



SIKH ACADEMIES TRUST
Faith Inspired Education

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

PART 3 – PSA CHILD PROTECTION

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A. Child Protection

Child Protection is part of Safeguarding and is about protecting children who may be at risk of harm or are being harmed.

Types of Child Protection Issues Staff May Come Across:

1. Abuse
2. Physical abuse
3. Emotional abuse
4. Sexual abuse
5. Neglect
6. Child on Child Abuse - Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools
7. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
8. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
9. Female genital mutilation
10. Mental Health
11. Serious Violence
12. County Lines
13. Domestic abuse (Operation Encompass including the National Domestic Abuse Helpline)
14. Child abduction and community safety incidents
15. Children missing from education
16. Children with family members in prison
17. Cybercrime
18. Homelessness
19. Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism
20. Radicalisation
21. Extremism (The Prevent duty, Channel)
22. Honour based Abuse including Forced Marriage and FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)

B. How to respond if a child tells you about something which might be a child protection issue:

- Stay calm.
- Do not communicate shock, anger, or embarrassment.
- Reassure the child. Tell her/him you are pleased that s/he is speaking to you.
- Never enter a pact of secrecy with the child. Assure her/him that you will try to help but let the child know that you will have to tell other people to do this. State who this will be and why. You must not promise confidentiality.

- Tell her/him that you believe them. Children very rarely lie about abuse; but s/he may have tried to tell others and not been heard or believed.
- Tell the child that it is not her/his fault.
- Encourage the child to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information. Use T.E.D questions i.e. tell me.... explain to me.... describe to me...
- Listen and remember - Be aware that the child may retract what s/he has told you. It is essential to record all you have heard.
- Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you.
- Communicate that s/he has a right to be safe and protected.
- Do not tell the child that what s/he experienced is dirty, naughty, or bad.
- It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender.
- At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know.
- As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations.

NB: It is not staff's role to seek or investigate disclosures. The role is to observe that something may be wrong, ask about it, listen, be available and try to be available to talk. Staff must not deal with any disclosures by themselves. They must report these to the Designated Safeguarding Lead urgently. The Headteacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead must report clear indications or disclosure of abuse to children's social care without delay. Children making a disclosure may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Listening to and supporting a child/young person who has been abused can be traumatic for the adults involved. Support for you will be available from your Line Manager, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Headteacher.

C. Allegations against a member of staff, visitor, governor, or trustee:

- Be non-judgemental, calm, and sympathetic
- Do not interrogate – let the child talk
- Do not promise secrecy
- Do not speculate about what might happen next
- Immediately access the Staff Dashboard > Safeguarding > Access the Keeping Everyone Safe Form and complete as accurately as possible
- If a child is in immediate danger, always dial 999.

D. What might happen next:

1. managing any support for the child internally via the school's own pastoral support processes.
2. undertaking an early help assessment, or

3. making a referral to statutory services, for example as the child might be in need, is in need or suffering, or is likely to suffer harm.
 - If there is a low level of need, the child will be given peer mentoring / adult mentoring / intervention with teachers /regular support meetings to ensure that problems are sorted out.
 - If there are clearly problems with the child / the family which are not abuse but to do with e.g. housing, anxiety, depression, bereavement, there will be a referral to an outside agency, such as CAF, CAMHS, Bereavement services, Youth Offending Team, CCS.
 - If there is even a suspicion that a child is at risk (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect) then the child will be referred to other appropriate agencies, e.g. Prevent Team Channel, Social Care.

E. Statutory children's social care assessments and services

Para 57. Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care and if appropriate the police, (see when to call the police: guidance for schools and colleges (npcc.police.uk)) is made immediately. Referrals should follow the local referral process.

Para 58. Local authority children's social care assessments should consider where children are being harmed in contexts outside of the home, so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and enable a contextual approach to address such harm. Additional information is available here: [Contextual Safeguarding](#).

Para 59. The online tool [Report child abuse to your local council](#) directs to the relevant local authority children's social care contact details.

Children in need

Para 60. A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

Para 61. Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to

safeguard and promote the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment. This includes all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

What will the local authority do?

Para 62. Within one working day of a referral being made, a local authority social worker should acknowledge its receipt to the referrer and make a decision about the next steps and the type of response that is required.

This will include determining whether:

- the child requires immediate protection and urgent action is required
- any services are required by the child and family and what type of services
- the child is in need and should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Working Together to Safeguard Children provides details of the assessment process
- there is reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and whether enquiries must be made, and the child assessed under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Working Together to Safeguard Children provides details of the assessment process, and
- further specialist assessments are required to help the local authority to decide what further action to take.

Para 63. The referrer should follow up if this information is not forthcoming

Para 64. If social workers decide to carry out a statutory assessment, staff should do everything they can to support that assessment (supported by the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) as required).

Para 65. If, after a referral, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the referrer should consider following local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.

F. Record keeping:

Para 66. All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. This will also help if/when responding to any complaints about the way a case has been handled by the school or college. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child. Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

Para 67. If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

Why is all of this important?

Para 68. It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address safeguarding risks, prevent issues escalating and to promote children's welfare.

Research and local child safeguarding practice reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action. Further information about local child safeguarding practice can be found in Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Examples of poor practice include:

- failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect
- poor record keeping
- failing to listen to the views of the child
- failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve
- not sharing information with the right people within and between agencies
- sharing information too slowly, and
- a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.

**ALL REFERRALS MUST BE DONE IN WRITING.
PLEASE CONTACT THE DSL REGARDING ANY SAFEGUARDING
MATTERS.**

G. Changes in KCSI 2024:

- 1) Page 4 Definition of 'safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children' – amended to reflect the updated 'Working together to safeguard children'.

Working together to safeguard children: Statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children: This revision to the guidance focuses on strengthening multi-agency working across the whole system of help, support and protection for children and their families, keeping a child-centred approach while bringing a whole-family focus, and embedding strong, effective and consistent multi-agency child protection practice. The update includes:

- principles for working with parents and carers that centre the importance of building positive, trusting and co-operative relationships to deliver tailored support to families
- expectations for multi-agency working that apply to all individuals, agencies and organisations working with children and their families, across a range of roles and activities
- new national multi-agency child protection standards that set out actions, considerations and behaviours for improved child protection practice and better outcomes for children.

[Improving practice with children, young people and families](#) provides advice for local areas on embedding working together to safeguard children and the children's social care national framework.

- 2) Paragraph 18 'Early help'– amended to reflect revised 'Working Together' guidance.
- 3) Paragraph 19 'Abuse and Neglect'– heading amended to include 'exploitation' (also throughout the document).
- 4) Paragraph 24 'Indicators of Abuse and neglect' – additional text included 'including where they see, hear, or experience its effects' when referring to domestic violence.
- 5) Paragraph 29 'Safeguarding Issues' – 'deliberately missing education' amended to reflect revised definition of 'unexplainable and or/persistent absences from education'.
- 6) Paragraph 92 Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR – paragraph included to comply with DPA/UKGDPR requirements.
- 7) Paragraph 171 'Alternative Provision'– text added to clarify school remains responsible for the pupils they place in alternative provision:

Where a school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and should be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.

- 8) Paragraph 204 Links added to NSPCC advice on protecting children with SEN and deaf/disabled children and young people.
- 9) Paragraphs 205 to 209 'Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning their gender' – disclaimer added, and additional text includes further clarification to comply with gender questioning children guidance terminology:

N.B. This section remains under review, pending the outcome of the gender questioning children guidance consultation, and final gender questioning guidance documents being published.

- 205. 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.
- 206. 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.

- 207. It 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.
- 208. As such, when supporting a gender questioning child, schools should take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with the child's parents (other than in the exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child), including any clinical advice that is available and how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying. Schools should refer to our Guidance for Schools and Colleges in relation to Gender Questioning Children, when deciding how to proceed.
- 209. 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

10) Paragraph 497 'Early help' – text amended to reflect 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023'.

11) Page 148 'Children and the court system' – two separate age-appropriate guides for schools to support children in the court system now included.

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds.

12) Page 156 'Preventing radicalisation' – disclaimer added, and minimal changes to clarify schools' duties in relation to Prevent.

Preventing radicalisation Note: This preventing radicalisation section remains under review, following the publication of a new definition of extremism on the 14 March 2024.

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools safeguarding approach.

- Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental 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 is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.
- 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. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children'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 a deputy) making a Prevent referral.

- 13) Annex C Role of the designated safeguarding lead: Page 170 'Holding and sharing information' bullet point 3 further guidance added regarding the rationale for making decisions.

The critical importance of recording, holding, using and sharing information effectively is set out in Parts one, two and five of KCSIE 2024, and therefore the designated safeguarding lead should be equipped to:

- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and with other schools and colleges on transfer including in-year and between primary and secondary education, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and
- be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions. This should include instances where referrals were or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent program etc.

H. Para 98. It is a requirement under KCSIE 2024 for the Child Protection Policy to:

1. Reflect the whole school approach to child-on-child abuse (see paragraph 159)

Para 159. All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing other children (including online). All staff should be clear about their school's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse.

2. Reflect Part five): Part 5 – link [HERE](#)
3. Reflects reporting systems as set out at paragraph 96:

Para 96. The school safeguarding policies and procedures should be transparent, clear, and easy to understand for staff, pupils, students, parents, and carers. Systems should be in place, and they should be well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report, any form of abuse or neglect, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.
4. Describes procedures which are in accordance with government guidance or refers to locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements put in place by the safeguarding partners (paragraphs 106-113)

Para 106. Schools have a pivotal role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that the school contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Para 107. Safeguarding partners (the local authority; Integrated Care Boards (previously known as clinical commissioning group) for an area within the local authority; and the chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area) will make arrangements to work together with appropriate relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs.

Para 108. Safeguarding partners have a shared and equal duty to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. To fulfil this role, they must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies. Relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children with regard to local need.

Para 109. Working Together to Safeguard Children is very clear that all schools (including those in multi-academy trusts) in the local area should be fully engaged, involved, and included in safeguarding arrangements. It is expected that, locally, the safeguarding partners will name schools as relevant agencies. Once named as a relevant agency, schools in the same way as other relevant agencies, are under a statutory duty to co-operate with the published arrangements. They must act in accordance with the safeguarding arrangements.

Para 110. It is especially important that schools understand their role within the local safeguarding arrangements. Governing bodies, proprietors, and their senior leadership teams, especially their designated safeguarding leads, should make themselves aware of and follow their local arrangements.

Para 111. Governing bodies and proprietors should understand the local criteria for action and the local protocol for assessment and ensure they are reflected in their own policies and procedures. They should also be prepared to supply information as requested by the safeguarding partners.

Para 112. Schools should work with local authority children's social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to interagency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans.

Para 113. All schools should allow access for local authority children's social care from the host local authority and, where appropriate, from a placing local authority, for that authority to conduct, or to consider whether to conduct, a section 17 or a section 47 assessment.

5. Includes policies as reflected elsewhere in Part two of this guidance, such as online safety (see paragraph 134), and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) (see paragraphs 202-204)

Para 134. It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. An effective whole school and approach to online safety empowers a school to protect and educate pupils, students, and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

Para 202 Children with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues 202. Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline. Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their child protection policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group of children. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration

- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges
- cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or the consequences of doing so.

Para 203. Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO).

Para 204. Schools should consider extra pastoral support and attention for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place. Further information can be found in the department's:

- SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years, and
 - Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions.
6. Is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and updated if needed, so that it is kept up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt; and
 7. Is available publicly either via the school website or by other means.