



Child Protection Policy

Date reviewed: Autumn 2025
Date of next review: Autumn 2026



SIKH ACADEMIES TRUST
Faith Inspired Education

CHILD PROTECTION

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

A. TYPES OF CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES STAFF MAY COME ACROSS:

- Abuse
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Child on child abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Domestic abuse, Operation Encompass, National Domestic Abuse Helpline
- Female genital mutilation
- Mental Health
- Serious Violence
- County Lines
- Child abduction and community safety incidents
- Children and court system
- Children missing from education
- Children with family members in prison
- Cybercrime
- Homelessness
- Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism
- Preventing radicalisation, Extremism, the Prevent duty, Channel
- Honour based abuse including Forced Marriage and FGM
- Online harms including misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories

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 and then refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Do not promise secrecy, but do say you will only tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Do not speculate about what might happen next
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- 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 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 KCSIE 2025:

The DfE will publish KCSIE (final version) 2025 on 1 September 2025, by which time they expect it to include links to revised guidance on Relationships, Sex, and Health Education and revised guidance on gender questioning children.

Whilst there are only technical changes to KCSIE 2025, future iterations will reflect the progress into legislation of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, the emerging further learnings from the work of the recent Casey Audit and subsequent inquiries, the Violence Against Women and Girls strategy and the interactions between these advances.

This Government is clear that there are and will continue to be further learnings about how we can better protect children in the future as we come to understand more clearly what has gone wrong in the past and schools will continue to need to play an incredibly important role in this.

Changes to KCSIE 2025:

1. Page 36 Para 128 - We have added a note to say that we expect to publish revised guidance on Relationships, Sex, and Health Education this summer. If published, we will signpost to this guidance in September 2025.
2. Page 38 Para 135 - Updated to clarify misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories are safeguarding harms.
3. Page 40 Para 142 - Link added to the plan technology for your school service, which schools can use to assess themselves against the filtering and monitoring standards and receive personalised recommendations on how to meet them.
4. Page 41 Para 143 - Link added to DfE guidance on the use of generative AI in education (2025) at end of filtering and monitoring (FM) section to support schools and colleges.
5. Page 41 Para 144 - wording amended in the cybersecurity standards for schools and colleges advice to clarify that it was developed to help schools improve their cyber resilience.
6. Page 47 Para 169 - 170 information added that clarifies and reflects existing AP Guidance
7. Page 49 Para 177 - updated to clarify 'working together to safeguard attendance' 'is now 'statutory' guidance. Page 54 Para 199 - has been amended to clarify that the role of the virtual head has been extended to include responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children in kinship care.
8. Page 56 Para 204 - We have added a note to say that we expect to publish the revised guidance on gender questioning children this summer. If published, we will signpost to this guidance in September 2025.
9. Page 56 Para 205 - removal of 'spectrum' and 'disorder' to align with SEND code of practice.
10. TRA links replaces with GOV.UK page links.
11. Page 87 Para 331 - information added that clarifies and reflects existing AP Guidance.
12. Page 106 Para 422 - amended to correct the title of the Information Commissioner's employment practice guidance.
13. Page 140 Para 545 - Link added to the Lucy Faithfull Foundation's 'Shore Space' which offers a confidential chat service supporting young people concerned about their own or someone else's sexual thoughts and behaviours.
14. Annex B - Page 157 Header removed
15. Annex B - Page 163 Link added to the CSA Centre's Resources for education settings | CSA Centre.
16. Annex B - Page 164 Link added to the Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation | The Children's Society.

H. Para 98. It is a requirement under KCSIE 2025 for the Child Protection Policy to:

- Reflect the whole school approach to child-on-child abuse (see paragraph 156 and Part 5 of KCSIE 2025)
- 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.

- Describes procedures which are in accordance with government guidance

- 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.

1. 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 201-203)

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 201. Children with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues. 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 202. 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 203. 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.

1. 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
2. Is available publicly either via the school website or by other means.