BHES

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Note: in this policy reference to governing body or governors refers to the management committee and its members.
Where contextually appropriate for school read service.

Bristol Hospital Education Service

Established over thirty years ago, Bristol Hospital Education Service is an Outstanding educational provision designed to support young people who are unable to access mainstream education because of medical needs.

HISTORY OF POLICY CHANGES

Date	Page	Details of Change
September 2020	All	Updated and re-written to reflect COVID-19, new statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, and for ease of reading (BCSB)
September 2021	All	Keeping Children Safe in Education current update
March 2022	All	Removal of Meriton logo Removal of Appendix F – COVID 19 Addendum Policy in the event of lockdown – now in standalone policy Low Level Concerns policy – added to linked list Reviewed – no changes to body of information
September 2024	All	KCSIE changes added – Appendix F
September 2024	All	KCSIE changes added – Appendix F Hyperlinks checked
September 2025	All	Reviewed content for updates; Appendix F – changes to KCSIE 2025

Contents

Part 1: Policy

Definitions

Safeguarding

As defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

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

This definition reflects a shift towards early intervention and a whole-family approach, with an emphasis on multi-agency collaboration and child-centred practice.

Child Protection

Under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, local authorities have a duty to make enquiries when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. These enquiries are intended to determine whether any action is required to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

Introduction

At Bristol Hospital Education Service, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a shared responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children, their families, and carers has a role to play.

To fulfil this responsibility effectively:

- All professionals must adopt a child-centred approach, always considering what is in the best interests of the child.
- We maintain a "it could happen here" mindset, recognising that safeguarding concerns can arise in any setting.
- Staff are expected to be vigilant, proactive, and responsive—identifying concerns, sharing information appropriately, and taking prompt action.

Our Commitment

Bristol Hospital Education Service is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by:

- Providing a safe and supportive environment where children and young people can learn and thrive;
- Acting immediately on concerns about a child's welfare;
- Meeting our legal duties to identify children who may need early help or who are at risk of significant harm;
- Working collaboratively with families and multi-agency partners to ensure the best outcomes for every child.

Ethos and Values

Our Ethos

At Bristol Hospital Education Service, our core purpose is to minimise the impact of chronic illness on a young person's education and wellbeing.

We are committed to:

- Providing high-quality education to students whose medical needs prevent them from attending their on-roll school;
- Working collaboratively with professionals across health, education, and social care to deliver well-coordinated, personalised intervention plans;
- Supporting students to reintegrate into their on-roll school as soon as they are ready and able;
- Empowering students by ensuring they understand the purpose of their learning and the support they receive;
- Guiding students through their journey with us, helping them to understand their next steps and future goals;
- Involving students and families in regular reviews and using interactive feedback to shape and improve our practice.

Our Values

The values that underpin our ethos and guide our work are:

Openness – fostering transparent communication and shared understanding;
Honesty – building trust through integrity and accountability;
Equity – ensuring fair access to education and support for all students;
Self-help – encouraging independence and resilience;
Social responsibility – promoting a sense of community and mutual respect;
Caring for others – nurturing empathy, kindness, and compassion in all we do.

Structure of BHES

Riverside Mental Health Unit

At the Riverside Mental Health Unit, safeguarding responsibility lies with the NHS team on site. The Riverside NHS Safeguarding Policy takes precedence over the BHES policy, and they hold ultimate responsibility for safeguarding within this setting.

All BHES staff working at Riverside must:

- Be familiar with and follow the Riverside Safeguarding Policy, procedures, and flowchart;
- Receive a dedicated safeguarding briefing during a staff meeting to ensure clarity and consistency;
- Ensure that new staff receive the same safeguarding briefing as part of their induction;
- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members at BHES must read and understand the full safeguarding documentation for this site.

Bristol Children's Hospital

At Bristol Children's Hospital, the NHS safeguarding team is the lead safeguarding authority. The BCH NHS Safeguarding Policy takes precedence over the BHES policy, and they retain overall safeguarding responsibility for this setting.

All BHES staff based at BCH must:

- Understand and adhere to the BCH Safeguarding Policy, procedures, and flowchart;
- Participate in a staff meeting briefing to ensure all staff are clear on safeguarding expectations;
- Ensure that new staff receive this information as part of their induction;
- All BHES SLT members must read and be familiar with the full safeguarding documentation for this site.

1:1 Tuition and Classes students

In addition to following the BHES Safeguarding Policy, all staff must:

- Read, understand, and comply with the Lone Working Policy;
- Ensure that a risk assessment is completed for each 1:1 tuition arrangement.

Students on Dual Registers

Students accessing BHES are dual registered, with BHES acting as the secondary education provider. The on-roll school retains lead responsibility for safeguarding.

BHES has a duty to:

- Liaise closely with the on-roll school regarding all safeguarding and attendance matters;

- Share safeguarding concerns promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the on-roll school;
- Maintain clear and timely communication to ensure the child's welfare is prioritised.

CPOMS: Safeguarding and Pastoral Monitoring

What is CPOMS?

CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System) is the UK's leading safeguarding software, designed to support schools in managing and recording concerns relating to:

- Child protection
- Safeguarding
- Behaviour
- Bullying
- Special educational needs
- Domestic issues
- Attendance
- Pastoral and welfare concerns

CPOMS enables staff to record concerns securely and efficiently, ensuring that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and other relevant staff are alerted in real time. This allows for swift, coordinated responses and the development of a comprehensive chronology for each student.

The system supports multi-agency collaboration, integrates with attendance and wellbeing data, and provides audit trails for accountability. CPOMS also allows schools to generate reports for case conferences, Ofsted inspections, and governance reviews at the touch of a button.

For more information, visit: www.cpoms.co.uk

Safeguarding Compliance at BHES

All safeguarding actions taken by Bristol Hospital Education Service (BHES) are aligned with the most current statutory and local guidance, including:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) – This statutory guidance outlines the responsibilities of all agencies in providing help, support, and protection for children. It emphasises multi-agency collaboration, a child-centred and whole-family approach, and introduces national child protection standards.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) – This statutory guidance sets out the legal duties for schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It includes expectations around safer recruitment, staff training, reporting concerns, and online safety.

- Local Safeguarding Guidance – BHES follows the protocols and procedures set out by the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership (KBSP), including the Effective Support for Children and Families in Bristol framework and local threshold guidance.
- COVID-19 Addendum – BHES has developed an addendum to its safeguarding policy to reflect changes in practice during periods of lockdown or remote learning, in line with government guidance.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Recruitment and Selection
- Whistleblowing and Public Interest Disclosure
- Code of Conduct for Staff/ Staff Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying /Peer on Peer Abuse
- Behaviour (and Exclusions Policy if a separate document)
- E-Safety
- Self-Harm
- Policy on Supporting Children in Care
- Attendance (including the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education)
- Health and Safety
- Low Level concern policy

This list is not exhaustive.

Equalities Statement

At Bristol Hospital Education Service (BHES), we are committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of our safeguarding practice. We recognise that safeguarding and equality are intrinsically linked, and we actively consider our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) when supporting children and young people.

Our Legal Duties

In line with the Equality Act 2010 and the PSED, BHES has a duty to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These duties apply to all protected characteristics, which include:
Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, and Sexual orientation.

We also comply with the Department for Education's guidance for schools on the Equality Act, which outlines how schools must ensure that policies, procedures, and practices do not discriminate and actively promote inclusion.

Our Local Commitments
BHES is a proud signatory of both the Bristol Equality Charter and the Bristol Children's Charter, aligning our work with the city's shared vision for a fairer, more inclusive society. These charters support our contribution to the One City Plan, which aims to make Bristol a city of equality, opportunity, and wellbeing for all.

Safeguarding and Inclusion
We are particularly mindful of the additional barriers that may exist when identifying abuse or neglect in children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). All staff receive training to recognise these barriers and respond appropriately, ensuring that no child is overlooked or disadvantaged in accessing support.

Our equality objectives and progress are published in the BHES Equality Statement and Action Plan, which is reviewed regularly to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

Professional Expectations, Roles, and Responsibilities

Role of All Staff
All staff at Bristol Hospital Education Service (BHES) have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. To fulfil this duty, all staff must:

- Read and understand Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025. Staff who work directly with children must also read Annex A, which provides additional safeguarding information.
- Be familiar with the school's safeguarding systems, including:
  - This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
  - The Behaviour Policy
  - The Staff Code of Conduct
  - The school's response to children missing education
  - The role and identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputies
  - Know how to contact the DSL, Deputy DSLs, Chair of Governors, and the Governor responsible for safeguarding.
- Be able to identify vulnerable learners and take appropriate action to keep them safe. This includes learners:
  - Who need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect

- o Requiring mental health support
- o Who may benefit from early help
- o Where there is a concern about radicalisation
- o Where a crime may have been committed
- o Understand and follow the school's procedures for:
- o Child-on-child abuse
- o Children missing education
- o Mental health concerns
- Contribute, where appropriate, to the implementation of individual support plans to safeguard and promote positive outcomes for learners.
- Record concerns accurately and promptly using the school's safeguarding systems (e.g. CPOMS).
- Raise any concerns about safeguarding practices within the school with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), in line with the school's whistleblowing procedures.

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is a senior member of staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety. This role is outlined in Annex C of KCSIE 2025.

The DSL will:

- Lead and manage the safeguarding team, including any Deputy DSLs.
- Oversee early identification of vulnerable learners and ensure accurate, secure records of concerns and referrals.
- Make referrals to local safeguarding partners, including:
  - o Children's Social Care
  - o CAMHS or other mental health services
  - o The Channel Programme (for radicalisation concerns)
  - o The police (where a crime may have been committed)
- Act as the main point of contact for external agencies and professionals.
- Support and advise staff on safeguarding matters and referrals.
- Liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in cases involving allegations against staff.
- Coordinate safeguarding training for all staff, ensuring it is in line with statutory requirements.
- Promote awareness of safeguarding policies and procedures across the school community.
- Support educational outcomes by sharing relevant safeguarding information with staff, ensuring:
  - o Staff know who vulnerable learners are
  - o Staff understand their academic progress and challenges
  - o High aspirations are maintained

- o   Reasonable adjustments are made to support learning
- Ensure timely transfer of safeguarding records when a learner moves to a new setting.
- Ensure safeguarding cover is available during term time and for any out-of-hours or out-of-term activities managed by the school.

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body of Bristol Hospital Education Service (BHES) holds strategic leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements. This includes ensuring that safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices are effective, compliant with legislation, and embedded across the school community.

A senior board-level lead is appointed to take overall responsibility for safeguarding, including online safety.

Key Responsibilities

The Governing Body must:

- Ensure compliance with all relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023);
- Appoint a Safeguarding Governor to work closely with the Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and to:
  - o   Oversee the completion of the Section 175 Safeguarding Audit for the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership;
  - o   Contribute to the annual safeguarding report to governors;
  - o   Ensure timely action is taken to address any weaknesses or deficiencies in safeguarding practice;
  - o   Review and approve the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy annually, or sooner if there are significant updates;
  - o   Ensure the DSL is a suitably senior member of the leadership team with the time, training, and resources to fulfil their role effectively;
  - o   Oversee staff training, ensuring it is regular, robust, and meets statutory requirements;
  - o   Ensure safeguarding is taught across the curriculum, including online safety, in a way that is age-appropriate and relevant;
  - o   Ensure safer recruitment practices are followed, including all statutory pre-employment checks;
  - o   Have procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns or allegations against staff, including supply staff and volunteers;
  - o   Ensure that pupils have a voice, and that systems are in place for them to express concerns or seek help;

- o Monitor the school's response to issues such as child-on-child abuse, mental health concerns, and children missing education;
- o Appoint a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of children in care and those who have left care.

Headteacher's Role

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are:

- Effectively implemented;
- Understood and followed by all staff;
- Regularly reviewed and updated in line with statutory guidance.

Safeguarding Training for Staff

All Staff
- Induction Training: Governing bodies and proprietors must ensure that all staff receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction. This includes understanding the school's safeguarding policies, procedures, and the role of the DSL.
- Regular Updates: Staff must receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training that is regularly updated. In addition, they should receive safeguarding updates (e.g., via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) at least annually to maintain relevant skills and knowledge.
- FGM Awareness: All staff must complete FGM awareness training and understand their legal duty under the Mandatory Reporting Duty. Teachers are personally responsible for reporting known cases of FGM in under-18s directly to the police.
- Prevent Duty: All staff must complete Prevent awareness training to understand the risks of radicalisation and how to make informed referrals. This is a statutory requirement under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
- Whistleblowing: Training must include clear reference to the internal whistleblowing policy and procedures for escalating concerns about safeguarding practices or staff conduct.
- Online Safety: Safeguarding training must include awareness of online safety risks, including filtering and monitoring systems, and emerging threats such as AI misuse.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and Deputies
- Formal Training: DSLs and their deputies must undergo formal training every two years to equip them with the knowledge and skills to carry out their role effectively.
- Equal Training for Deputies: Deputy DSLs must be trained to the same standard as the DSL.

- Ongoing Development: DSLs and deputies should engage with the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership, attend DSL network meetings, and stay informed through safeguarding bulletins and e-bulletins.

Other Training Requirements

- Safer Recruitment: At least one person on any appointment panel must have completed Safer Recruitment training, in line with the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009, Regulation 9.
- Designated Teacher for Children in Care: Must receive appropriate training to support the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, as outlined in statutory guidance.
- Mental Health Lead: Schools must appoint a Senior Mental Health Lead by 2025. This lead should complete DfE-approved training to implement a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing.
- Reasonable Force and Positive Handling: Staff in relevant roles must receive training on the lawful use of reasonable force and positive handling. This includes understanding when and how physical intervention may be used, and the importance of de-escalation strategies.
- Safeguarding Topics (Appendix A): Training should be integrated and aligned with safeguarding topics such as domestic abuse, child-on-child abuse, online safety, and exploitation, ensuring a holistic safeguarding approach.

Safeguarding in the Curriculum

Bristol Hospital Education Service (BHES) is committed to ensuring that all learners receive safeguarding education, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, tailored to their short-term placement and individual needs.

Note: BHES provides short-term educational input to support reintegration into the student's on-roll school. As such, not all aspects of the full curriculum may be delivered.

Curriculum Content and Approach

RSHE and PSHE: BHES follows statutory guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) and Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. This includes age-appropriate teaching on:

- Self-esteem and emotional literacy
- Assertiveness and personal boundaries
- Power dynamics and healthy relationships
- Building resilience to radicalisation and extremism
- Online safety and digital wellbeing
- Bullying, including child-on-child abuse

- Online Safety: In line with DfE guidance, online safety is embedded across the curriculum. Pupils are taught:
    - How to recognise and respond to online risks
    - How to behave respectfully online
    - How to seek help and report concerns
    - How to critically evaluate online content and understand digital footprints

Filters and Monitoring: BHES uses appropriate filtering and monitoring systems to protect learners online. These systems are reviewed regularly to ensure they do not over-block educational content or restrict safeguarding teaching.

Responsive Curriculum Design: The curriculum is shaped by local safeguarding trends identified by the DSL and safeguarding team. For example, if there is an increase in bullying incidents, targeted PSHE sessions will be delivered to address this.

Engagement and Voice

Parental Engagement: BHES actively engages parents and carers in the development of safeguarding curriculum content. This includes consultation on RSHE topics and sharing resources to support safeguarding at home.

Student Voice: Learners are given opportunities to inform curriculum planning through:

- School council discussions
- Feedback mechanisms
- Informal conversations with staff

This aligns with best practice in contextual safeguarding, ensuring that the curriculum reflects the lived experiences and concerns of students.

Safer Recruitment and Safer Working Practice

Safer Recruitment

BHES is committed to ensuring that all recruitment processes uphold the highest standards of safeguarding, in line with Part Three of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025.

Recruitment Procedures:

- All applicants are subject to rigorous scrutiny, including verification of identity, qualifications, employment history, and health suitability.
- References are obtained and scrutinised prior to appointment, with any concerns resolved satisfactorily.
- Recruitment materials clearly state BHES's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Pre-Appointment Checks:

- Enhanced DBS checks, barred list checks, and prohibition checks are carried out as appropriate to the role.
- Overseas checks are conducted for candidates who have lived or worked abroad, in line with Home Office guidance.gov
- Schools must risk-assess staff with overseas history where checks are not possible, and document decisions accordingly.

Safer Recruitment Training:

- At least one member of every appointment panel must have completed Safer Recruitment training, as required by the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009.

Use of Reasonable Force

BHES follows the DfE's 2025 guidance on the use of reasonable force and restrictive interventions.

Definition:

- Reasonable force refers to physical contact used to control or restrain a pupil, using no more force than necessary.

Principles:

- Staff must use professional judgement, considering the pupil's age, SEND status, and vulnerability.
- Force must be necessary, proportionate, and respectful of the pupil's dignity.
- De-escalation and positive behaviour support are prioritised to minimise the need for physical intervention.

Recording and Reporting:

- All incidents involving restraint or positive handling must be recorded and reported in line with statutory guidance.
- Reviews involve the pupil and their family, with a focus on learning and prevention.

Training:

- Staff likely to use reasonable force must receive appropriate training, including legal and safeguarding implications.

Whistleblowing Procedures

BHES promotes a culture of transparency and accountability. Staff are encouraged to raise concerns about malpractice or safeguarding failures without fear of reprisal.

Internal Channels:

- Staff can report concerns to designated whistleblowing contacts within the school or governing body.
- Procedures are outlined in the staff handbook, code of conduct, and displayed on staff notice boards.

External Channels:

- Staff may contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline:
  0800 028 0285 (Mon–Fri, 8am–8pm)
  help@nspcc.org.uk
- General guidance is available at gov.uk/whistleblowing.

Legal Protection:

- Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, whistleblowers are protected from dismissal or detriment.

Key Safeguarding Areas

In addition to general safeguarding responsibilities, Bristol Hospital Education Service (BHES) recognises its duty to address specific safeguarding issues as outlined in KCSIE 2025 Appendix A and C. These areas are integrated into our safeguarding policy, staff training, and curriculum planning.

Legal and Contextual Safeguarding Responsibilities

BHES staff must be aware of and respond to the following safeguarding concerns:

1. Children in the Court System

- Support for children involved in family or criminal court proceedings.
- Use of age-appropriate resources such as the CAFCASS Child Impact Toolkits.

2. Child Exploitation

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) are forms of abuse involving manipulation, coercion, or violence.
- Staff must be trained to recognise indicators and use local risk assessment tools.

3. Domestic Abuse

- Under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, children witnessing domestic abuse are recognised as victims in their own right.
- BHES participates in Operation Encompass to support affected pupils.

4. Homelessness

- Homelessness or risk of homelessness is a safeguarding concern.

- Staff should liaise with housing services and refer to early help where appropriate.

5. So-Called Honour-Based Abuse

- Includes:
    - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – Mandatory reporting duty applies to all professionals.
    - Forced Marriage – A criminal offence under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

6. Online Safety

- Embedded across the curriculum and safeguarding policy.
- Covers the 4 Cs: Content, Contact, Conduct, and Commerce.
- Includes risks from misinformation, AI misuse, and online radicalisation.

7. Mental Health

- Mental health concerns may be safeguarding issues.
- BHES follows the DfE Whole School Approach to Mental Health and ensures staff are trained to identify and respond appropriately.

8. Child-on-Child Abuse (Peer-on-Peer Abuse)

- Includes:
    - Bullying and Cyberbullying
    - Physical Abuse
    - Sexual Violence and Harassment
    - Sexting (Sharing of sexual imagery)
    - Upskirting – A criminal offence under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
    - Initiation/Hazing Violence
- Staff must challenge inappropriate behaviour and avoid minimising abuse as "banter" or "part of growing up".

9. Serious Youth Violence

- Includes knife crime, gang involvement, and county lines exploitation.
- BHES works with multi-agency partners to identify and support at-risk pupils.

10. Substance Misuse

- Includes alcohol, drugs, vaping, and prescription misuse.
- BHES follows local protocols and refers to specialist services where needed.

11. Preventing Radicalisation

- The Prevent Duty requires schools to identify and support pupils vulnerable to extremist ideologies.
- Staff must complete Prevent training and understand referral pathways including Channel Panels.

12. Private Fostering

- A private fostering arrangement must be reported to the local authority.
- Staff must be alert to informal care arrangements that meet the criteria.

13. Young Carers

- Young carers may face barriers to education and wellbeing.
- BHES ensures appropriate support and referrals to local services.

Further Resources

- KCSIE 2025 – Appendix A & C: Detailed safeguarding categories and indicators.
- NSPCC – Types of Abuse: Comprehensive guidance for professionals.
- DfE Guidance: Available for each safeguarding area via gov.uk.

Section 2 - Procedures

Safeguarding Procedures

Reporting Concerns

All staff must be clear on how to record and report concerns to the DSL or Deputy DSLs without delay.

If a child is in immediate danger, staff must call 999 and request police assistance.

Staff follow the procedures outlined in Appendix B, including responses to:

- Child-on-child abuse
- Mental health concerns
- Online safety issues

Concerns must be recorded factually and shared securely with the safeguarding team.

Information Sharing

BHES adheres to the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, recognising that safeguarding is a lawful basis for sharing special category personal data.

Staff understand that:

- Safeguarding and individuals at risk is a valid processing condition under GDPR.
- Consent should be sought where appropriate, but can be overridden if:
- Seeking consent places the child at risk.
- It is not reasonable to obtain consent.
- Timely sharing is essential to protect the child.

BHES will withhold data if sharing it would cause serious harm to the child. Legal advice will be sought in complex cases.

"Fears about sharing information must not stand in the way of safeguarding children." – ICO

Identifying and Monitoring Vulnerable Learners

The DSL and deputies will regularly review:

- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Attainment
- Safeguarding records

This ensures:

- Early intervention to prevent escalation.
- Educational outcomes are supported.
- Reasonable adjustments are made in response to vulnerability (e.g., trauma-informed behaviour support).

Multi-Agency Working

BHES is a relevant agency under the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership and follows Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance.

Referrals are made under:

- Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 for children in need (e.g., young carers, private fostering).
- Section 47 for children at risk of significant harm.

Referrals are made to the local authority where the child resides. If the child has a social worker, contact is made directly with them or their team manager. For children in care, the Hope Virtual School is also notified.

BHES will:

- Attend child protection conferences, core groups, and multi-agency meetings.
- Contribute to MARACs and child protection plans.
- Liaise with the Violence Reduction Unit (Safer Options) if a weapon-related incident occurs.
- In the event of a child death or serious harm, BHES will notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel within 5 working days.

Exclusions and Alternative Provision

When considering exclusion:

- A multi-agency risk assessment must be undertaken.
- If the child is subject to a child protection plan, a risk assessment meeting is convened before exclusion.
- For serious incidents requiring immediate exclusion, the risk assessment must precede the governing body meeting.

When commissioning Alternative Provision (AP):

- BHES follows the Bristol City Council ALP Hub guidance.
- Clear agreements are made regarding safeguarding responsibilities, communication, and monitoring.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

(To be read in conjunction with the Attendance Policy)

A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or radicalisation. BHES follows the Children Missing Education statutory guidance under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996.

Staff Responsibilities

- All staff must follow BHES procedures for unauthorised absence and repeated non-attendance.
- Concerns must be reported to the DSL/Deputy DSL and reviewed in line with vulnerability monitoring protocols.
- Immediate safeguarding concerns must be escalated to the police via 999.

Notification Duties

BHES will notify the on-roll school and may contact the Local Authority CME Officer if:

- A pupil fails to attend regularly.
- A pupil is absent without permission for 5 consecutive school days or more.
- A pupil is removed from roll at a non-standard transition point.

Responding to Peer-on-Peer Harm

Peer-on-peer abuse is recognised as a safeguarding issue, not merely a behavioural one. BHES follows Part 5 of KCSIE 2025 and the DfE's Sexual Violence and Harassment Guidance.

Types of Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Includes but is not limited to:

- Abuse in intimate relationships
- Bullying (including cyberbullying)
- Sexual violence and harassment
- Physical abuse (e.g. hitting, biting)
- Sexting (youth-produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting (a criminal offence)
- Initiation/hazing rituals

BHES Commitments

- Zero tolerance for minimising abuse as "banter" or "part of growing up".
- Equality-aware approach recognising that children with protected characteristics may be disproportionately targeted.
- Safeguarding records are maintained for all incidents.

Early Identification and Support

- DSLs review attendance, behaviour, attainment, and safeguarding data termly.
- Immediate safety and support are provided to all affected pupils.
- Risk assessments are developed and reviewed every 3 months or after each incident.

Handling Disclosures

Staff must:

- Listen non-judgmentally.
- Use open questions only (e.g. what, when, where).
- Avoid promising confidentiality.
- Reassure the child they are not creating a problem or to blame.

Sexual Violence and Harassment

Refer to Part 5 of KCSIE 2025 and the Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool to assess risk.

DSLs determine whether the case is managed internally, via Early Help, or requires statutory intervention under Section 17 or 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Online Elements

Staff must follow UKCCIS Sexting Guidance:

- Do not view, forward, or delete illegal images.
- Report immediately to the DSL.
- DSLs manage incidents in line with safeguarding policy and police liaison.

Police Involvement

If a criminal offence is suspected, BHES will liaise with:

- Avon & Somerset Police – Lighthouse Safeguarding Unit
- School Beat Officer or PCSO

Contextual Safeguarding Approach

BHES adopts a Contextual Safeguarding model, recognising that harm can occur in peer groups, online spaces, and the wider community.

Following incidents, DSLs will review:

- Supervision and staffing
- Physical environment
- Curriculum delivery of safeguarding topics
- Student voice is used to identify unsafe spaces and inform safeguarding improvements.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse Made Against Professionals

Bristol Hospital Education Service (BHES) follows Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025, which outlines procedures for managing allegations against staff, supply staff, volunteers, and contractors.

Threshold for Allegations

An allegation must be reported if a professional has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved in a way that suggests they may not be suitable to work with children (including incidents outside school).

Immediate Action

- Do not speak to the individual concerned.
- Report concerns directly to the Headteacher/Principal.
- If the concern involves the Headteacher, report to the Chair of Governors, who will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Supply Staff and Volunteers

- BHES will lead and coordinate with the LADO and the employment agency.
- The school retains responsibility for safeguarding and must ensure the agency cooperates fully.

Foster Carers and Positions of Trust

- Allegations against foster carers or any adult in a position of trust must be referred to the LADO on the same day.
- The child's allocated social worker must also be informed immediately.
- BHES will not investigate unless directed by the LADO.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health concerns may be indicators of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. BHES follows KCSIE 2025 and the DfE's Whole School Approach to Mental Health.

Safeguarding and Mental Health

- Mental health concerns that raise safeguarding issues must be reported to the DSL/Deputy DSL immediately.
- If a child is at immediate risk, staff must call 999.

Early Identification and Monitoring

- DSLs review attendance, behaviour, attainment, and safeguarding records termly.
- Staff use safeguarding procedures (Appendix B) to escalate concerns.
- Reasonable adjustments are made to support educational outcomes.

School Approach

BHES adopts the DfE's 8 principles of a whole school approach:

- leadership and management
- identifying need and monitoring impact
- staff development
- ethos and environment
- enabling student voice
- curriculum, teaching, and learning,
- targeted support and appropriate referrals
- working with parents, carers, and the wider community

Appendix A – Key Guidance for safeguarding issues.

All key single agency policies relevant for education settings can be found on the following webpage:

https://bristolsafeguarding.org/policies-and-guidance/education/

Other multi-agency guidance and policies from the Local Safeguarding Partnerships:

For Bristol - https://bristolsafeguarding.org/policies-and-guidance/

For South Glos - http://sites.southglos.gov.uk/safeguarding/library

Appendix B – Reporting concerns

1. Reporting Concerns about a Child – Bristol

- **Website**: Concerns about a child

- **Phone Numbers**:

    o **First Response (Children)**: 0117 903 6444

    o **Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours)**: 01454 615 165

    o **Police (Emergency)**: 999

    o **Police (Non-Emergency)**: 101

2. Safeguarding Contacts Poster – Multi-agency Contacts in Bristol

- **Poster PDF**: Contacts

- **Key Contacts**:

    o **First Response (Children)**: 0117 903 6444

    o **Emergency Duty Team**: 01454 615 165

    o **Mental Health Crisis Line**: 0300 555 0334

    o **LADO (Professionals)**: 0117 903 7795

    o **Safeguarding in Education Team**: 0117 922 2710

    o **Prevent Duty**: 01278 647466 | Email: PreventSW@avonandsomerset.police.uk

    o **Lighthouse Safeguarding Unit**: 01278 649228 | Email: LighthouseBristol@avonandsomerset.police.uk

3. Neighbouring Local Authority Safeguarding Contacts

South Gloucestershire

- **Access & Response Team**: 01454 866000

- **Emergency Duty Team**: 01454 615 165

- **Email**: accessandresponse@southglos.gov.uk

- **Website**: South Gloucestershire Council

North Somerset

- **Single Point of Access**: 01275 888 808

- **Emergency Duty Team**: 01454 615 165

- **Website**: North Somerset Council

Bath and North East Somerset (BANES)

- **Children's Social Work Services**: 01225 396312 / 396313

- **Email**: ChildCare_Duty@bathnes.gov.uk

- **Emergency Duty Team**: 01454 615 165

- **Website**: BANES Council

Appendix C – Dealing with a Disclosure of Abuse

When a child discloses abuse, staff must respond with sensitivity, professionalism, and in accordance with safeguarding procedures. The priority is to ensure the child feels heard, supported, and protected.

Key Principles to Remember

- **Stay calm and composed**
  Avoid showing shock, disbelief, anger, or embarrassment.
- **Reassure the child**
  Let them know you are glad they told you. Affirm that they have done the right thing.
- **Do not promise confidentiality**
  Explain that you may need to share the information with others to help keep them safe. Be clear about who you will tell and why.
- **Listen actively and attentively**
  Use TED questioning:

- o   Tell me what happened
- o   Explain to me what you mean
- o   Describe to me what you saw/felt

- **Avoid leading questions**

  Do not suggest answers or press for more detail than the child is ready to give.

- **Use the child's own words**

  Do not paraphrase or interpret. This ensures accuracy and supports any future investigation.

- **Do not comment on the alleged perpetrator**

  Avoid expressing personal opinions or making judgments.

- **Be aware of retraction**

  Children may retract disclosures due to fear or shame. Record what was said regardless.

- **Explain next steps clearly**

  At the end of the conversation, remind the child who you will tell and what will happen next.

Record the disclosure promptly and accurately include:

- Date, time, and setting
- Exact words used by the child
- Any questions asked (TED format only)

Your responses

- Observations of the child's behaviour or emotional state
- Note: It is not the role of education staff to investigate or seek disclosures. Staff should observe, listen, and report.

The 5 Rs of Safeguarding Response

- **Recognise** – Identify signs of abuse or neglect.
- **Respond** – Listen and reassure the child.
- **Reassure** – Affirm the child's right to be safe.
- **Refer** – Report to the DSL/Deputy DSL immediately.
- **Record** – Document the disclosure accurately and securely.

Appendix D – Types of Abuse and Neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused by adults or by other children, in person or online, within families, institutions, or communities.

Key Principles

- Abuse and neglect rarely occur in isolation. Multiple safeguarding concerns often overlap.
- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may face additional barriers to disclosure and recognition of abuse.

SEND-Specific Considerations

Staff must be alert to:

- Misattributing signs of abuse (e.g. mood, behaviour, injury) to a child's disability.
- Increased risk of peer isolation and bullying.
- Communication barriers that may prevent disclosure.
- The need for enhanced pastoral support and reasonable adjustments.

Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

These definitions are drawn from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and KCSIE 2025.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve:

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning/scalding, drowning, suffocating.
- Fabricated or induced illness by a parent/carer.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent emotional maltreatment causing severe adverse effects on emotional development. May include:

- Conveying worthlessness or inadequacy.
- Silencing or mocking the child.
- Age-inappropriate expectations.
- Witnessing domestic abuse.
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying).
- Exploitation or corruption.

Emotional abuse is present in all forms of maltreatment, even if not the primary concern.

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including:

- Physical contact (e.g. rape, oral sex, touching).
- Non-contact (e.g. viewing sexual images, grooming, online exploitation).

- Perpetrators may be adults or other children.
- Abuse may occur online or offline.

Neglect

Persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs, including:

- Inadequate food, clothing, shelter.
- Lack of supervision or medical care.
- Emotional unresponsiveness.
- Neglect may begin prenatally due to maternal substance misuse.

Neglect is the most common reason for a child protection plan in England.

Appendix E - Specific actions to take on topical safeguarding issues

1. Legal Duties and National Guidance

- All staff must follow statutory guidance in **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025**.

- Specific duties include:

  - Reporting concerns
  - Understanding thresholds for harm
  - Information sharing
  - DSL responsibilities

2. Referrals and Multi-Agency Liaison

- Referrals to **Children's Social Care** must be made if a child is **likely to suffer significant harm**.
- **Parental notification** is required unless it increases risk.
- Liaise with **other education settings** for contextual safeguarding, especially where siblings attend.

3. Child Exploitation (CSE & CCE)

- **Early Help** must be initiated at the first sign of exploitation.
- **CSE concerns** → report to **Operation Topaz**.
- **CCE concerns** → share with **Safer Options**.
- **Missing Persons notifications** → store securely in the child's safeguarding file.

4. Domestic Abuse – Operation Encompass

- Avon & Somerset Police notify schools of domestic abuse incidents.

- Schools must:
    - Be signed up to receive notifications.
    - Have **two trained staff** to act on them.
    - Seek **police consent** before sharing, except during safeguarding file transfers.

5. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- **Mandatory reporting duty** for known cases involving girls under 18.
- **Travel Risk Assessments** must be completed for families travelling to high-risk countries.
    - Use the **FGM Referral Risk Assessment** from the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership.
    - Referrals to social care should be **proportionate** and based on risk.

6. Online Safety

- Refer to **Appendix C of KCSIE**.
- For individual cases:
    - Contact the **Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline**.
    - Report confirmed abuse to **CEOP**.

7. Serious Youth Violence & Offensive Weapons

- Immediate police contact if threat or harm is present.
- **Safer Options** coordinates multi-agency risk assessments.
- **Exclusion decisions** should involve consultation to avoid increasing community risk.
- Incidents reviewed by the **Out of Court Disposals Panel**.

8. Preventing Radicalisation – The Prevent Duty

- Under **Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015**, schools must have **due regard** to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
- Updated guidance (2023–2025) focuses on:
    - **Risk assessment**: tailored to local threats.
    - **Partnership working**: with Prevent teams and safeguarding boards.
    - **Staff training**: proportionate to risk; DSL leads delivery.
    - **IT policies**: to reduce exposure to radicalising content.
- **New theme**: reducing permissive environments through curriculum and speaker policies.
- **Referrals** should be made if a child is believed to be on a pathway to terrorism.

9. Private Fostering

- Defined under the **Children Act 1989** and **Private Fostering Regulations 2005**.
- Applies to children under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) cared for by someone other than a parent or close relative for **28 days or more**.
- Must be reported to **Children's Social Care** at least **6 weeks before** the arrangement starts or **as soon as known**.

- Failure to notify is a **criminal offence**.
- Schools should support educational outcomes and monitor wellbeing.

10. Young Carers

- A young carer is under 18 and provides regular support to a family member with illness, disability, or substance misuse.
- Bristol's **All Age Carers Strategy 2025–2030** prioritises:
  - **Early identification and recognition**
  - **Timely carer conversations** (formerly assessments)
  - **Access to tailored support and information**
- Referrals can be made via:
  - [Bristol City Council Young Carers Support](#)
  - Carers Support Centre

Appendix F – Changes to KCSIE 2025

The DfE has published its final version of [Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)](#) for September 2025. It came into force on **1 September 2025**.

Please note: this article only summarises the changes between KCSIE 2024 and 2025. For a summary of the whole KCSIE 2025 document, see [our other article](#).

The changes this year are mainly technical, for example, providing updated links and resources.

Part 1: safeguarding information for all staff

All staff working directly with children are expected to read at least part 1 of KCSIE (those who don't work directly with children can read the condensed version of part 1, in annex A).

There are no changes to part 1 of KCSIE for 2025.

Part 2: the management of safeguarding

Some sections are likely to be updated in September 2025

Since the publication of the 'for information' version of KCSIE 2025, the DfE has now published revised guidance on [relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education](#).

The DfE also expects to publish revised guidance on gender questioning children, but doesn't have an exact date (the DfE previously expected to publish this in the summer).

The section 'Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning' (starting from paragraph 204) will likely receive an update with signposts to new guidance.

As soon as any new guidance is released, we'll update our relevant articles accordingly, to help you understand whether and how any changes may impact you and your school community. If

there's a particular article you're keen to follow closely, select 'save for later' in the top-right corner of it to receive a notification if and when we update it.

Updates to 'opportunities to teach safeguarding'

This has largely been updated to reflect the updated RSHE guidance, and includes:

- Clarification that an RSHE programme should take pupils' stages of development into account

- Additional areas an RSHE programme should tackle, including:

  - Supporting children to develop the skills that form the building blocks of all positive relationships

  - Kindness in relationships

  - Reporting concerns about abusive relationships

  - All forms of sexual harassment and abuse

  - Emphasising that victims of sexual harassment or abuse are never at fault for it

You can find this in paragraphs 128 to 130.

Updated definition of the 'content' area of risk for online safety

The 'content' risks related to online safety now include:

- Misinformation

- Disinformation (including fake news)

- Conspiracy theories

This is laid out in paragraph 135.

More guidance around filtering and monitoring, and AI

Information around the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards (paragraph 142) has been updated to include a link to the department's 'plan technology for your school' service, which you can use to self-assess your school against the DfE's standards and then receive personalised recommendations on how to meet them.

There's also a new link to the DfE's Generative AI: product safety expectations (paragraph 143), which covers:

- How to use generative AI safely

- How filtering and monitoring requirements apply to the use of generative AI in education

More detail around safeguarding related to alternative provision (AP)

This reflects existing guidance around AP and states that schools should obtain written information from the AP:

- That appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on anyone working at the AP

- About any changes that might put the child at risk, for example staff changes, so the school can make sure appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out

This information is also repeated in part 3 (paragraph 331).

This AP section now also includes that:

- Schools should always know where a child is based during school hours. This includes maintaining records of the address of the AP and any sub-contracted provision or satellite sites the child might attend

- Schools should regularly review AP placements, at least half-termly, in order to provide assurance that:

    o The child is regularly attending

    o The placement continues to be safe and meets the child's needs

- Where safeguarding concerns arise, the placement should be immediately reviewed and terminated, if necessary, unless or until those concerns have been satisfactorily addressed

This is set out in paragraphs 169 and 170.

Updated list of resources for children requiring mental health support

The DfE has updated the list of programmes and toolkits available for training staff in this area, with links to appropriate resources. It has also removed the reference to funding for training senior mental health leads.

You can find this in paragraph 184.

Updated wording around 'Working together to improve school attendance'

This is to highlight that the guidance is statutory and to set out how schools **must** work with local authority (LA) children's services where absence indicates a safeguarding concern (see paragraph 177).

Updated information on the role of the virtual school head (VSH)

VSHs now have a non-statutory responsibility to promote the educational achievement of children in kinship care (paragraph 199).

Removal of the term 'autism spectrum disorder'

KCSIE now uses the term 'autism', to align with the SEND Code of Practice (paragraph 205).

Part 3: safer recruitment

Services for background checks have changed

- [Check a teacher's record](#) replaces the TRA's Teacher Employer Access service

- [Individuals prohibited from managing or governing schools](#) replaces the TRA's Employer Secure Access portal

This is set out on pages 75 and 85.

Part 4: safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff

The only change to this section is a correction to the title of the Information Commissioner's employment practice guidance (paragraph 422).

Part 5: child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

This section now includes a link to the Lucy Faithfull Foundation's '[Shore Space](#)' (paragraph 545, page 140), a confidential chat service for young people concerned about their own, or someone else's sexual thoughts and behaviours.

Annex A: safeguarding information for school and college staff

No changes have been made to annex A.

Annex B: further information

Updated definition of extremism

The definition has been updated to include (changes are in bold):

- Vocal opposition of fundamental **British** values

- The mutual respect of **those with** different faiths and beliefs

'Calling for the death of members of the armed forces' has been removed from the definition

You can find this on page 157.

Additional advice and support

New resources have been added:

- The Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse's new resources to help education professionals identify and respond to [concerns of child sexual abuse and abusive behaviours](#)

- The Children's Society and Home Office's guide to [preventing child sexual exploitation](#)

Annex C: role of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

No changes have been made to annex C.