



Ministry  
of Defence

## DCS Directive 3.2.1

# Safeguarding Children and Young People in DCS Schools and Settings

DCS Dir V1.0 Jan 24

## General

Authorisation	Head DCS
Senior Responsible Owner	DCS Chief Education Officer
Point of Contact	DCS Safeguarding and Allegations Lead
Review Date	Apr 2025
Related Policy/Guidance	JSP 834 Safeguarding Children (Part 1)
	JSP 740 MOD Acceptable User Policy
	JSP 893 Procedure for Personnel and Posts Which Require a Disclosure Check
	JSP 342 Education of Service Children Overseas
	JSP 345 Applying Prevent Within Defence
	JSP 913 Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
	JSP 770 Tri-Service Operational and Non-Operational Welfare
	DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children
	DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education
	DfE Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework
	DfE 2015 Protecting Children from Radicalisation: The Prevent Duty

## Introduction

1. This document contains MOD policy and UK legislation for safeguarding children and delivers direction that must be followed in accordance with statute or policy mandated by Defence. It is the intention that this directive is reviewed annually or in response to higher policy or legislative changes. As directed by the Executive Committee of the Army Board, all new policies and services must wherever possible use inclusive language. This can usually be done by rephrasing sentences or, if this is not possible by using 'they' or 'their' rather than 'his' or 'her'. This policy directive complies with MOD's inclusive language guidance.
2. The owner of this directive is the Head of Defence Children Services (Head DCS). For further information or advice on any aspect of this publication or to provide feedback on content, please contact the DCS Safeguarding Team by emailing: [RC-DCS-HQ-SAFE@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-SAFE@mod.gov.uk)

## Aim

3. The aim of this directive is to provide DCS HQ UK and Schools and Settings with clear direction to ensure compliance with safeguarding legislation and MOD policy.

## Purpose

4. The primary purpose of this directive is to lay out the systems and responsibilities for safeguarding children and young people attending DCS Schools and Settings and enable staff to fulfil their professional duty, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, as outlined within the Department for Education (DfE) guidance; Keeping Children Safe in Education, issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002.

5. DCS works in accordance with Joint Service Publication (JSP) 834, Safeguarding Children and Young People Part One, which states all agencies who work directly with children should have in place safeguarding and child protection procedures.

## Scope

6. This directive applies to all staff, including those volunteering or working for or on behalf of DCS HQ, its Schools and Settings and specifically identifies the operational requirements and responsibilities on all individuals (in line with their contract of employment or other contractual arrangement). This directive also applies to extended school and off-site activities.

## Legislative Framework

7. DCS, so far as possible, adopts the statutory requirements in the legislation mandated by Defence, whilst recognising that these requirements have no legal force in overseas host nations. DCS Schools and Settings must accept the duties, wherever practicably possible, as follows:
  - Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (safeguard and promote the welfare of children)
  - Section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 (to comply with Early Years Foundation Stage Framework).
  - Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism).
  - Section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 (to report to the Police where they discover that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18).
  - Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006, including subsequent DfE updates.
  - The Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) which sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone (in the UK) is entitled to and contains the Articles and protocols of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (the Convention) that are deemed to apply in the UK.
  - The Equality Act 2010. DCS fully accepts and understands that certain children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist with respect to recognising or disclosing it.
  - The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) applies to all protected characteristics<sup>2</sup> and means that whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed, specific consideration is given to the equality implications of these.
  - **England.** Working Together to Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
  - **Scotland.** The National Guidance for Child Protection, Scotland.
8. In DCS locations overseas, the Chain of Command (CofC) can give effect to some requirements by way of standing orders for the safeguarding and welfare of children for whom the MOD has assumed responsibility. However, these standing orders will only apply to persons subject to Service law or civilians subject to Service discipline.

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<sup>2</sup> [Paragraph 87 of Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

## Definitions

9. For the purpose of this document, DCS uses the definitions and descriptions contained in legislation, policy and regulations that apply in England.
10. **Children.** All children (defined as those up to the age of 18) have a right to be heard and to have their wishes and feelings considered and all children regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal right to protection.
11. **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** means protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's mental and physical 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 outcome.
12. **Child in Need** is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health or development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services, or the child is disabled.
13. **Child Protection** refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.
14. **Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. See Annex A for categories and types of abuse.
15. **Neglect** is a form of abuse and is 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.
16. **Victim.** Not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, DCS will be prepared to use the term that a child involved feels most comfortable with.

## Responsibilities

17. Head DCS has overall responsibility for the delivery of effective, child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding practice, this includes:
  - Delegating all aspects of operational safeguarding management to Assistant Head DCS Specialist Support Services (SSS).
  - Bringing to the attention of Regional Command any significant case, theme or challenge that might affect DCS, its employees or children.
  - Ensuring sufficient resources are made available to ensure training and operational compliance.
  - Promoting and maintaining a vigilant safeguarding culture across DCS and all its activities.
  - Represent DCS at the Defence Safeguarding Partnership Board (DSPB).

### The Head Teacher

18. Where practicably possible, the Head Teacher should comply with the duties outlined in KCSIE.

### Setting Managers

19. The Setting Manager should perform their duties in accordance with the Early Years Foundation

Stage Statutory Framework (EYFS).

**In addition, all leaders shall:**

20. Model and embed a child centred, co-ordinated approach to any measures the School or Setting put in place to safeguard children.
21. Put systems in place for children to confidently report abuse.
22. Encourage staff to demonstrate professional curiosity and challenge.
23. Ensure this directive and related procedures are understood and implemented by all staff, embedded within induction processes and communicated outwardly to stakeholders.
24. Ensure all staff have access to regular safeguarding training and resources to fulfil their role.
25. Ensure that all staff have read and understood Part One of KCSIE and this directive, annually and tracked by the Head Teacher or Setting Manager.
26. Complete and submit all annual section 175 Self-Assessment and provide documentary evidence of as required.
27. Ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has appropriate time, training and resources to fulfil the role and that adequate cover in the DSL's absence is provided.
28. Ensure that the safeguarding reporting system<sup>3</sup> the safeguarding system used by DCS for all school and setting staff to record and manage safeguarding or welfare concerns relating to children. is fully operational, accessible to all staff and the only system for reporting and recording concerns pertaining to children.
29. Ensure all safeguarding briefs and updates issued by DCS HQ are communicated to all staff.
30. Ensure that there are effective arrangements in place for dealing with serious cases or risk to life, in line with JSP 834.
31. Actively monitor and review the implementation and effectiveness of safeguarding activity and internal processes.
32. Ensure safeguarding themes or trends are regularly communicated to the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP).
33. Contribute to Safeguarding Team data requests for submission to the DCS Quarterly Performance Risk Report (QPRR).

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<sup>3</sup> [My Concern](#)

34. In addition to the above, all **Head Teachers and Setting Managers** will ensure the relevant staffing ratios and staff qualification requirements are met, as outlined in the Statutory Framework for EYFS.
35. The **Head Teacher or Setting Manager** must ensure that each child in the Setting and/or Foundation Stage 1 is assigned a key person who is responsible for meeting the individual needs of the child in their care.

**DSL.**

36. Each establishment is to appoint a senior member of staff, with the appropriate level of authority as the DSL. The DSL takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the establishment, the duties of which are explicit within the post holders job description. The DSL is responsible for ensuring that they have understood the scope of their duties and work in accordance with MOD policy and DfE<sup>4</sup> documents:
37. The DSL is responsible for effective and vigilant safeguarding and child protection practice within the School or Setting (including online safety) and will be expected to:
38. Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so and contributing to the assessment of children in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children.
39. Refer cases of suspected abuse and neglect to the contracted social work provider and support staff who make referrals.
40. Where there is a radicalisation concern or a referral to the relevant agencies, support staff accordingly.
41. Where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child, inform the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Teachers Regulation Agency (TRA).
42. Keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals and understand the purpose of this record-keeping and relevant data protection legislation regulations, having due regard for the Data Protection Act 2018<sup>5</sup>
43. Work in accordance with the Information Commissioner Office guidance<sup>6</sup>, both within the school and setting, and with other schools on transfer including in-year and between primary and secondary education, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners.

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<sup>4</sup> [Statutory Framework of Early Years Education](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Data Protection Act 2018](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Information Commissioner Office guidance on information sharing](#)

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

44. Bring to the attention of contractors and visitors to the School or Setting the safeguarding arrangements, expectations for behaviour and how to report concerns.
45. Follow local procedures laid out by the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP), attend inter-agency, meetings and/or support other staff to do so.
46. Ensure any DSL's are trained to the same standard of the DSL and has the authority, confidence and capacity to take on delegated duties when necessary.
47. Ensure a copy of this directive and Part One (or Annex A, if appropriate) of KCSIE is provided to all staff at induction and yearly thereafter.
48. Provide regular safeguarding and child protection updates, including online safety (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as required, and at least annually, to all staff to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
49. Ensure all staff know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected.
50. Ensure staff know how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality, involving only those who need to be involved, such as the DSL (or a deputy) and contracted social care.
51. Inform the contracted social work provider when they are made aware of any child in need of protection arriving or due to arrive in their area of responsibility.
52. In overseas locations where emerging safeguarding needs occur that cannot be sufficiently supported, refer to the DCS Overseas Educational Supportability Team (OEST).
53. Instil and embed a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the School or Setting may put in place to protect them.
54. Understand the assessment process for providing Early Help and intervention, including criteria for action and local contracted social care referral arrangements.
55. Understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes.
56. Be alert to the specific needs and threats to those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers and understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners.
57. Understand and support the school with regards to Government requirements<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> [Chapter 1, Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)

58. Understand the unique risks associated with online safety and ensure all staff are confident that they possess the relevant knowledge and capability to keep children safe whilst they are online at school.

**All Staff**

59. Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who meets them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. Staff must always consider, what is in the best interest of the child. All staff will:

60. Be aware of systems within the School or Setting which support safeguarding, explained as part of each staff induction.

61. See, listen and respect the child, with the expectation that they are competent rather than not.

62. Know how to respond and act if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited, or neglected.

63. Read and understand this directive and Part One of KCSIE and sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year. Staff who do not directly work with children are to read Annex A of KCSIE.

64. Adhere to the staff code of conduct and Civil Service Code<sup>8</sup>.

65. Remain alert to potential indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

66. Attend the appropriate safeguarding and child protection training regularly (including online safety).

67. Record then report any concern for a child's welfare or safety to the DSL as soon as possible.

68. Maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality.

69. Have log in access to and attended training on the use of My Concern.

70. Teaching staff must work in accordance with Teaching Standards<sup>9</sup> which state that teachers (including Head Teachers) must safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

71. Provide a safe, child centred environment in which children can learn.

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<sup>8</sup> [Civil Service Code](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Teachers Standards 2012](#)



72. Be prepared to identify children who may benefit from Early Help. Further detail can be found in the Defence Early Help Strategy.
73. Never promise a child that secrets can be kept.
74. Reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
75. Never give the impression that a child is creating a problem by reporting any form of abuse and/or neglect.
76. Recognise that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.
77. Demonstrate professional curiosity and speak to the DSL regarding concerns about a child.
78. Remain aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues and children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face.

### **The School Governance Committees<sup>10</sup>**

79. (SGC) are expected to provide strategic challenge to school and setting senior leadership and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place are effective in the delivery of a robust approach to safeguarding. The SGC will facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that the safety and welfare of children underpin the ethos and culture. All members of the SGC will read KCSIE in its entirety and attend safeguarding training and relevant updates to ensure good understanding of safeguarding.
80. A member of the SGC must be appointed as the Safeguarding Member who is responsible for reporting any ongoing concerns to the Assistant Chief Education Officer. The Safeguarding Member is responsible for meeting with the DSL in onsite visits to review and discuss safeguarding practices. The SGC Chair and Safeguarding Member, will work with the DSL and Head Teacher to undertake an annual safeguarding self-assessment to ensure that all arrangements and functions within the school are carried out in line with section 175 of the Education Act 2002. Where an EYFS Setting is linked to the school, the oversight and responsibility of the SGC for safeguarding matters extends to the EYFS setting also.

### **Local Safeguarding Partnerships (Overseas)**

81. Overseas Commands are responsible for establishing an LSP for their Command area. Where practicably possible, DCS Schools and Settings, should comply with local command level procedures and interagency arrangements regarding child protection and safeguarding within the framework of JSP 834.
82. DCS Schools and Settings are responsible for ensuring that areas of concern or themes relating to contextual safeguarding or decisions/activity that will impact the community are communicated to the LSP. The LSP must be informed of all serious incidents relating to children in their location. Incidents that must be reported are:

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<sup>10</sup> QVS Commissioners work in accordance with the HMC Governance Manual but follow the principles and direction set out in this Safeguarding Directive.

83. When a child dies (including cases of suspected suicide), and abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

84. When a child has been seriously harmed and abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

### **Defence Safeguarding Partnership Board (DSPB)**

85. The DSPB provides the lead strategic Pan Defence partnership and is responsible for ensuring consistent and rigorous approaches to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within Defence. The DSPB works within the principles of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together to Safeguard Children. The DSPB is supported by a range of working groups, focused on coordinating the safeguarding system and has an overview of standards and governance arrangements for safeguarding across the MOD and works with all Commands.

### **Serious Incidents**

86. DCS adopts the definition of Serious Harm as outlined by the Government.<sup>11</sup> Schools and Settings must recognise that serious harm includes (but is not limited to) serious and/or long-term impairment of a child's mental health or intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. It should also cover impairment of physical health.

87. In the event of a serious incident, the Head Teacher or Setting Manager will follow the guidance as laid out in JSP 834 and JSP 375. Serious incidents must be reported to the LSP<sup>12</sup> within 24 hours of the incident to ensure that serious safeguarding incidents are reported to the AFFS Safeguarding Policy team who have responsibility, on behalf of the MOD, for oversight of such incidents and, for those that occur overseas, to report statistics relating to safeguarding children to the Department for Education.

### **Confidentiality and Sharing Information**

88. All staff should know how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality, only involving those who need to be involved, such as the DSL (or deputy) and the contracted social work provider. Sharing of information between practitioners and organisations is essential for effective identification, assessment, risk management and service provision. A DfE document<sup>13</sup> provides clear direction on how to share information to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people at risk of abuse or neglect.

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<sup>11</sup> [Chapter 4 Working Together](#)

<sup>12</sup> Head Teacher QVS is required to report serious incidents directly to DCS Chief Education Officer (CEO), within 24 hours of the incident, DCS CEO is responsible for informing the AFFS Safeguarding Policy Team.

<sup>13</sup> [Information sharing advice, practitioners safeguarding services](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Information sharing advice, practitioners safeguarding services](#)

90. DCS are aware of their obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) which place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.<sup>15</sup>
91. The Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) must not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe, in accordance with the Information Commissioner's Office guidance<sup>16</sup>.

## Child Protection

92. The Childrens Act 1989<sup>17</sup> provides clear legislative framework for child protection in England. DCS, wherever practicably possible, adopt the underlying principle that every decision, intervention and support offered is informed by the best interests of the child.
93. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff shall act in the best interests of the child at the earliest possible opportunity to prevent escalation to safeguarding or child protection.
94. Child protection is the term used to categorise a child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm if immediate support is not provided to reduce risks and safeguard the child.
- a. 'Harm' is the 'ill treatment or the impairment of the health or development of the child' (Section 31, Children Act 1989)
  - b. Harm can be determined 'significant' by 'comparing a child's health and development with what might be reasonably expected of a similar child'.
95. DCS Schools and Settings fulfil their safeguarding duties by working in partnership with other agencies including the contracted social work provider in their location, who have duties under the Armed Forces Act 1991. Referrals should be made to the local service as soon as practicably possible once concerns arise:
- British Forces Social Work Service (BFSWS) Cyprus
  - BFSWS Rest of World
  - BFSWS South Atlantic Islands

## Making a Referral

96. All safeguarding enquiries and concerns must be made to the MOD contracted social work provider for the location. Staff must make a referral to the provider and the relevant local Police force if they believe a child is suffering, likely to suffer from harm or in immediate danger.

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<sup>15</sup> Further information can be accessed in the ICO guidance [For Organisations](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Information Commissioner's Office guidance](#)

<sup>17</sup> [The Childrens Act 1989](#)

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

97. All contracted social work providers work with overseas commands and host nations to deliver guidance and support to personnel and their families. Where there is no coverage in location, personnel should contact DCS for advice by emailing [RC-DCS-HQ-WSW@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-WSW@mod.gov.uk).
98. DSLs should ensure that the threshold guidance for the relevant contracted social work provider is easily accessible to staff responsible for making referrals. Anyone can make a referral. The DSL must be informed as soon as possible if a direct referral has been made. All actions and information must be recorded onto My Concern.
99. When making a referral to the contracted social work provider or other external agencies, information will be shared in line with confidentiality requirements and will only be shared where necessary and safe to do so.
100. The DSL will be notified of the action that will be taken within one working day of a referral to the contracted social work provider being made. Where this information is not forthcoming, the DSL will contact the assigned social worker for more information.

### Parent/Carer Consultation

101. When sharing information about a child or family with the contracted social work provider or other agencies, the DSL should be transparent about concerns and seek to work cooperatively with parents or carers. It is best practice to inform parents or carers that a referral is being made.
102. Where a parent has agreed to a referral, this must be recorded. If, having taken full account of the parent's wishes, it is still considered that there is a need for a referral:
103. The reason for proceeding without parental agreement must be recorded. The contracted social work provider should be told that the parent has withheld her/his permission.
104. The parent should be contacted by the referring professional to inform her/him that after considering their wishes, a referral has been made.
105. Where a practitioner makes a referral without informing the parents or carers this must be recorded on My Concern, with reasons and confirmed in the referral to the contracted provider.
106. Referrals can be made without first informing parents or carers where to do so would place a child at risk. In this instance, the DSL should take advice from the contracted social work provider to ensure the child can be kept safe.

### The Police

107. Where there is risk to life or a crime has been committed, staff are to contact the host nation Police/emergency service where this exists. Where there is no Service Police and no suitable host nation Police presence, the Service Police Crime Bureau (SPCB) should be contacted via email at [OpsDesk@rmp.mod.uk](mailto:OpsDesk@rmp.mod.uk) or by telephone on 02392 28 5170/5180.
108. Staff should be aware that in some locations it is not appropriate to contact the Host Nation Police or local authorities, for advice and guidance personnel should contact the SPCB as above.

109. Under sections 17 and 22A of the Armed Forces Act 1991 (AFA 1991), the Service Police may, where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child would otherwise be likely to suffer significant harm, remove a child to suitable accommodation or take steps as necessary to ensure the prevention of the child's removal from any Service hospital, or other place where the child is being accommodated.
110. A Service Police officer has power under section 22A of the AFA 1991 to accommodate a child who is outside the British Islands where the Service Police officer has reasonable cause to believe that a relevant child would otherwise be likely to suffer significant harm. The maximum period that a child may be kept under such protection is 72 hours. These can be accessed in every location:
- Sovereign Base Authority (SBA) Police, Cyprus
  - Royal Military Police, including Special Branch (RMP), Rest of World
111. The DSL must ensure that children have an appropriate adult during Police investigations to support, advise and assist. The DSL or Head Teacher must inform a more senior officer if they consider that the rights of the child or young person are not respected.

## Indicators of Abuse

112. All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect (see Annex A of this directive) and understand that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of the School or Setting, inside and outside of home, and online.
113. All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.
114. All staff should exercise professional curiosity and know what to look for, to identify cases of children who may need help or protection. The Department for Education guidance,<sup>18</sup> provides more information on understanding and identifying abuse and neglect.
115. The DSL should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation.
116. In all cases, the DSL or DDSL should be consulted for advice but all staff working with children are expected to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. Further information can be found in KCSIE.

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<sup>18</sup> [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners](#)

## Safeguarding Disclosures

117. If a child discloses a safeguarding issue all staff are expected to:
- Listen and reassure them, allow them time to talk freely and not ask leading questions.
  - Stay calm and do not show shock or upset.
  - Use the words Tell, Explain or Describe (TED) to avoid drifting into an investigative interview.
  - Note the timing and record accurately on My Concern, using the child's own words.
  - Explain what will happen next and never promise to keep secrets.
  - Flag the concern to the DSL as soon as possible who will determine the next course of action.
  - Avoid informal conversations with other staff regarding the concern.
118. Setting Managers and staff working directly with children are expected to have read and understood the statutory guidance,<sup>19</sup> paying particular attention to Section 3: Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements.
119. Any action taken should be shared with the DSL as soon as is practically possible. Staff should not assume a colleague, or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

## Susceptible Groups

120. Some children are more susceptible to risks than others and may experience poorer outcomes if their needs are not met. Identifying and supporting individual children and young people within these groups is a priority for DCS Schools and Settings.
121. Groups include:
- a. Children with SEN and disabilities
  - b. Children with English as an Additional Language
  - c. Children Missing Education
  - d. Children who are 'in need' or who have 'child protection plans'
  - e. Children in care
  - f. Children at risk of sexual exploitation
  - g. Children at risk of female genital mutilation
  - h. Children placed for adoption or who are adopted
  - i. Young carers

## Safeguarding Issues

122. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately and speak to the DSL or DDSL. Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to the contracted social work provider (and if appropriate the Police) is made immediately.

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<sup>19</sup> [Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage](#)

123. Staff should maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act immediately and in the best interests of the child.
124. All Head Teachers, DSLs and staff who work directly with children are to have read the information on safeguarding issues.<sup>20</sup>

## Early Help

125. Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. DSLs should ensure they are familiar with the detailed guidance on how to identify children and families who would benefit from Early Help.<sup>21</sup>
126. Any child may benefit from Early Help, but all school and setting staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for Early Help for those children.<sup>22</sup>
127. If Early Help is appropriate, the DSL or DDSL should lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an Early Help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner.
128. Consent is required from parents for Early Help support. All cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to the contracted social work provider if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.
129. DSLs will ensure that the Early Help process is not time limited, but achievable goals are set in cooperation with the child, young person and their families to promote positive change in a timescale relevant to the age of the child.
130. The DSL and/or lead professional shall keep the case under constant review and the school will consider a referral to the contracted social care provider if the situation does not improve. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.
131. Questions or requests for advice relating to Early Help should be directed to the contracted social work provider or e-mail [RC-DCS-HQ-WSW@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-WSW@mod.gov.uk).

## Children with a Social Worker

132. DCS recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them susceptible to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

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<sup>20</sup> [Annex B of KCSIE](#)

<sup>21</sup> [Chapter one of Working Together to Safeguard Children.](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Section 20, KCSIE](#)

133. Where a child has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of their safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:
- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.
  - The provision of pastoral and/or academic support.
  - Looked-after Children (LAC) and previously looked-after children (PLAC)
134. The most common reason for children becoming looked after is because of abuse and/or neglect. The DSL is responsible for gaining the relevant information about a child's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents/those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements in addition to details of social workers and other relevant agency contacts.
135. A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable. The SGC, Head Teachers and Setting Managers should ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC safe.
136. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together, and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children.

## **Private Fostering**

137. The DSL will fulfil their duty to notify the relevant contracted social work service if they become aware a child is being privately fostered, in line with JSP 834.
138. A private fostering arrangement, outlined in the Children Act 1989, is one that is made privately for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18 if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. A close relative is defined as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt as well as half-siblings and stepparents; but not including cousins, great-aunts or great-uncles, great-grandparents.
139. Most children in private fostering situations are likely to be safe however, in some private fostering arrangements there are clear safeguarding issues and children and young people do not have appropriate safety or welfare arrangements or support. Where DSLs have concerns about the private fostering arrangements in place, they will immediately report this to the contracted social work provider.

## **Child on Child Abuse**

140. All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children at any age (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). And that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.
141. Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:
- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
  - abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')



- Physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment

142. DCS expects all staff to understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, particularly those that are abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours can lead to an unsafe environment for children, and in worst case scenarios, a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

## **Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)**

143. Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected, to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. HSB covers problematic, abusive, developmentally inappropriate, and violent sexual behaviour and may cause developmental damage.

144. When considering HSB, both ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years' difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them.

145. DSLs are expected to take the lead role and use professional judgement, taking support from other agencies, such as the Police, in all cases of HSB. Further guidance on how to respond to incidents of HSB can be found in Part 5 of KCSIE.

146. All concerns of this nature must be reported to the DSL and recorded on My Concern.

## **Sexual Violence**

147. DCS staff are expected to be aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse other children in this way and that it can happen both inside and outside of school.

148. When referring to sexual violence it is the context of child-on-child sexual violence<sup>23</sup> Further information on how to conduct risk assessments and to respond to concerns relating to incidents of sexual violence can be found in Part 5 of KCSIE.

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<sup>23</sup> [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)

## Consent

149. Staff are expected to understand that consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another and consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. In addition:
- A child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity.
  - The age of consent is 16.
  - Sexual intercourse without consent is rape.<sup>24</sup>
  - The PSHE association<sup>25</sup> provides advice on teaching consent at Key stage 3 and 4.

## Sharing of Nudes and Semi-Nudes

150. All incidents involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos, must be reported to the DSL, and recorded on My Concern. Staff must not possess or share the images.
151. DSLs are advised to be familiar with the detailed guidance created by the United Kingdom Council for Internet Safety:<sup>26</sup>
152. Consensual image sharing, especially between older children of the same age, may require a different response and may not be abusive but children need to know it is illegal, whilst non-consensual is illegal and abusive.
153. DSLs should ensure parents/carers and children are aware of ChildLine and The Internet Watch Foundation Report Remove<sup>27</sup> tool in cases where it is felt videos or images have been shared online.

## Harassment

154. Sexual harassment is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that covers a wide spectrum of behaviours and can occur online, offline and both inside and outside of school. Sexual harassment is likely to violate a child's dignity, make them feel intimidated, degraded, or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.
155. DSLs are expected to have read Part 5 of KCSIE and understand their role and responsibilities in preventing and responding to child-on-child sexual harassment.

## Allegations of Abuse Made against Other Children

156. Abuse between children will never be tolerated or passed off as "banter "or "part of growing up", as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.
157. Children can abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.

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<sup>24</sup> Further information can be found at [Rape Crisis England & Wales - Sexual consent.](#)

<sup>25</sup> [PSHE Association](#)

<sup>26</sup> [UK Council for Internet Safety: Advice for schools and colleges on responding to incidents of non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes](#)

<sup>27</sup> [The IWF Report Remove Tool](#)

158. The DSL should notify the parents or carers of all the children involved, if it is safe to do so. Care should be taken when deciding what information is provided about other children, and when. The DSL is expected to lead on any agency involvement such as Police or social work to ensure information sharing is consistent.
159. The DSL, along with any relevant agencies should meet with the victim, parents or carers, to discuss what is being put in place to safeguard them and understand their wishes in terms of what support they may need and how the report will be progressed.
160. The DSL should meet with the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers to discuss support for them, and what's being put in place that will impact them. Clear and documented record keeping is essential.

## **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

161. DCS recognise that children with SEND, certain health conditions or additional safeguarding needs can face further safeguarding challenges and are more likely to be abused than their peers. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group.
162. Any abuse involving children with SEND will require liaison with the DSL or DDSL and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).
163. Certain groups of children within a School or Setting are more likely to be identified as requiring extra support to meet their safeguarding needs; these could include:
  - Children with SEND
  - Care experienced children
  - Young carers
  - Children with mental health concerns
  - Children living in households where there are mental health concerns and/or substance misuse
164. DCS refers to the Government Advice<sup>28</sup> which sets out how all agencies and professionals should work together to ensure that the needs of disabled children are fully understood and addressed.
165. The reporting of concerns regarding children at additional risk should take place in accordance with the School or Setting's policy/directive. For complex cases which involve children with SEND, advice may be sought from the DCS EPSL & SEND Manager.

## **Mental Health**

166. Schools and Settings have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children. Mental health, in some cases, can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

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<sup>28</sup> [Safeguarding Disabled Children Practice Guidance 2009](#)

167. The SGC, working alongside the Head Teacher or Setting Manager, should ensure that clear processes are in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and seek further support.

168. If a School or Setting has a Mental Health Lead, it is expected that they are supported by the senior leadership team and work closely with other pastoral leads, including the SENCo.

## **Children Who are Absent from Education or Educated Otherwise than at School (EOTAS)**

169. The Head Teacher and DSL must ensure appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place to respond to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods as these can act as vital warning signs to a range of safeguarding issues.

170. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

171. Children Missing Education (CME)<sup>29</sup> are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving a suitable alternative education such as electively home educated.

172. Children who are missing are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation as well as becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Impacting both their current educational attainment as well as their future aspirations and opportunities.

173. Head Teachers and DSLs must work with parents, other agencies and Commands to ensure effective and timely information sharing to promote all children of compulsory school age receive suitable a suitable education whilst on overseas postings.

174. All school staff responsible for attendance have a duty to notify the Education Welfare Service if they are made aware of a child who is CME or at risk of CME to enable safe and appropriate support and tracking to be initiated.

175. Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions are children of compulsory school who are either:

- Struggling with low school attendance (below 60%)
- On part-time timetables
- Missed a significant portion of education at one time
- School refusing
- Head Teachers and DSLs should refer to the Attendance Policy and initiate the staged response to attendance and refer to the Education Welfare Service for immediate support. [RC-DCS-HQ-WSW@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-WSW@mod.gov.uk).

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<sup>29</sup> [Children Missing Education \(CME\)](#)

## **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

176. Both CCE and CSE 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.
177. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved for the purpose of exploitation. DCS staff should be aware that CSE and CCE can and does happen in locations outside of the UK and all staff should refer to KCSIE for further detail.

## **Domestic Abuse**

178. DCS complies with the principles in JSP 913 and aims to ensure that all cases of domestic abuse are notified to the contracted social care provider and/or Police. Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional.
179. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, wellbeing, development, and ability to learn.
180. DSLs are expected to work in partnership with Service Police, contracted social work providers and single welfare agencies to provide emotional and practical help to children. Where appropriate, the DSL should make a referral to the contracted social work provider if they are concerned about a child's welfare<sup>30</sup>.

## **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

181. All staff and the SGC Safeguarding member must undertake the Government training to be alert to the potential indicators that a girl may be at risk of FGM or has already suffered FGM.
182. DCS teaching staff must comply with Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, which places a statutory duty upon teachers to report to the Police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases may face disciplinary sanctions.
183. Teachers must report this personally, but in the case where they have valid, exceptional reason not to, should seek immediate advice from the DSL<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> More information can be found at [Home: Operation Encompass](#)

<sup>33</sup> Information on when and how to make a report can be found at [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information](#)

## Modern Slavery

184. Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support for victims is available in the UK guidance, [Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/modern-slavery-how-to-identify-and-support-victims).
185. Concerns that a child may be a potential victim of modern slavery or human trafficking should be immediately referred to the Police and the Contracted Social Work Provider to ensure the child is safe. As first responders, these agencies will be responsible for making further necessary referrals.

## Concerns Relating to Extremism and Radicalisation

186. DCS are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism', this duty is known as Prevent. The purpose of Prevent is to safeguard and support people who are vulnerable to radicalisation; a process through which a person comes to support terrorism and ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
187. DCS staff are directed to follow JSP 345: Applying Prevent within Defence in all circumstances where there are concerns that a child is vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.
188. To comply with the Prevent duty, schools must show evidence of:
- Productive co-operation with the Police and social care providers
  - Co-ordination through existing multi-agency forums
189. All staff must undertake Prevent Duty training<sup>32</sup> and understand their role in reporting any concerns relating to radicalisation. The Head Teacher or DSL are responsible for making Prevent referrals.
190. In addition, DSLs must also ensure that they have read and are familiar with the guidance contained within The Prevent duty: An introduction for Those with Safeguarding Responsibilities<sup>33</sup>

## Online Safety

191. All DCS staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline.
192. The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:
- Content (being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content)
  - Contact (being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users)
  - Conduct (online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm)
- Commerce (risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams)

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<sup>32</sup> [Prevent Duty Training](#)

<sup>33</sup> [The Prevent duty: an introduction for those with safeguarding responsibilities.](#)

193. An effective approach to online safety empowers a School or Setting to protect and educate children and staff and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.
194. Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing their whole school approach to safeguarding and related policies and procedures. Further information is contained within KCSIE.
195. Setting Managers work in accordance with the direction contained within the statutory of Early Years Framework and should consider the DfE guidance<sup>34</sup>

## **Filtering and Monitoring**

196. DCS Schools and Settings have in place robust filtering and monitoring IT systems and will, as close as is practicable, follow the Government guidance<sup>35</sup> to reasonably limit children's exposure to the risks from IT systems.
197. The SGC and Head Teacher or Setting Manager should ensure that the School or Setting has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and review their effectiveness at least annually, whilst ensuring that the leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.
198. SGC and Head Teachers/Setting Managers should consider the number of and age range of their children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often they access the IT system along with the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks whilst looking to the effectiveness of blocking harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.

## **Photography & Images**

199. All Head Teachers and Setting Managers must ensure that images are recorded and stored securely, in line with the DCS Social Media Directive. Non-school issued or personal devices must not be used to capture or record images of children or School/Setting activity.
200. Informed, written consent from parent/carers must sought in the admissions process and the names of children whose images are being used in any published material should be removed. On admission, parental consent is requested for images and recordings of their children can be used for legitimate reasons. Where a photograph is used, the children are not named without direct parental consent.

## **Personal Devices & Acceptable Use of Technology**

201. Many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile networks and are therefore, whilst at school, able to sexually harass, bully, and control others via their mobile and

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<sup>34</sup> [Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations](#)

<sup>35</sup> [Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges](#)

smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups) and view and share pornography and other harmful content.

202. The Head Teacher or Setting Manager is responsible for ensuring that the School or Setting has a clear policy on the use of mobile and smart technology and all staff are expected to reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with parents.
203. Head Teachers and DSLs, in accordance with the DfE's guidance<sup>36</sup> have the power to search children's phones if they find due cause for concern. DSLs, Head Teachers and Setting Managers should familiarise themselves with the additional guidance and conditions on the powers contained within KCSIE.
204. All staff must be made aware of the restrictions placed up on them with regards to the use of private mobile phone and cameras and sign to comply with the acceptable use of the internet in school, use of the school's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology. All staff are to adhere to JSP 740: MoD 'Acceptable User Policy' which makes clear that online conduct is covered by the expectations of the Civil Service Code of Conduct<sup>37</sup>.

## Recording

205. Concerns about a child's welfare and the actions that are taken should always be recorded in writing. Records should include clear and explicit recorded agreement about who will take what action, that no further action will be taken and why. Records should be managed in accordance with JSP 441: Information, Knowledge, Digital and Data in Defence.
206. Head Teachers and Setting Managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff recognise that clear, appropriate recording is essential in terms of accountability and allows for the greater protection of both children and staff, from Early Help to child protection. Lack of information about circumstances can impact a child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.
207. All DCS staff are expected to comply with the direction outlined in KCSIE and ensure all safeguarding records include:
- A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
  - Details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
  - A note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
  - The DSL shall ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content within it is shared.
  - All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded. 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.
  - If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the DSL.

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<sup>36</sup> [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#)



208. DSLs are to ensure that staff do not:

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

209. Head Teachers and Setting Managers must adhere to the duties outlined within the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR and subscribe to the DfE departmental advice on Information sharing<sup>38</sup>. And recognise that child protection information is not a barrier to sharing information but is an obligation to work to professional standards of data management.

## My Concern

210. Records will demonstrate a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of who is responsible for follow up actions and timescales for reviews. The DSL is responsible for ensuring all staff are up to date with the My Concern training and have access to their own account. Paper based recording is not used unless in extreme circumstances.

211. For transparency, parents/carers are to be informed via the website or induction materials that My Concern is used by the School or Setting to securely record and monitor all welfare, child protection and safeguarding concerns.

212. A body map will be completed as part of the My Concern record if injuries have been observed.

## Transfer of Records

213. The DSL is responsible for ensuring all safeguarding records are transferred in accordance with data protection legislation to the child's subsequent school as soon as possible.

214. The DSL is responsible for ensuring all transferred in safeguarding records are considered and included on My Concern<sup>39</sup>. The DSL is responsible for confirming the information is received and has been read and key staff are made aware of relevant information as required.

215. If a child for whom the school has, or had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their file is forwarded as soon as possible, securely, and separately from the main pupil file.

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<sup>38</sup> [Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers 2015.](#)

<sup>39</sup> My Concern module 7 provides detailed guidance on how to safely transfer concerns.

216. To allow the new School or Setting to have support in place when the child arrives, this should be within 5 days for an in-year transfer, or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. A confirmation of receipt should always be obtained. It is the responsibility of the DSL to ensure the following information will be recorded on the admissions register by the School Business Manager:
- The name of the new school
  - The date on which the pupil first attended, or is due to attend, that school
217. For a child where there are previous or ongoing safeguarding concerns the DSL will follow up with the receiving school via email to ensure the child has arrived.
218. In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, the DSL is responsible for speaking to the receiving DSL and provide information to enable them to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child and ensure they have support in place for when they arrive.
219. The DSL is expected to work closely with parents and carers to ensure that the child understands the arrangements in place, are effectively supported, and informed of where additional support can be accessed.

## **Safeguarding and Supportability**

220. Where a child is moving to a DCS School or Setting, the DSL will be responsible for sourcing information and ascertaining the child's support needs, supported by the SAFE and/or WSW team, if there is an indication of Local Authority Children Services involvement.
221. If DCS need to contact a local authority to fully understand and assess a child's needs, and a parent does not consent for this sharing of information, the assessment of support needs cannot be completed. The parent will be advised of the possible impact this will have on their proposed accompanied posting overseas.

## **Allegations against those in a position of trust**

222. DCS on behalf of the DSPB is responsible for ensuring records are kept of all allegations of child maltreatment made against MOD personnel (including volunteers) who have direct supervisory contact with those who are under 18 years of age. This information is processed and held in accordance with Defence Policy for Information Management and with UK GDPR and DPA regulations.
223. If staff have concerns or allegations about someone in a position of trust (including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor), posing a risk of harm to children, the Head Teacher or Setting Manager are to be notified as soon as possible.
224. Where a conflict of interest occurs in reporting a concern or allegation or if the concerns relate to the Head Teacher or Setting Manager, the Assistant Chief Education Officer (ACEdO) should be notified. The ACEO will then follow the procedures set out JSP 834 and contact the Defence Allegation Designated Officer (DADO) Service.

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

225. The Head Teacher or Setting Manager must be informed if anyone working or volunteering in the School/Setting has:
- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
  - Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
  - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
  - Behaved or may behave in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children
226. If there is an immediate threat to the safety of children, young people or staff the local Police force must be contacted immediately.
227. The Head Teacher or Setting Manager are responsible for ensuring all staff involved are aware of their duty to maintain strict confidentiality throughout the allegation management process. Notification forms can be gained by contacting [RC-DCS-HQ-DADO@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-DADO@mod.gov.uk)

### Low Level Concerns

228. The SGC and Head Teacher or Setting Manager should ensure the staff code of conduct, behaviour policies and safeguarding procedures are implemented effectively and ensure that appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to facilitate a whole organisation approach to dealing with low level concerns.
229. It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher or Setting Manager to ensure that staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing the expected, appropriate behaviours from inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour, in themselves and others.
230. All low-level concerns, relating to DCS staff, volunteers or contracted staff, should be shared with the Head Teacher or Setting Manager in the first instance. Staff should be empowered to share any low-level safeguarding concerns, including self-referral, where, for example, staff have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.
231. The Head Teacher or Setting Manager should be the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low-level concerns, although it is recognised that depending on the nature of some low-level concerns the DADO Service should be consulted for advice and guidance [RC-DCS-HQ-DADO@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-DADO@mod.gov.uk).
232. Low-level concerns which are shared about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers and the relevant contact within Command or, where appropriate the Chair of the LSP, so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified. This information should also be shared with the DADO Service.
233. If there is uncertainty as to whether the information which has been shared about a member of staff as a low-level concern meets the harm test threshold, the DADO Service should be consulted.
234. Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the School or Setting should decide on a course of action, either through its Civil Service Misconduct procedures or

where a pattern of behaviour moves from a low-level concern to meeting the harm threshold, in which case it should be referred to the DADO Service.

235. Schools can decide where low concern records are held, but they must be kept confidential, securely and comply with the DPA 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). It is for the Head Teacher or Setting Manager to decide how long information is retained, but it is recommended that it is at least until the individual leaves DCS employment. Further advice on how records containing sensitive, personal information are to held, should be sought from [RC-DCS-HQ-IHUB@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-IHUB@mod.gov.uk)
236. Head Teachers and Setting Managers should give due consideration to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies could be revised, or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.<sup>40</sup>

## Abuse of Position of Trust

237. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship or engage in sexual acts with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity in the real or digital worlds between a member of the school staff and a child under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if the pupil is over the age of consent. Any such concerns are reported to the Head Teacher or DSL immediately.

## Whistle-blowing

238. Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. DCS follows the guidance of the MOD Whistle Blowing Policy. The designated Whistleblowing Support Service can be accessed on 0800 161 3665 (STD) or +44 1371 85 4881 (Overseas) for independent advice and guidance.

## Safeguarding Training

239. The Head Teacher or Setting Manager is responsible for ensuring all staff access the required training as laid out in the Safeguarding Training Matrix in Part 1 of JSP 834 and KCSIE.

### All staff

240. All staff, volunteers and SGC members shall undertake safeguarding training at induction, including whistle-blowing procedures, My Concern and online safety to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect. All staff should receive safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

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<sup>40</sup> Head Teachers and Managers may wish to consider [Developing and implementing a low-level concerns policy: A guide for organisations which work with children.](#)

### **Prevent**

241. All staff will undergo training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

### **Level 1**

242. All staff are required to complete initial training within two weeks of commencing employment.

### **Level 2**

243. All staff and SGC members are to attend Level 2 safeguarding training within 12 weeks of commencing employment/their role, in addition to undertaking the online FGM and Prevent training. This training must be updated annually.

### **Level 3**

244. DSLs and Senior Leadership staff are required to undertake advanced training prior to commencing the role. This training must be updated every 2 years to extend knowledge. In addition, knowledge and skills are built upon at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through webinars-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments).

## **Safer Recruitment**

245. The SGC, Head Teacher or Setting Manager should ensure that those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training. Further information on training can be gained from the DCS Safeguarding Team.

246. JSP 893: Procedure for personnel and posts which require a disclosure check, sets out the MOD's policy on conducting safer recruitment checks for personnel who are part of or associated with the MOD community (MOD civil servants, contractors, volunteers), to aid the safeguarding of children and adults.

247. DCS work alongside Defence Business Service (DBS) for UK Based Civilians (UKBC) appointments and Overseas Commands for locally employed civilians (LECs).

248. Head Teachers and Setting Managers are responsible for ensuring recruitment practices for all staff and volunteer cohorts are carried out in line with JSP 893 and KCSIE part three, as closely as is practicable.

## **Single Central Record (SCR)**

249. All DCS Schools and Settings are required to hold and maintain an SCR to demonstrate all mandatory pre-onboarding and safer recruitment checks have been carried out on all staff, volunteers, frequent visitors and members of the SGC.

250. The SGC Chair should ensure that regular checks and monitoring of the SCR are being carried out by the senior leadership team.

251. The Safeguarding Team holds the responsibility of conducting SCR audits for all DCS Schools and Settings.

## Checking the Identity and Suitability of Visitors

252. Visitors are required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of the School or Setting and are expected to read the safeguarding information prior to signing into the premises. All visitors must wear a visitors badge or lanyard and refrain from using any personal devices.
253. The Head Teacher or Setting Manager is responsible for ensuring the appropriate checks are carried out prior to entry. All other visitors, including visiting speakers, should always be accompanied by another member of staff.
254. Head Teachers or Setting Managers should not invite into the School or Setting any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise pupils or staff.

## Use of School Premises

255. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on a range of organisations, including schools and educational settings to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children<sup>41</sup>.
256. Where services or activities are provided separately by another body using the school premises, the Head Teacher or Setting Manager should seek written assurance that the organisation concerned has appropriate procedures in place about safeguarding children and all relevant safeguarding checks have been made in respect of staff and volunteers.
257. The Head Teacher or Setting Manager reserves the right to cancel or delay the use of the premises if the individual or organisation fail to provide original evidence of appropriate checks to the school's satisfaction.

## Disclosure and Barring

258. Head Teachers and Setting Managers are expected to ensure the necessary Government Disclosure and Barring (DBS)<sup>42</sup> checks are undertaken and comply with the MOD requirement, under JSP 893. DBS checks must be renewed every three years. DCS does not recruit at risk.
259. Head Teachers and Setting Managers are responsible for ensuring checks, such as The International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) or relevant Police checks are sought for any staff who have lived or worked in any other country beyond a six-month period, prior to onboarding.
260. If a disclosure reveals that an applicant is prohibited from seeking or working with children, it is an offence for a person to apply for or accept any work in a position that includes Regulated Activity, and the Police must be informed without delay of the individual's attempt to seek employment.
261. It is an offence for DCS to knowingly offer work in a position that includes Regulated Activity to an individual who is disqualified from working with children or to fail to remove such a person from such work. DCS fully comply with their duties as an employing authority.

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<sup>41</sup> DCS cannot apply for checks for external agencies using the premises.

<sup>42</sup> [Disclosure and Barring Service - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service)

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

262. All Head Teachers and Setting Managers are expected to have read and understood the criteria and procedure for making a barring referral.<sup>43</sup>
263. Further support can be sought via the Safeguarding team [RC-DCS-HQ-SAFE@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-SAFE@mod.gov.uk).

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<sup>43</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/barring-referrals> or <http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/protectionservices/referralprocess.htm>

**Annex A to  
DCS Safeguarding Policy Directive**

<b>Categories and Types of Abuse</b>	
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	This includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	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 children 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 the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. Emotional abuse 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.
<b>Children living with Domestic Abuse</b>	Children in this situation can suffer emotional and psychological maltreatment <sup>44</sup> . Detailed direction and guidance on Domestic Abuse is laid out in JSP 913: Whole force policy on Domestic Abuse.
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	A form of abuse which involves forcing or enticing a child or young person 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 (e.g. rape, buggery 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, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
<b>Child Sexual Exploitation<sup>45</sup></b>	This is a form of sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or</li> <li>b. for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.</li> </ul>

<sup>44</sup> Section 31, The Children Act (1989)

<sup>45</sup> DfE non-statutory guidance for Child Sexual Exploitation (2017)



OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

<p><b>Neglect</b></p>	<p>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. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).</li><li>b. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.</li><li>c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers).</li><li>d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.</li></ul>
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