Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
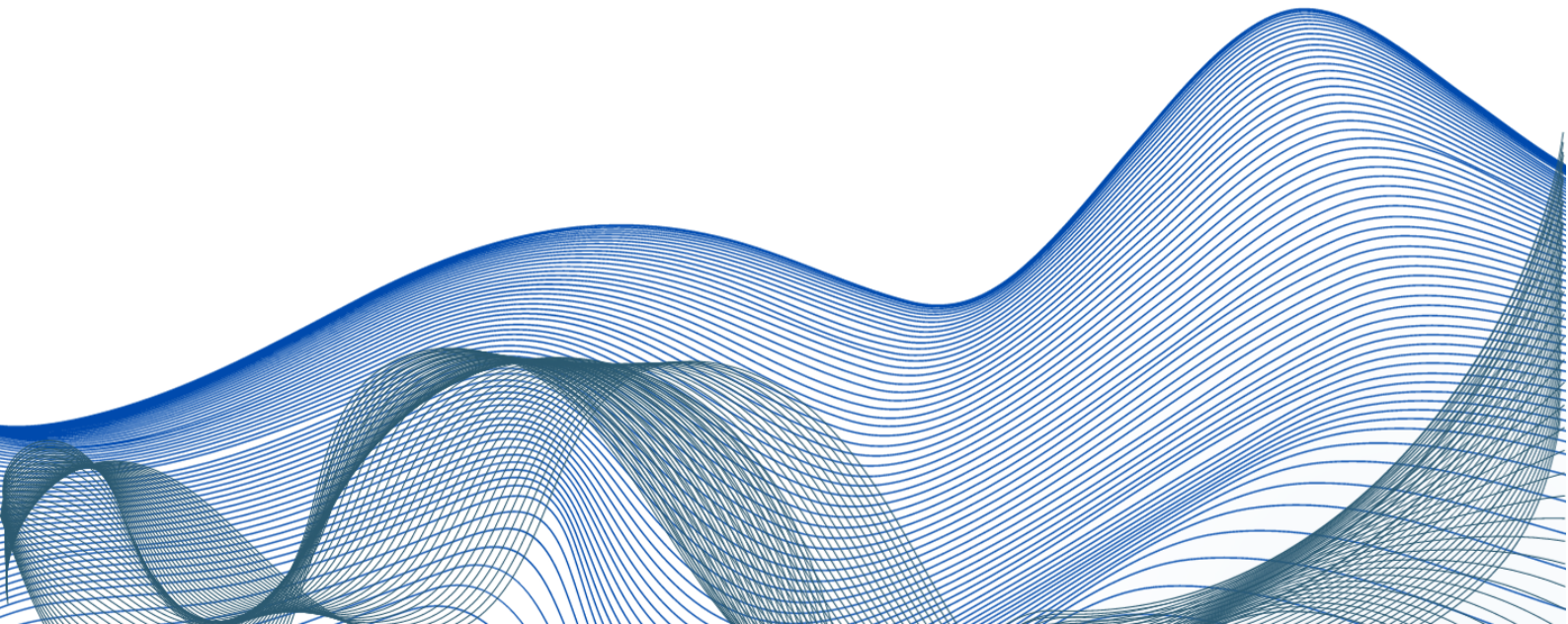
Updated January 2024

Review date: January 2025

Muslim Education Centre

Important Contact Details

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Fayez Rahman (Headteacher) fayez@mecawt.co.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Saqub Hussain saqub@mecawt.co.uk
Nominated Safeguarding Trustee	Naveed Hussain

Education Safeguarding Advisory Service ESAS offers support to education providers to assist them to deliver effectively on all aspects of their safeguarding responsibilities.	01296 387981 Secure-esasduty@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
First Response Team (aka MASH) (including Early Help, Channel) The First Response Team process all new referrals to social care, including children with disabilities. Referrals are assessed by the team to check the seriousness and urgency of the concerns and whether Section 17 and/or Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 apply. The First Response Team will ensure that the referral reaches the appropriate team for assistance in a quick and efficient manner.	01296 383962 Out of hours 0800 999 7677 Secure-cyp.firstresponse@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) The Buckinghamshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is responsible for overseeing the management of all allegations against people in a position of trust who work with children in Buckinghamshire on either a paid or voluntary basis	01296 382070 Secure-lado@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Bucks Family Information Service Information for families on a range of issues including childcare, finances, parenting and education	01296 383065
Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) Procedures, policies and practice guidelines	
Schools Web School bulletin, Safeguarding links, A-Z guide to information and services	
Buckinghamshire Council Equalities & School Improvement Manager	01296 382461 Yvette.thomas@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Buckinghamshire Council Prevent Co-ordinator	01296 674784 Alisonwatts1@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Thames Valley Police	101 (999 in case of emergency)

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1. Policy Statement and Principles

1.1 Overview

This policy is one of a series in the Madrasah's integrated safeguarding portfolio. Further details on key aspects of the Safeguarding policy are provided in the following policies:

- Anti-Bullying
- Behaviour
- Safer Recruitment
- Induction
- Confidentiality
- Whistleblowing

This policy has been developed in accordance with following legislation and guidance:

- Children Act 1989 (amended 2004)

- "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018" - July 2018 Working Together To Safeguard Children July 2018

- "Keeping Children Safe in Education"- statutory guidance for schools and further education colleges - Keeping children safe in education 2022 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

- Information Sharing Guidance for Safeguarding Practitioners Information Sharing Guidance – DfE July 2018

- Statutory Guidance issued under section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act - 2015 Prevent Duty Guidance

- The Equality Act - 2010 Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK

- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - March 2015 What to do if you are worried a child is being abused

- Statutory guidance on FGM Multi-agency Statutory Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation

1.2 Safeguarding Statement; our commitment

The Muslim Education Centre is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children and young people, ensuring their well-being and protection from harm. We believe safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we have a duty to protect our pupils from harm and abuse, as dictated by our faith, moral and statutory responsibility.

Our commitment to safeguarding is reflected in our dedication to promoting the welfare of children, preventing abuse, and responding effectively to any safeguarding concerns. In situations where there is a belief that a child is facing the potential for significant harm or is currently experiencing harm, the Madrasah will adhere to the procedures outlined in this policy.

1.3   Our core safeguarding principles are:

- The Madrasah prioritises the safeguarding and promotion of children's welfare as a matter of utmost importance.
- Successful learning is facilitated by ensuring the safety of children.
- Representatives from the Madrasah's community, including pupils, parents, staff, and trustees, will actively participate in the development and review of policies.
- Policy reviews will be conducted at least once a year.

1.4   Policy Aims

The aim of this safeguarding policy are:

- To provide an environment in which children feel safe, secure, valued and respected.
- To ensure that all teaching staff and volunteers:
  - o   Are aware of the need to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children
  - o   Identify the need for early support
  - o   Promptly report concerns, in line with guidance from the Buckinghamshire Continuum of Need
  - o   Are trained to recognise signs and indicators of abuse

- To provide systematic means of monitoring children known to be or thought to be at risk of harm and ensure contribution to assessments of need and support plans for those children.

- To ensure Muslim Education Centre has a clear system for communicating concerns both internally and with external agencies in line with the Working Together guidance.

- To ensure the school has robust systems in place to accurately record safeguarding and child protection concerns.

- To develop effective working relationships with all other agencies involved in safeguarding, supporting the needs of children at our school.

- To ensure that all staff appointed have been through the safer recruitment process and understand the principles of safer working practices as set out in our **Staff Code of Conduct.**

- To ensure that any community users of our facilities have due regard to expectations of how they should maintain a safe environment, which supports children's wellbeing.

- This policy is published on our website, www.mecawt.co.uk/policies and hard copies can be requested from the office.

1.5 Prevention

Muslim Education Centre is committed to providing early assistance and identifying unaddressed needs and vulnerabilities. Collaborating with other agencies, the Madrasah actively promotes the welfare of pupils and ensures children are kept safe.

1.6 Protection

All staff and volunteers are trained to recognise and respond to abuse and neglect. All staff and volunteers are expected to be vigilant and must act quickly when they suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer.

1.7 Support

Muslim Education Centre (MEC) acknowledges the sensitivity and complex nature of safeguarding and child protection and therefore ensures that pupils, staff and families are supported appropriately.

At MEC, we recognise that effective safeguarding systems are those which:
- Put the child's needs first;
- Provide children with a voice;
- Promote identification of early help;
- Encourage multi-agency working and sharing of information.

Terminology

- **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children:** refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes **(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).**

- **Child protection:** Part of the safeguarding process and it refers to the procedures undertaken to protect individual children who have been identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

- **Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the Madrasah, full time or part time, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

- **Child** refers to all young people who are under the age of 18.

- **Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step parents, foster carers and adoptive parents or legal guardian

- **Abuse**: a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. (Further information regarding the categories of abuse can be found in the appendix to this document.)

2. Statutory Guidance

- **Education Act 2002:**
  Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the governors of maintained schools and further education (FE) colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)**
  This document sets out the legal responsibilities of organisations and individuals to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It provides guidance on effective inter-agency working, identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect, and sharing information appropriately. All staff members are expected to read and familiarise themselves with the key principles outlined in this document.

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education:**
  This document aims to help staff in schools and colleges understand their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It provides further guidance on creating a safe environment, identifying signs of abuse, reporting concerns, and working with external agencies

3. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff, volunteers and visitors understand safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Any person who receives a disclosure of abuse, an allegation or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to Fayez Rahman (Designated Safeguarding Lead; DSL) or, in their absence, to Saqub Hussain (Deputy DSL). In the absence of either of the above, concerns will be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff on site.

Our school procedures for all staff, supply staff, governors, volunteers, visitors and contractors in safeguarding and protecting children from harm are in line with Buckinghamshire Council and Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership safeguarding procedures, **"Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018"** Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, **"Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023"** Keeping children safe in education 2022 (publishing.service.gov.uk)and statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015** Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a moral, legal responsibility to protect children and ensure they are kept safe.

This is done by following the 5 R's:

- **Recognise** – unmet needs, abuse and harm
- **Respond** – alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or Children's Services
- **Report** – DSL is to report safeguarding concerns to LADO
- **Record** – ensure records are kept up-to-date and secure
- **Refer** – share information and refer to external agencies to safeguarding and protect children from harm

3.1 Staff and volunteers:

- Must have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep both looked after children and previously looked after children safe.
- Must read and adhere to the **Staff Code of Conduct**
- Must have children's safeguarding training appropriate to their role and responsibility which is updated at least every 3 years (except Designated Leads)
- Should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect.
- Should be aware of how to respond to specific safeguarding concerns as outlined in this policy.
- Have a responsibility to identify those children who may require early intervention support and what action to take to ensure they are supported appropriately.

- Have a responsibility to identify and respond to a child who is or likely to suffer significant harm and what action they must take, appropriate to their role.
- Must be aware of the importance of multi-agency partnership working and information sharing processes.
- Staff must understand vulnerability and that barriers exist when recognising abuse. Consider the following groups who may have increased vulnerability:
    - Young carers
    - Children with SEND
    - Children living with domestic abuse
    - Children whose parents suffer with poor mental health, including substance misuse
    - Criminal exploitation, including sexual exploitation, County Lines radicalisation and gang involvement
    - Look after children and previously look after children
    - Children who have a social worker
    - Privately fostered children
    - Asylum seekers
    - So-called Honour Based Violence, including FGM and forced marriage
    - Children who frequently go missing or whose attendance is a concern
    - Children who are part of the LGBTQ+ group
    - Children who are at risk of discrimination due to faith and belief, race or ethnicity.

3.2 The Trustees

The trustee board understands and fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities. It must:

- Ensure that the Headteacher creates and maintains a strong, positive culture of safeguarding within the school.

- Ensure that this policy reflects the unique features of the community we serve and the needs of the pupils attending our provision. This policy will be reviewed at least annually and whenever new guidance is issued.

- Regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this Child Protection policy.

- Appoint a member of staff from the senior leadership team to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and also appoint at least one Deputy DSL. The roles and responsibilities of the DSL and Deputy DSL are made explicit in those post-holders' job descriptions. If not the DSL, the Headteacher still maintains overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the school.

- Ensure measures are in place for the trustees to have oversight of how the school's delivery against its safeguarding responsibilities are exercised and evidenced. Ensure robust structures are in place to challenge the Headteacher where there are any identified gaps in practice or procedures are not followed.

- Recognise the importance of the role of the DSL, ensuring they have sufficient time, training, skills and resources to be effective. Refresher training must be attended every 2 years, in addition knowledge and skills must be refreshed at regular intervals, at least annually.

- Recognise the vital contribution that the school can make in helping children to keep safe, through incorporation of safeguarding within the curriculum. Ensure that through curriculum content and delivery children understand to keep themselves safe.

- Ensure there are written recruitment and selection procedures that include the requirement for appropriate pre-employment checks and at least one person on any appointment panel has undertaken safer recruitment training. Ensure robust procedures are in place in order to prevent and deter people who are unsuitable to work with children, from applying or being employed by the school.

- Ensure the Madrasah contributes to multi and inter-agency working.

- Ensure resources are allocated to meet the needs of pupils requiring child Protection or early intervention.

- Ensure there are procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the Head Teacher and a nominated person.

- Ensure policies adopted by the senior leaders are disseminated, followed and understood by staff.

- There are procedures in place to handle allegations of abuse of children against other children.

- The child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide to protect individual children through ensuring there are systems in place for children to express their views and give feedback.

The Trustees must ensure that relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles set out in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR, which allow them to share or withhold personal information when it is necessary to safeguard any child.

It is the duty of the Chair (Naveed Hussain) to liaise with relevant agencies if any allegations are made against the Headteacher. If there are concerns that issues are not being progressed in an expedient manner, staff/pupils/parents/carers should escalate concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) via First Response.

The Governing body must ensure that procedures are in place to manage safeguarding concerns of allegations against staff, supply staff, governors, volunteers, visitors or contractors where they could pose a risk of harm to children. The guidance in Part four of

Keeping children safe in education 2023 (publishing.service.gov.uk) must be followed if there were any such concerns.

3.3 The Head Teacher:

- Ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff.
- Allocates sufficient time and resources to enable the DSL and deputy to carry out their roles effectively.
- Ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures.
- Ensures that pupils' safety and welfare is addressed through the curriculum.

3.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is the designated point of contact for staff and parents/carers to be able to discuss and share their concerns. The DSL is required to be available to staff and outside agencies during school hours and term time for consultation on safeguarding concerns raised. Having responsibility to ensure that cover is arranged outside of term-time during working hours with the expectation that all meetings in madrasah holidays are attended including those convened at short notice.

Overall, the DSL responsibility is to ensure children receive the right help at the right time using the Buckinghamshire Continuum of Need document.

A deputy lead must also be identified who can undertake those functions in the absence of the DSL.

The broad areas of responsibility for the Designated Safeguarding Lead as outlined in 'Keeping children safe in education 2023' are:

3.4.1 Managing referrals:

Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care and to:
- To the designated officer for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a staff member)- this remains the LADO in Bucks.
- To the Disclosure and Barring Service (cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child)
- The Police (cases where a crime may have been committed), using the guidance When to call the Police
- The head teacher must be informed of these issues especially ongoing enquiries and police investigations.

The DSL should ensure referrals to partner agencies, are followed up in writing, including referrals to First Response and Early Help (FSS).

3.4.2 Training:

The DSL should receive appropriate training every two years in order to:
- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention.
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the child protection policy and procedures, especially new staff and volunteers.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs.
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses and
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the Madrasah may put in place to protect them.

3.4.3 Raising Awareness

The designated safeguarding lead should ensure Madrasah's policies are known and used appropriately. The DSL should:

- create a culture of safeguarding within the madrasah where children are protected from harm.
- Ensure Madrasah's child protection policy is reviewed annually, and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with the nominated trustee on this.
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the Madrasah in this.

3.4.4 Record Keeping

The DSL is responsible for:
- Establishing and maintaining a safe and secure system for recording safeguarding and child protection records. These records must be audited regularly to ensure all actions are completed.
- Ensuring all child protection files are held separately from pupil's educational records.
- Maintaining the record for staff safeguarding training.
- Ensuring that the Madrasah's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is available on the Madrasah website and shared with parents.

3.5 Visitors

Visitors must be:
- Clearly identified with visitor/contractor passes.
- Met and directed by madrasah staff/representatives.
- Signed in and out of the madrasah by SLT staff.
- Directed to a poster informing them of how to report a concern
- Given restricted access to only specific areas of the madrasah, as appropriate.
- Escorted by a member of staff/representative as required.
- Given access to pupils restricted to the purpose of their visit.

4. Good Practice Guidelines

The Muslim Education Centre is committed to promoting a culture of safeguarding, and staff members, employed and voluntary, play a crucial role in creating a safe and secure environment for all children.

The following guidelines outline good practices that all staff members and volunteers should adhere to:

- Treat all pupils with respect;
- Treat pupils as individuals;
- Put the child's welfare first;
- Set a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately;
- Involve pupils in decisions that affect them;
- Encourage positive and safe behaviour among pupils;
- Be a good listener;
- Be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour;
- Recognise that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse;
- Read and understand the child protection policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, physical contact and information-sharing;
- Ask the pupil's permission before doing anything for them of a physical nature, such as assisting with dressing or administering first aid;
- Maintain appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language;
- Be aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse;
- Share concerns immediately with the DSL; and
- Always act in the best interests of the child or young person.

4.1 Rewards & Gifts

All staff are expected to:
- Ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared immediately.

- Generally, only give gifts to an individual pupil as part of an agreed reward system.
- Where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of an insignificant value and given to all children equally.
- Ensure that the selection processes for gifts and rewards are fair, transparent and (wherever practicable) are undertaken by more than one member of staff.

4.2 Infatuations

All staff members are required to notify a senior leader of any signs (verbal, written, or physical) indicating that a pupil may have developed an infatuation with a member of staff.

4.3 Social Contact

All staff are expected to:

- Notify the headteacher or the DSL of any (unplanned) social contact they have with a pupil which might cause concern.
- Report and record any situation which they feel might compromise Madrasah or their own professional standing.
- Refrain from sending personal communication to pupils e.g. letters, cards, text messages or emails etc. unless agreed with a senior leader.

4.4 Photography, Videos and Other Creative Arts

All staff are expected to:
- Refrain from making any visual recordings of pupils (still or moving) without the prior consent of a senior leader.
- Ensure that the storage and distribution of such images is approved by senior leaders and care is taken to avoid illicit use of the images.
- Ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability.
- Be able to justify images of children in their possession.
- Avoid making images in one-to-one situations.
- Avoid taking images of pupils using personal mobile phones.

5. Record-Keeping and Retention of Records

When a disclosure of abuse or an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer has been made, no matter how low level, our madrasah must have a record of this. These records are maintained in a way that is confidential and secure, in accordance with our Confidentiality policy and Data Protection Legislation.

Records should include:
- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- a clear, detailed and robust chronology must be maintained
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

Muslim Education Centre will maintain child protection files until a pupil reaches the age of 25 years. Child protection files will only be destroyed when the pupil reaches their 25th birthday.

Our files are stored and disposed of in line with GDPR protocols, local and national retention policies.

5. Children who may be particularly vulnerable

It is vital that children receive the right help and support at the right time to address unmet needs and identify risks to prevent issues from escalating.

To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- disabled or have special educational needs
- living in a domestically abusive situation
- affected by parental substance misuse
- asylum seekers
- regularly absent from school
- attending alternative provision or subject to a managed move
- living away from home (frequent movers)
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- living in temporary accommodation
- living a transient lifestyle
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race,
- ethnicity, religion or sexuality
- involved directly or indirectly in prostitution or child trafficking
- speakers of another first language
- children that are subject to a Child Protection Plan
- exhibit any changing behaviours that cause concerns
- missing from education

Parents/carers must inform school if there are any changes to a pupil's living arrangement. The Madrasah has a mandatory duty to inform the local authority, via the First Response Team, if a child under the age of 16 years old lives with someone other than their parent, step-parent, aunt, uncle or grandparent for a period of more than 28 days. This is defined as being a private fostering arrangement.

5.1 Buckinghamshire Continuum of Need

Staff must maintain a good working knowledge of the Buckinghamshire Continuum of Need and any updates and how it should be used to inform decision making regarding a referral to First Response.

6. Recognising and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns - Procedure

6.1 Procedure for Staff:

In the event of a child disclosing abuse, staff must:

1. **Refer to the following guidance:**
    What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused

2. **Listen to the child**, allowing the child to tell what has happened in their own way and at their own pace. Staff must not interrupt a child who is freely recalling significant events. Remain calm. Be reassuring and supportive, endeavouring not to respond emotionally.

3. **Not ask leading questions.** Staff are reminded to ask questions only when seeking clarification about something the child may have said or to gain sufficient information to know that this is a safeguarding concern. Staff are trained to use TED; Tell, Explain, Describe.

4. **Make an accurate record** of what they have seen/heard using the madrasah's record keeping processes, recording; times, dates or locations mentioned, using as many words and expressions used by the child, as possible. Staff must not substitute anatomically correct names for body part names used by the child. Staff must initially make a verbal report to the DSL to alert them to the safeguarding/child protection concern. Staff must sign and date the report giving details of their role within school

5. **Reassure the child** that they did the right thing in telling someone.

6. **Explain to the child what will happen next** and the need for the information to be shared with the DSL.

7. **Share concerns with the DSL**. In the unlikely event the DSL and the deputy DSL are not available, staff are aware they must share their concerns with the most senior member of staff.

8. **If there is immediate risk of harm to a child, staff will NOT DELAY and will ring 999.**

9. **Monitor/accompany the child** at all times following a disclosure, until a plan is agreed as to how best they can be safeguarded.

6.2 Procedure for DSL

Following a report of concerns the DSL must:

a) Decide whether there are sufficient grounds for suspecting significant harm, in which case a referral must be made to First Response and the police if it is appropriate, referring to the guidance, When to call the Police . The rationale for this decision should be recorded by the DSL.

b) Madrasah should try to discuss any concerns about a child's welfare with parents/carers and, where possible, obtain consent before making a referral to First Response. However, in accordance with DfE guidance, this should only be done when it will not place the child at increased risk or could impact a police investigation. Where there are doubts or reservations about involving the child's family, the DSL should clarify with First Response or the police whether the parents/carers should be told about the referral and, if so, when and by whom. This is important in cases where the police may need to conduct a criminal investigation. The child's views should also be taken into account.

c) If there are grounds to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the DSL (or Deputy) must contact First Response by telephone immediately, in first instance and then complete the Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF).

d) If the child is in immediate danger and urgent protective action is required, the police must be called. The DSL must then notify First Response of the occurrence and what action has been taken.

e) If a child needs urgent medical attention, the DSL (or Deputy) should call an ambulance via 999. DSL to contact First Response; advice to be sought from First Response about informing parents/carers.

The DSL must record when the report was passed to them and what action was taken alongside any outcomes achieved.

The DSL must ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into consideration when deciding on next steps.

7. Multi-agency working

Muslim Education Centre know what the role of madrasahs is, as a relevant agency, within the three safeguarding partner arrangements and as required, will contribute to multi-agency working, in line with the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

When named as a relevant agency and involved in safeguarding arrangements, Muslim Education centre will co-operate alongside other agencies with the published arrangements.

Muslim Education Centre will contribute to inter-agency plans to offer children support of early help and those children supported through child protection plans.

Muslim Education Centre allow access for and work with children's social care to conduct or consider whether to conduct as section17 or section 47 assessment.

If, following a referral, the situation is not improving for the child, the DSL will follow the escalation process.

8. Supporting Staff

We recognise that staff becoming involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, could find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSL and to seek further support if necessary. This could be provided by the Headteacher or another trusted colleague, as appropriate.

9. Allegations against staff and volunteers

At Muslim Education Centre, we have our own procedures for managing concerns and/or allegations against those working in our madrasah. While it is uncommon for a child to make entirely false or malicious claims, misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events can occur. In some instances, a child might accuse an innocent party due to fear of naming the actual wrongdoer. Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that some professionals may pose a serious risk to pupils, necessitating action on every allegation.

- All school staff and volunteers must take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents/carers to be conducted in view of other adults.
- We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff notified of the allegation will immediately inform the Headteacher or the most senior teacher if the Headteacher is not present. If the allegation is made against the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors must be informed.

- At Muslim Education Centre, we recognise that an allegation may be made if a member of staff or a volunteer has:

    o Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
    o Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
    o Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children
    o Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children. This includes behaviours both inside and outside of school.

9.1 Procedure

1. **Report any allegations** against staff or volunteers should be reported to the Head teacher. If the allegation is against the Head teacher, the Chair of trustees is to be informed.

2. **The Headteacher/ Chair of Trustees will discuss with LADO** the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). This is to be done in all such occasions, and without delay.

3. The Headteacher/ Chair of Trustees must:

    a. **Follow all advice given by the LADO including how to manage the staff member or volunteer** against whom the allegation is made, as well as supporting other staff and volunteers within the workplace.

    b. **Follow all advice given by the LADO relating to supporting the child** making the allegation, as well as other children connected to the organisation.

    c. **Ensure feedback is provided to the LADO** about the outcome of any internal investigations.

4. The madrasah will follow the local safeguarding procedures for managing allegations against staff and volunteers.

> The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in the BSCP's policy on allegations against staff:
>
> BSCP Flowchart for Managing Allegations
>
> BSCP Procedures: Managing Allegations against staff and volunteers

5. Suspension of the member of staff against whom an allegation has been made needs careful consideration and, if necessary, we will consult with the LADO in making this decision.

6. Should an individual staff member or volunteer be involved in child protection, other safeguarding procedures or Police investigations in relation to abuse or neglect, they must immediately inform the Headteacher. In these circumstances, the school will need to assess whether there is any potential for risk of transfer to the workplace and the individual's own work with children.

10. Whistleblowing

Staff that are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation, and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount and that they have a duty to respond and inform the Designated Senior Lead.

The Madrasah's whistleblowing code enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place. Staff are required to familiarise themselves with this document during their induction period.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the Headteacher.

11. Induction

Our Madrasah endeavours to do our utmost to employ 'safe' staff by ensuring our recruitment, selection and pre-employment processes are in line with statutory guidance including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and 'Keeping children safe in education 2018' and these are contained within our 'Safer recruitment policy'.

12. Complaints

In instances where a pupil or parent expresses concern about inadequate practice towards a pupil that does not initially meet the criteria for child protection action, our complaints procedure will be invoked. The management of such complaints falls under the purview of the Head teacher.

Complaints raised by staff members are addressed through the Madrasah's comprehensive complaints, disciplinary, and grievance procedures, as outlined in our dedicated Complaints Policy.

13. Staff Training

It is imperative that all staff members undergo comprehensive training to enhance their confidence and competence in recognising potential signs of abuse and neglect, as well as understanding the appropriate steps to take when concerns arise.

New staff will receive training as an integral component of their induction process. Continuous professional development will be ensured for all staff, including the head teacher, with training updates scheduled at least every three years. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will receive more frequent updates, at least every two years, to maintain a high level of proficiency in their role.

Guidance for Safer Working Practice - a copy of this guidance is accessible (on school website) by all members of staff (paid or voluntary) to assist with appropriate behaviour and minimise allegations of professional abuse.

The non-executive committee, via the Head Teacher, must be satisfied that every member of staff has read and understood the guidance, with a signed declaration agreeing to operate in line with the best practice guidance.

> UK government guidance to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
>
> Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

14. Discriminatory Incidents

In line with the **Equalities Act 2010**, our **Equalities Policy** addresses all forms of discriminatory incidents.

15. Health and Safety

We recognise the importance of safeguarding pupils whilst in our care. Our Health and Safety policy reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children, both physically and emotionally, within the school environment.

Part of the safeguarding measures we have in place include the safe drop off and collection of pupils at the start and end of the school sessions (please refer to the drop off and collection policy).

Pupils who leave the site during the madrasah sessions (due to exceptional circumstances and with the school's permission and authorisation sought) do so only by being collected by an authorised adult. Madrasah should be notified by the parents/carers regarding whom they have authorised for this task.

In the event of a pupil going missing during the madrasah's session, we will carry out immediate checks to ensure the pupil is not on site, we will then make contact with the pupil's parents/carers and inform the police.

16. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The Muslim Education Centre recognises that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must only disclose personal information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis.

- All staff members will recognise that child protection matters demand a significant level of confidentiality. This commitment is not only out of respect for all individuals involved, but also to prevent the compromise of evidence if disclosed publicly.

- Any concerns should be exclusively shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, head teacher, or Chair of trustees (depending on the subject of concern). Subsequently, the designated person will determine who else requires this information and will distribute it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

- Staff must not keep duplicate or personal records of child protection concerns. All information must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and securely stored separate from the pupil records.

- All staff are aware they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being or that of another as they have a duty to share. Staff must, however, reassure the child that information will only be shared with those people who will be able to help them and therefore need to know.

- We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care (First Response) with their parent/carer's consent, unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with First Response on this point. We recognise that GDPR data Protection Act 2018 must not be a barrier for sharing information regarding safeguarding concerns in line with '**Working Together'**

  Gov Guidance Link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice

16.1 Storing Sensitive Information

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with Data Protection Act 1998 principles. Refer to the Madrasah's Confidentiality Policy for further information.

> Our approach to storing & sharing sensitive safeguarding information reflects the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Child Protection (BSCP) Multi Agency Information Sharing Policy
>
> BSCP Information Sharing

Briefly, our approach to storing sensitive child protection information is as follows:

- Information will be:
  - Processed for limited purposes
  - Adequate, relevant and not excessive
  - Accurate
  - Kept no longer than necessary
  - Processed in accordance with the data subject's rights

- Record of written information will be stored in a locked facility. Digital records will be password protected and only made available to authorised individuals.

- Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access, and sensitive information should not be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. If it is necessary to store child protection information on portable media, such as a CD or flash drive, these items will also be kept in locked storage.

16.2 External Access to Safeguarding Records

Records related to child protection are typically exempt from the disclosure regulations outlined in the Data Protection Act. Consequently, children and parents do not possess an automatic entitlement to access these records. In the event that a staff member receives a request from a pupil or parent to view child protection records, they should direct the request to the head teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

It is important to note that the Data Protection Act does not prohibit Madrasah staff from sharing information with pertinent agencies if such information can contribute to the protection of a child.

17.Online Safety

Madrasah are aware of the risks posed by children in the online world; in particular non-age appropriate content linked to self-harm, suicide, grooming and radicalisation.

All staff are aware of the school policy for **Online-Safety** which sets out our expectations relating to:

- Creating a safer online learning environment,
- Giving everyone the skills, knowledge and understanding to help children stay safe on-line, question the information they are accessing and support the development of critical thinking, inspiring safe and responsible use of mobile technologies, to combat behaviours on-line which may make pupils vulnerable.
- Use of camera equipment, including smart phones.
- Staff use of social media as set out in the **Staff Code of Conduct**.

The Madrasah has online filtering and monitoring systems in place to ensure children are safeguarded from potentially harmful online material. These systems are regularly monitored.

Madrasah will follow the advice as given by the government, to advise and support children with any online learning taking place at home to ensure this is done so safely.

All staff are aware of the school policy for **Online-Safety** whilst using the school's management system and teaching online via Zoom.

Cyber-bullying by children, via texts, social media and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

18.Mobile Phone Usage

- Students are not allowed mobile phones at the school.
- Visitors to our school are respectfully requested to turn all mobile devices off. This is a safeguarding measure for our pupils.
- Staff use of mobile technology whilst on site is set out in the **Staff Code of Conduct.**

19. Anti-Bullying

Anti-Bullying is referenced within the madrasah's Anti-bullying policy and measures are in place to prevent and respond to all forms of bullying, which acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

20. Child-on-Child Abuse

Muslim Education Centre believes that all children have a right to attend madrasah and learn in a safe environment free from harm by both adults and other pupils. We recognise that some safeguarding concerns can occur via child-on-child abuse.

- All staff operate a zero-tolerance policy to child-on-child abuse and will not pass off incidents as 'banter' or 'just growing up'.

- All staff recognise that child on child issues may include, but may not be limited to:
    o Bullying (including cyber bullying)
    o Racial abuse
    o Physical abuse, such as hitting, hair-pulling, shaking, biting or other forms of physical harm
    o Sexual violence and sexual harassment
    o Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
    o Abuse related to sexual orientation or identity
    o Sending nude or semi-nude images (consensual & non-consensual)
    o Emotional abuse
    o Abuse within intimate partner relationships

- All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. Incidents of child-on-child abuse must be reported to the DSL, who will refer to the appropriate agencies as required.

- The following will be considered when dealing with incidents:
    o Whether there is a large difference in power between the victim and perpetrator i.e. size, age, ability, perceived social status or vulnerabilities, including SEND, CP/CIN or CLA
    o Whether the perpetrator has previously tried to harm or intimidate pupils
    o Any concerns about the intentions of the alleged perpetrator
    o How to best support and protect the victim and alleged perpetrator as well as any other children who may have been involved or impacted.
    o Risk assessments and safety planning will be created in conjunction with external professionals.

- In order to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse taking place, as a madrasah we must:
    - Ensure that pupils know that all members of staff will listen to them if they have concerns and will act upon them
    - Have systems in place for any pupil to be able to voice concerns
    - Develop robust risk assessments if appropriate
    - Refer to any other relevant policies when dealing with incidents, such as the **Behaviour Policy** and/or the **Anti-Bullying Policy.**

- Reference will be made to the following government guidance and part 5 of the **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023** to ensure that all staff have an understanding of the serious nature of sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in madrasah.

21. Sexual Violence & Sexual Harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any age and sex**. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. This can occur online, face to face (both physically and verbally) and can take place inside or outside of madrasah. As set out in Part five of the KCSIE 2023, all staff maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'** and it is never acceptable.

All staff have a responsibility to address inappropriate behaviour in a timely manner, however seemingly insignificant it may appear.

All victims will be reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. No child will ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report or that they are creating a problem for our madrasah.

22.Cultural Issues

As a Madrasah, we are aware of the cultural diversity of the community around us and work sensitively to address the unique culture of our pupils and their families as they relate to safeguarding and child protection. This includes children at risk of harm from abuse arising from culture, ethnicity, faith and belief on the part of their parent, carer or wider community. Staff must report concerns about abuse linked to culture, faith and beliefs in the same way as other child protection concerns.

23. So-Called 'Honour' Based Abuse

Staff at our Madrasah understand there is a legal duty to report known cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and So Called 'Honour' Based Abuse to the police and they will do this with the support of the DSL. Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information - GOV.UK

Our Madrasah is aware of the need to respond to concerns relating to forced marriage and understand that it is illegal, a form of child abuse and a breach of children's rights. We recognise some pupils, due to capacity or additional learning needs, may not be able to give an informed consent and this will be dealt with under our child protection processes. Madrasah staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information. Contact 020 7008 0151 fmu@fco.gov.uk

- We are aware of the signs of FGM Female genital mutilation (FGM) | NSPCC
- We recognise both male and female pupils may be subject to honour-based abuse.
- Any suspicions or concerns for forced marriage are reported to the DSL who will refer to First Response or the police if emergency action is required.

24. Contextual Safeguarding and extra-familial harms

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding and responding to children's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. Extra-familial harm is linked to contextual safeguarding; these concepts refer to harms that occur outside of the family system often during the adolescent years.

- At Muslim Education Centre all staff recognise that pupils may encounter safeguarding incidents that happen outside of madrasah and can occur between children outside of this environment. We will respond to such concerns, reporting to the appropriate agencies in order to support and protect the pupil.

- All staff and especially the DSL, will consider the context of incidents that occur outside of madrasah to establish if situations outside of their families may be putting the pupil's welfare and safety at risk of abuse or exploitation, including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and serious youth violence.

- Children who may be alleged perpetrators will also be supported to understand the impact of contextual issues on their safety and welfare.

- In such cases the individual needs and vulnerabilities of each child will be considered. Further guidance can be found at: https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/

25. Serious Violence

All staff are aware of signs and indicators which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from madrasah, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or significant change in well-being or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Staff are aware that unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

At Muslim Education Centre, we are aware of the range risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending such as theft or robbery. Madrasah will take appropriate measures to manage any situations arising. Preventing youth violence and gang involvement - Practical advice for schools and colleges (publishing.service.gov.uk)

26. Domestic Abuse

All staff recognise that children who experience domestic abuse can suffer long lasting emotional and psychological effects. Staff must report any concerns using the school's safeguarding procedures.

27. Children who need a social worker (Child Protection and Child In Need Plans)

Staff recognise that children may have a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs and this can cause them to have barriers with attendance, behaviour, learning and mental health.

Muslim Education Centre will share information with a social worker for any child whom they are supporting to ensure decisions are made in the best interests of the child.

Informed decisions, will be made by staff with regards to safeguarding for those children who are being supported by a social worker.

28. Mental Health

At Muslim Education Centre, we are aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or may be at risk of suffering abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Staff recognise that traumatic adverse childhood experiences can have lasting impact throughout a child's life and this can impact on mental health, behaviour and education. Staff will report any mental health concern that is linked to a safeguarding concern to the DSL.

29. Prevent Duty

We are aware of the Prevent Duty under Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to protect young people from being drawn into terrorism. The DSLs and senior leaders are familiar with their duties under The Prevent Duty Guidance: Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

30. Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation of this policy

The policy will be distributed to all staff members at the start of the academic year. Staff meetings will serve as a platform for disseminating the policy, addressing any questions, and outlining key responsibilities.

Senior leaders will conduct an annual review of the policy. The designated person(s) will hold the primary responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the policy.

Appendix

Everyone who works with children has a duty to safeguard and promote their welfare. They should be aware of the signs and indicators of abuse and know what to do and to whom to speak if they become concerned about a child or if a child discloses to them.

The following is intended as a reference for madrasah staff and parents/carers if they become concerned that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

> **What is 'abuse'?**
> The Children Act 1989 defines abuse as when a child is suffering or is likely to suffer 'significant harm'. Harm means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development. Four categories of abuse are identified (shown below)

Categories of Abuse

Child abuse is a form of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical Abuse

A form of abuse which may involve, hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

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

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

Exploitation

Exploitation is a form of child abuse and may take a number of forms:

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

Taken from – **"Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022".**
Home Office – Serious Violence Strategy, April 2018 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is

required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Taken from **"Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022"**

Extremism

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

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)

Children's sexual behaviour ranges, from normal and developmental expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. The inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent behaviour can cause developmental damage and is referred to as "Harmful Sexual Behaviour" (HSB).