76. Serious Crime Act 2015).

In England, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims of domestic abuse if they "see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of abuse". The Act places a duty on local authorities to support all victims of domestic abuse in safe accommodation such as refuges.

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass but is not limited to:

- psychological;
- physical;
- sexual;
- financial;
- emotional.

All children and adult at risk learners can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members.

Appendix 2

Children and adults at risk in need of protection

Some children are in need because they are suffering or likely to suffer 'significant harm'. Where local authorities believe a young person is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, they have a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a young person.

Children and Adults at Risk in Need

Children and adults at risk who are defined as being 'in need' under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, are those whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of service(s). A child with a disability is a child in need.

Children and adults at risk missing from education

All staff should be aware that children and adults at risk of going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines.

It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage.

Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school's or College's unauthorised absence and children and adults at risk missing from education procedures.

Children or adults at risk with family members in prison

It is not uncommon for children and adult at risk learners to have a parent sent to prison each year. These families are at more risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children and adult at risk learners.

Children with a Social Worker

At Derwentside College, we recognise that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that the child is more at risk than most learners. This may mean that they are more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and poor mental health. We take these needs into account when making plans to support pupils who have a social worker.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Although the term refers to CCE this incorporates children and adult at risk learners and can be described where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- Children and adult at risk learners who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children and adult at risk learners who associate with other children involved in exploitation;
- Children and adult at risk learners who suffer from changes in emotional wellbeing;
- Children and adult at risk learners who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- Children and adult at risk learners who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late;
- Children and adult at risk learners who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking

These crimes include holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after. Although human trafficking often involves an international cross-border element, it is also possible to be a victim of modern-day slavery within your own country. It is possible to be a victim even if consent has been given by the individual.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a young or adult at risk person into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or 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.

CSE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology. CSE can affect any child or young person under the age of 18 years, including 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).
The above CCE indicators can also be indicators of CSE, as can:

- Children and adult at risk learners who have older partners; and
- Children and adult at risk learners who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant.

Technology can also play a part in sexual abuse, for example, through its use to record abuse and share it with other like-minded individuals or as a medium to access children in order to groom them. A common factor in all cases is the lack of free economic or moral choice.

Making or sharing nudes and semi nudes

Making or sharing nudes and semi-nudes includes the creation, sending, receiving or sharing of nude or semi-nude photographs, videos, livestreams or other sexualised imagery involving children. This may be consensual or non-consensual and may take place online or offline. Images may be self-generated, created by another person, digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including deepfakes or deep nudes.
All incidents involving nudes or semi-nudes will be treated as safeguarding concerns. Staff must not view, copy, print, store, save or share imagery, or ask a learner to download or share imagery. Any concern must be reported to the DSL or deputy immediately. The DSL will assess the circumstances, including age and development, consent, coercion, grooming, exploitation, financial extortion, the involvement of an adult and any immediate risk of harm, and will follow local safeguarding procedures. The College will use the DfE guidance on sharing nudes and semi-nudes when responding to incidents.

County Lines

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line".

Exploitation is an integral part of the County Lines offending model with children and adult at risk learners exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children and adults at risk can be targeted and recruited into County Lines in several locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes. Children and adult at risk learners are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children and adults at risk learners can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as County Lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the County Lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in County Lines are missing episodes (both from home and

school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered.

Mental Health

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff should note that only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following the reporting of a safeguarding concern procedure and speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy.

Upskirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender can be a victim.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into care where there is harm or at risk of harm.

Honour-based Abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage (FM)

Honour-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

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.

FGM

Comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

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 perpetrators use perceived cultural practices to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and Colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children and adult at risk learners from forced marriage.

Children or adults at risk who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning

A child or young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who are.

However, the Cass review identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there remain many unknowns about the impact of social transition and children may well have wider vulnerabilities, including having complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases additional diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

It is recommended that when families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning children, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. When parents are supporting pre-pubertal children, clinical services should ensure that they can be seen as early as possible by a clinical professional with relevant experience.

As such, when supporting a child who is questioning their gender, the College will take a careful, child-centred and evidence-informed safeguarding approach. Decisions will consider the individual circumstances, the child's welfare and best interests, the views and wishes of the child, the involvement of parents where appropriate, any relevant clinical advice and any wider vulnerabilities, including bullying, mental health needs, SEND or other safeguarding concerns. The College will follow the requirements and guidance contained within KCSIE 2026 and will keep arrangements under review. The College will not rely on outdated standalone draft guidance where KCSIE 2026 provides the current statutory framework.

Where arrangements for single-sex spaces are relevant to safeguarding, the College will act in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and applicable law, with regard to safety, privacy and dignity. Any alternative facilities will be provided in a way that does not compromise the safety or dignity of the child or other learners.

Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where they can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

Appendix 3:

Preventing Radicalisation and Terrorism

We recognise that children are susceptible to extremist ideology and radicalisation and as a College we aim to protect our learners from this form of harm.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental British values, (including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs). This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause. Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology, there are possible indicators that should be taken into consideration alongside other factors and contexts. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability.

Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home). However, it is possible to protect vulnerable people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being radicalised. Staff should be alert to changes in learner's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

Possible indicators when taken into consideration alongside other factors or context may be a sign of being radicalised. Further information and a list of such indicators can be found at https://actearly.uk/ (Prevent Radicalisation and Extremism by Acting Early). Radicalisation in children can happen over a long period of time. In some cases, it is triggered by a specific incident or news item and can happen much more quickly. Sometimes there are clear warning signs of radicalisation, in other cases the changes are less obvious.

The teenage years are a time of great change and children often want to be on their own, easily become angry and often mistrust authority. This makes it hard to differentiate between normal teenage behaviour and attitude that indicates they may have been exposed to radicalising influences.

The following behaviours listed here are intended as a guide to help you identify possible radicalisation:

Outward appearance

- Becoming increasingly argumentative
- Refusing to listen to different points of view
- Unwilling to engage with students who are different
- Becoming abusive to students who are different
- Embracing conspiracy theories
- Feeling persecuted
- Changing friends and appearance
- Distancing themselves from old friends
- No longer doing things they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Being secretive and reluctant to discuss their whereabouts
- Sympathetic to extremist ideologies and groups

Online behaviour

- Changing online identity
- Having more than one online identity

- Spending a lot of time online or on the phone
- Accessing extremist online content
- Joining or trying to join an extremist organisation

The Prevent Duty

All schools and Colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent Duty. Derwentside College views the Prevent Duty as a part of the Colleges' wider safeguarding obligation. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) in the College are aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

Channel

A voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the College may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

Appendix 4

Sexual Harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and Colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and online sexual harassment, which might include consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including digitally altered or AI-generated imagery; inappropriate sexual comments on social media; exploitation; coercion and threats. Online sexual harassment may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

It is important to consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment (as setout above) creates an atmosphere that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

Sexual violence
It is important to be aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse other children in this way and that it can happen both inside and outside of College.

When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (NOTE- Schools and Colleges should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (NOTE – this could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or engage in sexual activity with a third party.

Consent

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not to another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity, and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if they agree by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Someone doesn't have the freedom and capacity to agree to sexual activity by choice if:

- They are asleep or unconscious.
- They are drunk or ‘on’ drugs.
- They have been ‘spiked’.
- They are too young.
- They have a mental health disorder or illness that means they are unable to make a choice.
- They are being pressured, bullied, manipulated, tricked, or scared into saying 'yes’.
- The other person is using physical force against them.

Appendix 5

Derwentside College Code of Conduct

This code of conduct shall provide clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all College staff are expected to observe. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action, including dismissal. A serious breach of this code may result in a referral being made to an external or statutory agency.

Derwentside College seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment where the welfare and health and safety of learners and staff is paramount. Staff should act professionally at all times.

All staff have a duty of care to keep learners safe and are accountable for the way in which they use their authority and position of trust.

1. **Setting an Example**

All staff must:

- avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times;
- demonstrate high standards of conduct to encourage learners to do the same;
- avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.

2. **Safeguarding**

- All staff have a role to play in safeguarding children;
- All staff are responsible for their own actions;
- All staff are required to read Part One of the most up to date Keeping Children Safe in Education legislation annually as well as the College's relevant safeguarding policies and procedures;
- All staff are required to undertake Safeguarding Training which should be refreshed every year;
- All staff should take reasonable care of learners under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare;
- Any safeguarding concerns should be reported to the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- All staff and work placement providers should be aware of, and follow, the College's safeguarding procedures;
- Staff should never give out their own personal details or the personal details of other members of staff or learners;
- Staff must never access, store or disseminate inappropriate images;
- Staff should never make contact with learners outside of College for the purpose of 'friendship', including via the use of Social Media;
- All staff must accept the terms of the College's E-Mail, Internet and Telephone Monitoring Policy and Data Protection Policy, and they must adhere to the College's Acceptable Use Policy for Network Registration, by signing and dating the statement. Staff who do not adhere to this, will not be given access to College systems or networks;
- Staff are encouraged to report any suspected infatuation or any situation which they may feel compromises their professional standing;
- Staff are vulnerable to accusations when working alone with a learner. If possible, leave the door open or use a room with a window in the door. Avoid travelling in a car with one learner.
- Staff must report any low-level concern about the behaviour of an adult working in or on behalf of the College in accordance with the College's low-level concerns procedure, even where the concern does not appear to meet the harm threshold;
- Staff must raise concerns about unsafe practice, safeguarding failures or conduct that may place learners at risk through the College's safeguarding or whistleblowing arrangements. Staff will not be disadvantaged for raising a concern in good faith.
- Staff are encouraged to self-refer where they recognise that their actions or conduct may have been misinterpreted, appear compromising, or fall below the College's expected professional standards.
- Staff should not enter into personal relationships with learners.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This form must be completed when drafting a new policy/procedure or amending an existing policy/procedure. It should be completed at the earliest opportunity so any issues can be resolved/mitigated in advance.

POLICY / PROCEDURE DETAILS	
Name of policy / procedure:	Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy
Version:	**6.0**
Date of latest version:	1st September 2026
Manager responsible:	Alex Muir
Others involved in this EIA:	Susan Errington

ASSESSMENT			
What evidence have you used? (This could be internal data, surveys, complaints/grievances or other external quantitative or qualitative research)	The previous version of the policy was used as well as changes identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)		
Who have you engaged / consulted with? (This could be individuals, groups, networks or organisations)	Susan Errington (Deputy Principal) and Ian Oyston (Information Technology Manager)		
For each protected characteristic, does the evidence show that the policy/procedure…	does not inadvertently disadvantage or discriminate against staff, learners or service users?	actively explores opportunity and fosters good relations between people of different protected groups and backgrounds?	Where 'no' is checked, or concerns have been identified detail them here:
Age (including older and younger people)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Disability (including those with physical disabilities, unseen disabilities and mental health issues)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Sex (both men and women)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Gender reassignment or Gender identity (including trans staff and students who have transitioned, are considering transitioning or are in the process of transitioning from one gender to another, and also non-binary staff and students who do not identify with, or reject gender labels)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	

Marriage and Civil Partnership	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Pregnancy / Maternity (including breastfeeding mothers)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Race and Ethnicity (including nationality, colour, native language, culture and geographic origin)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Religion and belief (including those with no religion or belief)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Sexual orientation (including, but not limited to, gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer and straight staff and learners)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	
Intersectionality (although not a protected characteristic itself it's important to consider how characteristics intersect)	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	

ACTION PLANNING

Issue Identified	Planned or completed remedial action	Person responsible and timeframe

MONITORING AND REVIEW

How will the impact of your policy and procedure be monitored and reviewed once agreed?
The policy will be reviewed in light of any safeguarding issues identified but will be formally reviewed in September 2027

AUTHORISATION

	Signature	Date
Manager responsible:	Alex Muir	1st September 2026
EIA Panel:		
EIA Committee's Comments if applicable:		