



Gillingham Football Club

Safeguarding Children Policy

Approved by	Version	Issue Date	Review Date	Contact Person
	1	November 2018	November 2019	Geoff Wellard
	2	June 2019	June 2021	Geoff Wellard



Policy statement and principals

Gillingham Football Club (GFC) is committed to providing a safe and positive environment for everyone involved in its services and activities. The Club takes its extended moral and legal duty of care very seriously in relation to children and young people. We seek to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and to protect them from harm or abuse when they engage in any activities conducted under the name Gillingham Football Club. This policy is one of a number in the Club's safeguarding portfolio.

This policy is promoted to all new staff, volunteers and participants and via the Club website. It is also included in the staff handbook.

Child protection statement

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff and volunteers are consistent with those of Medway Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

Policy principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, ability, culture, race, language, religious beliefs, sexual or gender identity, have equal rights to protection
- Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to respond positively in response to any concerns, suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- Children, volunteers and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support
- Staff and volunteers with roles and responsibilities for children and young people will be subject to appropriate safe recruitment checks and safeguarding training
- GFC staff and volunteers of the Club will receive appropriate learning and training opportunities to ensure that they can make informed and confident responses to safeguarding issues
- GFC is committed to providing a safe and positive environment for all children and young people to participate in the sport to the best of their abilities for as long as they choose to do so

Policy aims

- To provide all staff and volunteers with the necessary information to enable them to meet their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities
- To promote consistent good practice
- To demonstrate the Club's commitment to safeguarding children

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 have the best outcomes.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering, significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the Club, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

DSO refers to the designated safeguarding officer at the Club

Child includes everyone 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 legal guardians.



Safeguarding legislation and guidance

The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004 Children and Families Act 2014
- Criminal Justice Act 1988
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Serious Crime Act 2015 Counter terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2017
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015

Roles and responsibilities

Key personnel

The designated safeguarding officers (DSO) for safeguarding are:

Academy Designated Safeguarding Officer – Rob Peck (01634 350126) rpeck@priestfield.com

GFC School Designated Safeguarding Lead – Lisa Darren (01634 623 420) ldarren@priestfield.com

Matchday Designated Safeguarding Officer – Gary Newman (01634 300000) gnewman@priestfield.com

The Senior Safeguarding Manager is:

Geoff Wellard

Contact details: email: gwellard@priestfield.com

Tel: 01634 350126

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):

The designated Safeguarding Officer has primary responsibility for managing and reporting safeguarding concerns and for putting into place and monitoring policies, procedures and daily practice to safeguard children and adults at risk in the organisation.

Duties and responsibilities

- Working with others within the organisation to create a positive, child-centred environment
- Ensure staff working in their area of responsibility are DBS checked, have signed a self-declaration and have access to the appropriate policies and guidance concerning safeguarding.
- Maintain the Single Central record for all staff in their area of responsibility
- Play a lead role in developing and establishing the organisation's approach to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk
- Manage cases of poor practice and abuse reported to the organisation



- Maintain accurate, confidential and up-to-date documentation on all cases of safeguarding and child protection and report where required in line with GDPR regulations
- Manage referrals to children's social-care services, LADO, the police, the EFL and FA as and when required
- Central point of contact for internal and external individuals and agencies
- Represent the organisation at external meetings related to safeguarding
- Coordinate the dissemination of policy, procedures and resources throughout the organisation
- Provide advice and support to all staff, volunteers and associates of the organisation in relation to safeguarding concerns and queries
- Advise on the organisation's training needs and the development of its training strategy; provide training where appropriate
- Play a lead role in maintaining and reviewing the organisation's implementation plan for safeguarding and protecting children
- Ensure safeguarding standards are met and maintained
- Keep own knowledge and skills up-to-date
- Encourage good practice by promoting and championing the safeguarding policy.

The Senior Safeguarding Manager:

The senior safeguarding manager has primary responsibility for managing and reporting safeguarding concerns and for putting into place and monitoring policies, procedures and daily practice to safeguard children and adults at risk in the organisation.

Duties and responsibilities

- Represent and regularly report to the Board on safeguarding policies, procedures and practices within the organization,
- Report to the Board regularly on organizational safeguarding and Duty of Care matters, including highlighting areas of risk/concern, identifying areas of poor practice/areas for improvement, and providing analysis of numbers and types of safeguarding concerns/disclosure, complaints, and bullying incidents within the organization
- Ensure that Designated Safeguarding Officers have adequate time and resources to fulfil the requirements of their role as well as access to training relevant to the role
- Ensure that all policies relating to safeguarding and welfare are signed off by the Board annually or when required due to a change in legislation or practice
- Working with others within the organisation to create a positive, child-centered environment
- Play a lead role in developing and establishing the organisation's approach to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk
- Manage cases of poor practice and abuse reported to the organisation
- Maintain accurate, confidential and up-to-date documentation on all cases of safeguarding and child protection and report where required in line with GDPR regulations
- Manage referrals to children's social-care services, LADO, the police, the EFL and FA as and when required
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- Provide advice and support to all staff, volunteers and associates of the organisation in relation to safeguarding concerns and queries
- Advise on the organisation's training needs and the development of its training strategy; provide training where appropriate
- Play a lead role in maintaining and reviewing the organisation's implementation plan for safeguarding and protecting children
- Ensure safeguarding standards are met and maintained
- Keep own knowledge and skills up-to-date
- Encourage good practice by promoting and championing the safeguarding policy and procedures.



Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct 8

Good practice includes:

- treating all with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- maintaining a child focus and involving children and young people in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour by all
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in children's behaviour and to signs of negative impact, abuse, neglect and exploitation
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding the Club's child protection policy, staff behaviour policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances of some children and other issues of diversity (including disability and communication/learning differences) lead to an increased risk of abuse
- sharing all concerns about a child's safety and welfare to the DSO without delay, or, if necessary directly to police or children's social care

Abuse of position of trust

All staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards children is unacceptable and that their conduct towards them must be beyond reproach.

Staff must understand that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual or intimate relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is deemed consensual. This means that any sexual activity between those in a position of trust and a young person under 18 may be a criminal offence and would be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children may be at increased risk of harm or abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to recognise concerning behaviour or to accept that abuse can occur. To ensure that all children involved in Club activities receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to those who are:

- disabled or have communication and language differences
- young carers
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs
- asylum seekers
- living away from home
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- living in temporary accommodation
- live transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender identity or sexuality
- at risk of sexual exploitation
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- at risk of forced marriage
- at risk of being drawn into extremism.



This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages when appropriate and accessible formats for children with communication support needs.

Responding to allegations, disclosures or concerns

All staff, volunteers and players have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of children and to take appropriate steps to ensure that suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to quickly and appropriately. It is not the responsibility of anyone within the club to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. It is never an option to do nothing if you become aware of concerns. These should be shared with the appropriate designated individuals or agencies without delay so that advice can be sought and appropriate action taken. It is however recognised that an individual may need to respond to a situation immediately and prior to such contact if the nature of the suspicion or report is putting the child concerned in immediate danger.

Raising concerns about a member of staff or a colleague

Staff who are concerned about the behaviour of a colleague towards a child 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. The Club's whistleblowing code enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the DSO. Complaints about the DSO should be reported to the Senior Safeguarding Manager. The LADO will be notified of any concerns relating to staff and the Club's Designated staff will consult with the police and local authority children's social care as appropriate. Useful contact details are listed at the end of this policy.

Staff may also report their concerns directly to the LADO, children's social care, the police or the NSPCC if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action. Where there is a complaint against a member of GFC staff then one of the following may occur:

- A criminal investigation led by the Police
- A child protection investigation led in a multi-agency approach by the Local Authority
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation led by the club, which may also involve The Football Association

The club will delay an internal disciplinary or misconduct investigation while a criminal or local authority investigation takes place.

Historical Allegations against staff

All concerns will be taken seriously by GFC and responded to positively irrespective of when they arose. Evidence demonstrates that historic concerns may indicate current risks and therefore the Club encourages anybody with concerns to report them directly to the Police or Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Please see the club's Whistleblowing policy.

Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at the Club, or historical allegations will be reported to the police and/or LADO, FA and EFL.

Staff training

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs and indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff and Board members will receive a briefing during their induction, which includes the Club's safeguarding policies and procedures, staff behaviour policy, reporting and recording arrangements, and details for the DSO. All staff, including the DSO, SSM and Board will receive training that is regularly updated. All staff



working directly with children will be required to attend an FA safeguarding course (managers, club, officials, medics and other support staff) and coaches will be required to undertake the FA coaches' safeguarding children course ('How we support' level 1 workshop) or the UK Coaching Safeguarding and Protecting Children workshop. Training should be refreshed at least every three years. All staff will also receive safeguarding updates via email, e-bulletins, website access and staff meetings throughout the year.

Safer recruitment

Our Club complies with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2016 and DfE 2018) and the LSCB by carrying out the required checks including the take up of references and verifying the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history. The Club's Staff Recruitment policy and procedures set out the process in full and can be found on our website. All staff engaged in any way in activities involving substantial and unsupervised responsibilities in relation to children, young people and adults at risk are required to have a Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) and will not be allowed to work in any unaccompanied capacity until clearance has been received by the Club's DSO.

Volunteers

Volunteers, will undergo DBS checks commensurate with their role and responsibilities in the Club, their contact with children and adults at risk and the supervision provided to them. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised.

Contractors

The Club checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS with barred list checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during times where children/adults at risk are on site.

Site security

Visitors to the Club, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. All visitors are expected to observe the Club's safeguarding and health and safety regulations.

Off-site arrangements, trips and visits

All extended and off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. Where Club activities are provided by and managed by the Club, our own child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities in partnership with or on behalf of the Club we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures. When our children are involved in off-site activities facilitated or organised by the Club, including day and residential visits and work-related activities, we will check that effective safeguarding and child protection arrangements are in place.

Staff/children/adults at risk online and electronic communication

The Club provides advice to staff and volunteers regarding their personal online activity and electronic communication. GFC has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with participants and service users (children/adults at risk). Staff found to be in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action and/or internal/external investigation.

Child protection procedures

Recognising abuse

To ensure that our children are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.



Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone. Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

Bullying

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause anxiety and distress. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures

Taking action

Any child in any family and in any organisation could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”.

Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary call 999
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSO, definitely by the end of the day
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only - do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern
- seek support for yourself as these issues almost always have an emotional impact.

If you are concerned about a child's welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a child may be subject to harm or abuse. These concerns may arise as a result of issues within Club activities or outside of the Club environment. Their behaviour may have changed, they may show signs of confusion or distress, or physical indicators may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff should give them the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK or if they can help in any way. Staff should record these early concerns and report them to the DSO. If the child does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below and discuss their concerns with the DSO.

If somebody discloses to you

It takes a lot of courage for anybody to disclose that they are being abused and there are even greater blocks for children and young people. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive. If a child talks to a member of staff about anything that indicates a potential risk to their safety or wellbeing, **the staff member will, at the appropriate time, let the child know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to someone who can help or advise (the DSO).** The point at which they state that this is a matter for personal and professional judgement. During their conversations with the child staff should:

- allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and not overreact
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’
- not be afraid of silences
- **under no circumstances** ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings, or what does their mother think about it. It is fine to say ‘do you want to tell me what has happened?’ or ‘Can you describe what you mean by [quote something they have said]?’ in order to clarify what has caused them distress or harm
- at an appropriate time tell the child/adult at risk that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on to the Club’s safeguarding lead to get advice and support
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. If the child is upset and initiates the contact themselves, this should be recorded and reported



- tell the child what will happen next
- report verbally to the DSO themselves (never assume the child or someone else will or has done so)
- provide reassurance, but false promises of confidentiality should never be made.
- complete a written record and hand it to the DSO as soon as possible
- seek support for themselves as managing concerns always has an emotional impact

Notifying parents

The Club will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a child with their parents/legal guardian. This must be handled sensitively and the DSO will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the child. Therefore, if the Club believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff will understand that safeguarding issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the person and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence or any subsequent investigation.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSO and/or Senior Safeguarding Manager. That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However any member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.

Safeguarding information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Information sharing is guided by the following rules and principles*:

1. neither data protection legislation and guidance or human rights law are barriers to sharing information in the interests of safeguarding
2. be open and honest
3. seek advice (from designated people e.g. DSO or statutory agencies)
4. share information with consent where possible
5. always consider safety and wellbeing
6. the information shared is necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure
7. a record must be kept of your actions, decision & reasons for it

**Information sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers. HM Gov. March 2015*

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share.

Records of concern and other written information will be stored in a locked facility with restricted access and any electronic information will be stored in a protected file, transferred securely and only made available to appropriate individuals.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the DSO/SSM.

The Club's confidentiality and information-sharing policy is available to parents and young people/adults at risk on request.

Referral to children's social care

The DSO will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The child (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's social care if they believe independent advice and action is necessary to protect a child.



Reporting directly to child protection agencies

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- the situation is an emergency and the DSO and SSM are unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the child's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

Peer on peer abuse

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the Club's anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a child's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures.

Peer on peer abuse can take many forms, including:

- **physical abuse** such as biting, hitting, kicking or hair pulling
- **sexually harmful behaviour/sexual abuse** such as inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault
- **sexting**, including pressuring another person to send a sexual imagery or video content
- **teenage relationship abuse** - defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, perpetrated against a current or former partner
- **initiation/hazing** - used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as sports team or school groups by subjecting them to a series of potentially humiliating, embarrassing or abusing trials which promote a bond between them
- **prejudiced behaviour** - a range of behaviours which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless or excluded and which relates to prejudices around belonging, identity and equality, in particular prejudices linked to disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual identity.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Different gender issues may be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse, for example girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

At our Club, we take the following steps to minimise or prevent the risk of peer on peer abuse.

- We will seek to promote an open and honest environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them.
- Induction processes are used to provide a moral framework outlining codes of conduct, acceptable behaviour and stressing the effects of bullying.
- Staff will endeavour always to create surroundings where everyone feels confident and at ease in the Club.
- We will ensure that Club activities are well supervised by appropriate and qualified staff and volunteers.

All allegations of peer on peer abuse should be passed to the DSO immediately. They will then be investigated and dealt with as follows.

- **Information gathering** - children, staff and witnesses will be spoken with as soon as possible to gather relevant information quickly to understand the situation and assess both the impact and whether there was intent to cause harm.
- **Decide on action** - if it is believed that any young person is at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made to children's social care. The DSO will then work with children's social care to decide on next steps, which may include contacting the police.
- **Inform parents** - as with other concerns of abuse, the school will normally seek to discuss concerns about a child with parents. Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the child and so if the Club believes that notifying



parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

Supporting those involved

The support required for the child who has been harmed will depend on their circumstance and the nature of the abuse. Support could include counselling, mentoring, the support of family and friends and/or support with improving peer relationships or some restorative justice work.

Support may also be required for the child that exhibited harmful behaviour. We will seek to understand why the child acted in this way and consider what support may be required to help the child change behaviours. Once those needs have been met, the consequences for the harm caused or intended will be addressed with them in partnership with parents and external agencies as required.

Related safeguarding portfolio policies

This policy should be read alongside our other Club safeguarding policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Photography and digital images policy
- Whistle blowing policy
- Complaints policy
- Anti-bulling procedures
- Staff and Volunteers Code of Conduct
- GDPR Policy
- Transport Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Tours and Events Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safer Recruitment policy
- Host Families policy
- Changing Facilities policy
- Scouts Policy



Sharing Concerns and Reporting Contact Details

All concerns should be recorded as soon as possible. Records should include the date, time relating to the welfare of any child, whether these concerns arise outside of or within Club activities, should be shared and advice sought without delay. Wherever possible, please have as many relevant details to hand e.g. full name, date of birth and address of child, siblings and parents; full details of the concern etc. but do not let a lack of detail block you from reporting.

The following contact numbers are provided for the reporting of concerns:

GFC Designated Safeguarding Officer's

Academy Designated Safeguarding Officer – Rob Peck (01634 350126) rpeck@priestfield.com

GFC School Designated Safeguarding Lead – Lisa Darren (01634 623 420) ldarren@priestfield.com

Match day Designated Safeguarding Officer – Gary Newman (01634 300000) gnewman@priestfield.com

Senior Safeguarding Manager – Geoff Wellard (01634 350126) gwellard@priestfield.com

Local Authority Designated Officer:

The Medway LADO sits within the Safeguarding Unit and is accountable to the Safeguarding Manager Children, and Families.

The LADO is supported by a LADO Business Support Officer who undertakes the administrative duties of the LADO role.

The Medway LADO telephone number: 01634 331 307 or 01634 331 126

EFL Safeguarding Manager:

Alexandra Richards

Tel: 07792 284740

Email: arichards@efl.com



Gillingham FC

Club Safeguarding Children Policy

Appendix 1 – Safeguarding in specific circumstances

Extremism and Radicalisation (The prevent duty channel)

Since 2010, when the Government published the 'Prevent' strategy (the key prevention aspect of Contest), there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from extremism. There have been several occasions, both locally and nationally, in which extremist groups have attempted to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to hold extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

GFC values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs and ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both children and teachers have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. GFC is clear that exploitation and radicalisation is viewed as a safeguarding concern and must be dealt with accordingly.

ALL staff at The GFC School and Academy must complete Prevent and Channel training as part of and will receive regular briefings.

Forced Marriage and Honour-based violence

A 'forced' marriage is distinct from a consensual 'arranged' marriage because it is without the valid consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. A child who is forced into marriage is at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Information about a forced marriage may come from the child themselves, of the child's peer group, a relative or member of the child's local community or from another professional. Forced marriage may also become apparent when other family issues are addressed, e.g. domestic violence, self-harm, child abuse or neglect. Forced marriage may involve the child being taken out of the country for the ceremony, is likely to involve non-consensual/under-age sex and refusal to go through with a forced marriage has sometimes been linked to 'honour killing'. Honour-based violence is an ancient cultural tradition that encourages violence towards family members who are considered to have dishonoured their family.



It is rooted in domestic violence and is often a conspiracy of family members and associates, meaning victims are a risk for their parents and families.

Staff should respond to suspicions of a forced marriage or honour-based violence by alerting the DSL who will make a referral to Children's Social Care and if the risk is acute, to the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team. School staff should not treat any allegations of forced marriage or honour-based violence as a domestic issue and send the child back to the family home. It is not unusual for families to deny that forced marriage is intended, and once aware of professional concern, they may move the child and bring forward both travel arrangements and the marriage. For this reason, staff should not approach the family or family friends, or attempt to mediate between the child and family, as this will alert them to agency involvement. Further information and advice can be obtained from the Forced Marriage Unit www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage or 02070080151 and the Honour Based Violence Helpline 0800 599 9247. Again, as with all concerns, please alert the DSO as soon as possible.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (sometimes referred to as female circumcision) refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Female Genital Mutilation affects girls particularly from North African countries, including Egypt, Sudan, Somalia and Sierra Leone.

Staff should be alert to the following indicators:

- The family comes from a community that is known to practice FGM
- A child may talk about a long holiday to a country where the practice is prevalent
- A child may confide that she is to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a special occasion
- A child may request help from a teacher or another adult
- Any female child born to a woman or has a sister who has been subjected to FGM must be considered to be at risk, as must other female children in the extended family

It is illegal in the UK to allow girls to undergo FGM either in this country or abroad. It is important to note that all staff have a duty to report personally any concerns they may have about girls at risk of FGM to the police. Any concerns must be immediately shared with the DSO and staff aware that they have a mandatory duty to report known cases of FGM.

Bullying (all forms including cyber bullying)

We understand that bullying, including cyber-bullying, is harmful to children. We have an anti-bullying policy that sets out our aim of ensuring no child becomes a victim of any form of bullying and the work that we carry out to foster an environment where bullying behaviour is known to be unacceptable. We will always take seriously any reports of bullying and respond appropriately. We understand that bullying may take different forms and may include, as examples, racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic and biphobic behaviours. All staff are clear about the



Protected Characteristics, as prescribed in the Equality Act 2010 (see our equality policy). Any such reported or observed incident will be dealt with in accordance with our anti-bullying policy.

We recognise that children's use of the internet is an important part of their education but that there are risks of harm associated with its use. We have an online safety policy that addresses how we seek to minimise those risks and teach children how to stay safe when using the internet. We also recognise that all members of staff must always be mindful of the need to follow our policy of acceptable use of our IT equipment.

The potential dangers the internet can pose includes:

- Access to illegal, harmful or inappropriate images, video games or other content
- Unauthorised access to/loss of/sharing of personal information
- The risk of being subject to grooming
- The sharing/distribution of personal images without an individual's consent or knowledge
- Inappropriate communication/contact with others, including strangers
- Sexting
- Implications of geolocation
- Cyber-bullying
- An inability to evaluate the quality, accuracy and relevance of information on the internet
- The potential for excessive use which may have a negative impact on the social and emotional development and learning of the young person.

Material published by children and staff in a social context which is considered to bring the clubs reputation into disrepute or considered harmful to, or harassment of, another child or member of the organisation will be considered a safeguarding issue and a breach of conduct and behaviour and treated accordingly, as per behaviour, equality, anti-bullying and/or staff conduct policies/procedures.

Sexting

The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) have produced guidance on how to tackle sexting and 'youth produced sexual imagery' as sharing photos and videos online is part of daily life for many people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives.

This increase in the speed and ease of sharing imagery has brought concerns about young people producing and sharing sexual imagery of themselves. This can expose them to risks, particularly if the imagery is shared further, including embarrassment, bullying and increased vulnerability to child sexual exploitation.

Making, possessing and distributing any imagery of someone under 18 which is 'indecent' is illegal. The relevant legislation is contained in the Protection of Children Act 1978 (England and Wales) as amended in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales). Specifically, it is an offence to possess, distribute, show and make indecent images of children. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales) defines a child, for the purposes of indecent images, as anyone under the age of 18.



Staff should respond swiftly and confidently to ensure that children are safeguarded, supported and educated if they suspect any activity.

The response to these incidents should be guided by the principle of proportionality and the primary concern at all times should be the welfare and protection of the young people involved.

- All incidents involving sexting and youth produced sexual imagery should be responded to in line with the school's safeguarding system.
- The DSO should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff
- There should be subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate)
- Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm
- At any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately

Child Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation can take many forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for attention/affection, accommodation or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power within the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops. GFC attempts to identify young people who are vulnerable to, or at risk of, sexual exploitation and who need services and interventions to keep them safe. We will pass on any information about CSE issues affecting activity, for example concerns about adults hanging around, to the police.

Sexual Violence and Sexual harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It may occur through a single child or group of children sexually harassing or being sexually violent towards another child or group of children, it may happen both physically or verbally, online or offline. Evidence suggests that girls, children with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) and LGBT children are at greater risk. It is important that all disclosures are taken seriously, victims are supported and there is a clear message that it is never acceptable.

Any experience of sexual violence and sexual harassment is likely to have a significant impact on a child's emotional wellbeing and adversely affect their attainment. Staff are to report any concerns about a child to the designated safeguarding officer

Allegations from children against other children.

In most instances, negative conduct of children towards each other will be covered by our behaviour and anti-bullying policies. However, some allegations and peer on peer abuse may be of a more serious nature and raise safeguarding concerns. Allegations made against another pupil may include physical abuse (e.g. violence, particularly pre-planned; forcing the use of drugs or alcohol), emotional abuse (e.g. bullying, blackmail, extortion, threats, intimidation), sexual abuse (e.g. indecent exposure, touching, sexual violence and sexual harassment, sexting, forcing the watching of pornography) and/or sexual exploitation (e.g. photographing or videoing indecent acts).



GANGS

Across Kent, gangs are prevalent and children are vulnerable to gang membership or re-membership. It is also well documented that pupils suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people, under threat of violence.

MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST OTHER CHILDREN

All staff members treat this abuse very seriously and never consider it as 'banter' or part of growing up. When an allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern:

- The DSO should be informed
- A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances
- The DSO will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in both childrens' files
- If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police will be contacted at the earliest opportunity and parents informed (of both the pupil being complained about and the alleged victim)
- It may be appropriate to exclude the pupil being complained about for a period of time, as per our anti-bullying policies
- A thorough school investigation will take place in any case, using our internal procedures
- In situations where the DSL considers a safeguarding risk is present the Social Care Services must be consulted

Child Criminal Exploitation

The criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity; drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and areal areas, market and seaside towns. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, child criminal exploitation can affect any child under the age of 18. It can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual, there is usually some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. It can also involve force and/or enticement-cased methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Staff should raise the concern with the DSO as soon as possible and log any information relating to child criminal exploitation.

Homelessness

A pupil's welfare can be affected if they are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The DSO can assist families in getting them support; in addition to discussions and supporting letters that can be provided to the Local Housing Authority, it may be deemed necessary to make a referral to children's social care if the child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.



It should also be recognised in some cases 16 and 17-year olds could be living independently from their parents or carers, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Children's services will be the lead agency for these young people and the DSO will ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness includes household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviours as well as the family being asked to leave a property.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live.

Drug and Substance misuse

GFC recognises that young people are at risk from a range of both legal and illegal substances and that substance misuse is an increasing social problem that can have devastating consequences for individuals, their families and the community as a whole. The club is committed to the health, safety and welfare of children and will take action to help safeguard their well-being as well as providing support, advice and education about drugs and substance misuse as appropriate. The club will never condone the misuse of substances, and the possession or supply of illegal drugs, and it will be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

Children and the Court System

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There is guidance available on the government website that explains the process and support that are available for children.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following a relationship breakdown can be an extremely stressful time for the whole family. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool which parent/carer(s) may find helpful as it offers clear information in the dispute resolution service. Further information on the court system can be found at: <https://helpwithchildarrangements.service.justice.gov.uk/>

Child Employment

Only children over the age of 13 may be employed to do light work. Regulations determine the type of work and restrict the hours a child may be employed for. Children working in the UK who are still of compulsory school age are required to have a work permit in all cases; it is illegal for a child to work and not have a work permit, even if this is in a family business. Different regulations apply to children in entertainment, where children under thirteen may be licensed to perform in commercial performances under strict guidelines and controls. Further information on children in employment can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/child-employment>



Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately, without the involvement of a Local Authority, for the care of a child under the age of 16 years of age 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. Each party involved in the private fostering arrangement has a duty to refer it to the Local Authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to begin, and not to do so would be an offence. The club has a duty to inform social services if we become aware of a private fostering arrangement that has not been shared with the Local Authority.

Health and Safety

We have a health & safety policy which demonstrates the consideration we give to minimising any risk to the children when involved in club activities. This also includes alternate provisions, where the club is responsible for the safeguarding of pupils, eg. Tours and tournaments; risk assessments, site visits and a written statement is obtained from the provider stating that they have completed all the required vetting and barring checks that are necessary on their staff.

The club acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard all children in potentially vulnerable situations such as changing rooms, while also acknowledging the child's right to privacy. A professional judgement is made based on the age and the developmental needs of the pupils; appropriate supervision is achieved by staff being in close proximity to the changing room and pupils should be aware of this, knowing that adults will enter the room if necessary. Risk assessments are in place to ensure the safety of both pupils and staff members.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN'S FAMILIES

Children's Information

We recognise the importance of keeping up-to-date and accurate information about children. We will regularly ask all families to provide us with the following information and to notify us of any changes that occur:

- Names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives
- Names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility
- Emergency contact details
- Name and contact detail of the child's general practitioner
- Any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child

Confidentiality

Information about children given to us by the children themselves, their parents or carers, or by other agencies will remain confidential. Staff will be given relevant information only on a "need to know" basis in order to support the child if that is necessary and appropriate.



We are, however, under a duty to share any information which is of a child protection nature. We understand that this is in the best interests of the child and overrides any other duties we have regarding confidentiality and information sharing.

We have a duty to keep any records which relate to child protection work undertaken by us or our partner agencies and to ensure that these are kept apart from the main child record, stored securely and only accessible to key members of staff. We also have a duty to send copies of these records to any school to which the attends.

Referrals to other agencies

If we have a reason to be concerned about the welfare of a child we will always seek to discuss this with the child's family in the first instance. On occasion, according to the nature of our concern, it may be necessary for us to make an immediate referral to social care services when to do otherwise may put the child at risk of further harm either because of delay, or because of the actions of the parents or carers.

ADULTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Safer Recruitment

The club has a recruitment policy for the safe recruitment of staff

Supervision of Staff and the management of allegations against staff

We will always supervise staff and act on any concerns that relate to the safeguarding of children.

Our procedures for managing allegations of abuse against members of staff are simple and clear – the quick resolution of any allegation is an absolute priority. Put simply, allegations made should be reported straight away, normally to the designated safeguarding officer, designated safeguarding Manager, or unit director. The club must then involve the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if the allegations require investigation.

In response to an allegation, suspending the member of staff is not the default response, unless there is no reasonable alternative. If suspension is deemed appropriate, the reasons and justification will be recorded by the school's leaders (or proprietor) and the individual notified of the reasons.

Allegations that are found to have been malicious will be removed from personnel records and any that are not substantiated, are unfounded or malicious will not be referred to in employer references.

Children who have made malicious allegations are likely to have breached the clubs' behaviour policy and will receive an appropriate sanction.

The procedures for dealing with allegations should be applied with common sense. However, it is important that even allegations that appear less serious are followed-up.



Our procedure is:

1. The recipient of an allegation must report it to the designated safeguarding officer, Designated Safeguarding Manager or Unit Director as soon as possible and never try to investigate it themselves.
2. A record of the report must be made by the designated safeguarding officer, Designated Safeguarding Manager or Unit Director which must be timed, dated and include a clearly written name and signature
3. If the allegation is serious and credible and alleges that a member of staff has;
 - a) behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child,
 - b) possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
 - c) behaved towards a child/ren in a way that indicated he/she is unsuitable to work with children, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be informed on the same day
4. If unsure, call the LADO in any case to discuss the allegation
5. Such consultation in point 3/4 will enable the LADO and the Designated Safeguarding Manager to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action
6. If this leads to a decision that no further action is to be taken this decision and the reasons for it should be recorded by both the Designated Safeguarding Manager and the LADO. They should agree between them the information that should be put in writing to the individual about whom the allegation was made. Both should then consider the action that should follow in respect of that individual and also the person (or persons) who made the allegation
7. If it is decided that the allegation warrants further action the LADO will take this forward
8. The Designated Safeguarding Manager should inform the accused person about the allegation as soon as possible, but only after consulting the LADO about whether this is appropriate at this stage and what information can be given to the person
9. Consideration must be given as to whether it is necessary to remove the subject of the allegations from contact with children at the club, pending investigations and procedures arising from the allegation. Suspension should not be automatic, but should be considered if: a) there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, b) the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or c) the allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal
10. Any decision to suspend shall be taken only after consultation with the LADO. It will take into account the safety of the child or children involved and the impact on any enquiry
11. Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation should be dispatched within 24 hours, giving the reasons for the suspension. The person should be informed at that point who their named contact is within the organisation and provided with their contact details



12. The subject of the allegations (whether suspended or not) shall be: a) advised to contact her/his trade union or professional association, b) treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed, processes involved and possible outcomes, c) kept informed of the progress of the case and of the investigation, d) clearly informed of the outcome of any investigation and the implications for disciplinary or related processes and e) provided with appropriate support

13. The Designated Safeguarding Manager shall be responsible for continuing liaison with Medway's LADOs and all communication between the club and other agencies that may be involved in processes following an allegation

14. Confidentiality is essential and information about an allegation must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to:

a) protect children,

b) facilitate enquiries,

c) avoid victimisation,

d) safeguard the rights of the person about whom the allegation has been made and others who might be affected and

e) manage disciplinary/complaints aspects

15. If, following the conclusion of child protection processes, further enquiries are pursued for the purpose of disciplinary, regulatory or complaint investigation, they should be arranged in a way that avoids the repeated interviewing of children or other vulnerable witnesses.

The Medway LADO is...

01634 331 307 or 01634 331 126

For further information on the management of allegations against staff, please see our whistleblowing policy.

Dismissal and our duty to refer to the DBS

GFC is clear about its duty to refer a person who is deemed unsuitable to work with children to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS).

Specifically, we refer to the DBS any member of staff who:

- has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child
- has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that the individual has committed a listed relevant offence
- is dismissed or receives disciplinary action because of misconduct relating to a child
- leaves their employment during an investigation related to misconduct relating to a child



The DBS will then consider whether to bar the person. Referrals will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual.

We ensure that all staff are clear about the expectations we have of their behaviour towards all children and that any incident that falls below our expected standards will be dealt with appropriately, as per our staff conduct and disciplinary procedures.

Appendix 2

INFORMATION & GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

Below is a set of guidelines that staff should take on board when dealing with individual/small groups of children. It is important to be mindful at all times of your behaviour in relationship to individual/small groups of children and of the potential risk of an allegation.

Staff should take necessary precautions in order to minimise the opportunity for an allegation to be made against them. This is generally about exercising common sense, but all staff should specifically take note of the following:

- Whenever possible try not to be alone in a room with a child, regardless of gender. If you are on your own with a child, leave the door open and inform a colleague if possible. Always keep an appropriate distance between you and the child
- Do not engage in conversations about your personal life with children
- Keep boundaries very clear between you and children, particularly if the conversation involves relationships, emotions, and sexual content
- Do not exchange mobile phone numbers with children. If possible, do not have your mobile phone out when dealing with an individual child
- Do not accept children (or their family members) as 'friends' or links on social networking websites or mobile phone apps
- If a child wishes to disclose personal information to you, ensure that they understand that you cannot guarantee confidentiality. Do not probe a child about their personal life unless they approach you. Avoid giving advice to children about their relationships

Changing Rooms and Showering Facilities

- Where facilities are used by both adults and children at the same time there must be access to separate changing, showering and toilet areas where possible.
- Adult staff/volunteers must not change or shower at the same time as children and young people using the same facilities.
- When children use changing rooms, they should be supervised by two members of staff/volunteers. Older teenagers may not require any supervision however the club may wish to have an appropriately recruited adult within the vicinity of the changing facilities to ensure their welfare is monitored.



- If a child feels uncomfortable changing or showering in public then no pressure should be placed on them to do so. Instead, they should be encouraged to do so at home.
- The use of mobile phones and/or photographic equipment by club officials, members, parents and young people should be prohibited within areas where children and young people are changing/ showering.

Appendix 3

DEFINITIONS & CATEGORIES OF CHILD ABUSE

All children have certain basic needs, which include:

- Physical care and protection
- Affection and approval
- Stimulation and approval
- Discipline and control that is consistent and appropriate to age
- The opportunity to gradually acquire self-esteem, confidence, independence and responsibility that are age appropriate

Individual cases must always be treated on their own merits however in general terms the following definition should provide the bases for action under these guidelines: "A child is considered to be in need of protection when the basic needs of that child are not being met through avoidable acts of either commission or omission".

Before a child is placed on a Child Protection Plan a conference must decide that there is, or is a likelihood of, significant harm leading to the need for a plan. The following are used for the plan. They are intended to provide definitions as a guide; in some instances more than one category may be appropriate.

Neglect

The persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or extreme failure to carry out an important aspect of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Physical Abuse

Physical injury to a child including deliberately poisoning, where there is definite knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.



Sexual Abuse

The involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend and to which they are unable to give informed consent, or that violate the social taboos of family roles.

Emotional Abuse

Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. All forms of abuse involve some emotional ill treatment.

Neglect

Severe neglect is associated with major retardation of cognitive functioning as well as growth. It is recognised through a typical pattern of poor growth, poor hygiene, withdrawal and in extreme cases a pseudo-autistic state, all of which can rapidly reverse in alternative care.

Although neglect has one of the most pervasive effects on development and is one of the most frequent forms of abuse, it is an area which is frequently neglected by professionals. Like parents, professionals can feel overwhelmed and hopeless by large families living in squalid conditions.

Signs to look out for:

- Dirty unkempt appearance of child, in overall poor condition
- Thin wispy hair. Underweight child, diarrhoea may indicate poor nutrition
- An undernourished child may be unduly solemn or unresponsive, or may be overeager to obtain food
- An under-stimulated child may not reach expected milestones
- Behaviour and developmental difficulties that cannot be explained by clinical factors

Associated factors

Neglected children frequently come from homes where there is:

- A parent who is lonely, isolated, unsupported or depressed
- Poor inter-parental relationship / domestic violence
- A parent who is abusing drugs or alcohol
- A large number of children living in cramped or very poor conditions

Physical Abuse (Non accidental injury)

It should not be assumed that an injury to a part of the body normally vulnerable to accidental injury has necessarily been caused accidentally – it could be non-accidental. All injuries to children, which do not easily come into the category of normal bumps and scrapes, should be seen by a doctor.



Certain parts of the body are more commonly subjected to non-accidental injury. These include the upper arm, where a child may be gripped or shaken, the back, and the buttocks. Multiple injuries of various types, ages and location are common features of physical abuse.

Most non-accidental injuries leave marks on the body. PE teachers are therefore often key people in the identification of this form of abuse, as they regularly see the children partially dressed.

Signs to look out for:

- Children who show a reluctance to undress or to expose parts of their bodies should be monitored as children who may have suffered physical injury
- Unexplained absences
- Physical signs of injury
- Unexplained or confused accounts of how an injury occurred
- Explanation of an injury which appears to be inappropriate to the nature and age of the injury

Common medical/physical factors associated with physical abuse

BRUISING

- Facial bruising around the mouth and ears
- Groups of small bruises
- Black eyes without a forehead injury, particularly if both eyes are affected
- Weal marks or outline of bruising (e.g. hand mark)
- Bruising of soft tissue with no obvious explanation (most bruises occur on bony protuberances such as the temple or shin)
- Bruises on the back, back of legs, stomach, chest or neck
- Bruises or cuts to mouth or tongue (e.g. split frenulum)
- Pinch marks are found in pairs and may be seen on the back, buttocks, arms or cheeks

BITES

- Bites leave clear impressions of teeth and some bruising – they are never accidental
- Parents sometimes claim that bites have been made by other children or animals. It is therefore important to check the size and shape of the injury. If the impression is more than 3cms across it will have been caused by an adult or adolescent
- Bites can be inflicted almost anywhere on the body

BURNS AND SCALDS

- Children will sometimes suffer minor burns through hot irons etc., but it is uncommon for multiple burns to be caused accidentally
- A cigarette burn is characteristically round, but may have a tail when dragged against the skin, and is surrounded by an area of inflamed skin
- Cigarette burns can be found in groups and can be found on any part of the body
- Scalds from boiling water may result from lack of supervision, or non- accidentally



- A child is very unlikely to sit down willingly in very hot water; therefore he cannot scald a bottom accidentally without also scalding the feet
- Burns and / or scalds are particularly worrying as a degree of sadism may be involved when such injuries are inflicted

ASSOCIATED FACTORS

- Injuries not consistent with explanation given by parent (even if agreed by the child)
- Circumstances where parent delays seeking medical advice
- A history of repeated injuries or presentation to A&E
- Consent for a medical refused by parent
- Desire of a parent to attribute blame elsewhere
- Distant or mechanical handling of the child by the parent

Sexual Abuse

The traumatic effects of child sexual abuse can be far-reaching and enduring, impacting on a child's cognitive, behavioural and social development. The earlier the abuse occurs, the more adversely subsequent stages of development may be affected. The longer the abuse continues, the more extensive it is e.g. involving penetrative abuse, the greater the number of developmental stages that abuse continues through, the more disturbed the child is likely to be. Children who have suffered chronic long-term sexual abuse tend to have very negative feelings about themselves and all aspects of their relationships.

What is sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse can be one or more of the following:

- Rape – genital and / or oral intercourse
- Digital penetration or penetration with an object
- Mutual masturbation
- Inappropriate fondling
- Taking pornographic photographs or exposing the child to pornographic materials
- Forcing the child to observe others involved in sexual activities
- Sadomasochistic activities

Both boys and girls can suffer from sexual abuse. Both men and women can be perpetrators – boys and girls who disclose sexual abuse from a female perpetrator are often met with disbelief. It is therefore important to listen to what a child says without being judgemental. Abusers can be parents, friends, teachers, childcare workers, clergymen or strangers. Warning children about Stranger Danger should therefore only form part of any child protection programme.

Signs to look out for:

- A child who demonstrates inappropriate sexual interest and activity, through play or drawings
- Sexualised behaviour, masturbation and sex play which often leaves the peer group confused or embarrassed



- A child having excessive preoccupation with, or precocious knowledge of adult sexual behaviours
- A child who shows a marked fear of adults, usually men, but occasionally men and women
- A child who presents as depressed and where there may be instances of drug or alcohol abuse, suicide attempts or running away
- A child who suddenly starts to wet or soil
- A child who takes over the role of wife / mother within the family
- A child whose concentration and academic performance suddenly deteriorates
- A child who avoids medical examination or is reluctant to change for PE
- A child who has low self-esteem and few friends
- Aggressive behaviour from a normally quiet child, or withdrawn behaviour from a normally boisterous child
- Frequent unexplained absences or lateness
- Arson
- Pregnancy in young teenagers where the identity of the father is vague or unknown
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Signs of sexually transmitted infections and overall dishevelled appearance

Emotional Abuse

Emotional or psychological abuse can be defined as the destruction of the child's competence to be able to function in a social situation. The child may be denied appropriate contact with peers within or outside of school, and be forced to take on a particular role in relation to parents, which is detrimental to the child's ability to function appropriately in social contexts. This type of abuse is very difficult to identify as there are no physical signs – symptoms are usually apparent via a child's behaviour and demeanour.

It is important to note that the emotional / psychological abuse is present in all other forms of abuse, but this category is only used when it is the sole form of abuse.

Signs to look out for:

- A child may be inducted into a parental care-taking role and not be encouraged to be involved with appropriate play
- A child may be used as a parent's confidant to a degree that is harmful to the child's psychological development
- A child may be ignored, rejected or denigrated by a parent
- A child may be terrorised by a parent or others so that she / he is overly fearful and watchful
- A parent who is unable to be responsive to a child's emotional needs, who may be emotionally distant and / or excessively negative and hostile
- A child (usually of a mentally ill or disturbed parent) who is inducted into a parent's delusional state or paranoid beliefs
- A child who is cripplingly over-protected and not given freedom to act at an age appropriate level
- A parent who provides only conditional love with threats of withdrawal of love



Behavioural definitions are very difficult to quantify because a) most children experience some of these acts from time to time, and b) because the impact of a single or seldom occurring act of abuse will not have severe and harmful effects. The harm of emotional maltreatment results from the cumulative effects of repeated acts of psychological abuse.

Associated Factors

Children who suffer from emotional abuse frequently come from homes where there is:

- A mentally ill or disturbed parent
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- A parent who is socially isolated, unsupported or depressed, or conversely, a parent who has a very active social life with very little time or energy to give to child care
- A parent who has poor social skills, who may have learning difficulties and lack of knowledge about children's age appropriate needs
- A parent who has suffered severe abuse within her / his own childhood
- A household where there is 'adult on adult' domestic violence

Many parents who emotionally abuse their children are unaware that what they are doing is harmful. Because of their own life experiences they may have a distorted view of parenting and their role as a mother / father.



SAFEGUARDING KEY CONTACT INFORMATION

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION KEY CONTACTS

Club Designated Safeguarding Manager – Geoff Wellard (01634 350126) gwellard@prestfield.com

Academy Designated Safeguarding Officer – Rob Peck (01634 350126) rpeck@prestfield.com

GFC School Designated Safeguarding Lead – Lisa Darren (01634 623 420) ldarren@prestfield.com

Matchday Designated Safeguarding Officer – Gary Newman (01634 300000)
gnewman@prestfield.com