

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Contact details and websites

In School:

The School maintains a dedicated Safeguarding telephone line. The mobile phone will always be in the possession of the DSL or Deputy DSL on duty.

Safeguarding Role	Name	Position at the School	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Tania Davidson	Deputy Head Pastoral	01904 727614 07889 592414 tdavidson@queenmargarets.com dsl@queenmargarets.com
Deputy DSL	Claire Sheard	Senior Deputy Head	01904 727613 07889 592414 csheard@queenmargarets.com
Deputy DSL	Paula Edwards	Senior Sister	01904 727608 pedwards@queenmargarets.com
Deputy DSL (SIFLO)	Clarisse Bale	SIFLO Co-ordinator	01904 727605 cbale@queenmargarets.com
Head/ Deputy DSL	Nicola Dudley	Head	01904 727600

On the Board of Governors

Safeguarding Role	Name	Position at the School	Contact Details
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Sue King	Safeguarding Governor	0113 204 5708

Usually, the DSL or the Deputies will be the first point of contact for any Safeguarding concern. However, this does not preclude a member of staff making a referral to outside agencies if necessary

Contact details for outside agencies

Local Authorities

Outside Agencies	Contact Details
Where there are significant immediate concerns about the safety of a child, you should contact the police on 999	
North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board:	<p>Contact Us</p> <p>If you believe the situation is urgent but does not require the police, please call 0300 131 2 131 to make a telephone contact.</p> <p>Outside Office Hours (Monday – Friday / 9am-5pm) call 0300 131 2 131 to speak to the Emergency Duty Team.</p>
Duty Designated Officer for Selby District	01609 780 780
Deputy Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	01609 533 080 lado@northyorks.gov.uk
Customer Services Centre	<p>If your concern is outside normal office hours, you should contact the emergency duty team for North Yorkshire</p> <p>During Office Hours: By Phone: 01609 780780 Email: social.care@northyorks.gov.uk</p> <p>Outside Office Hours: Emergency Duty Team (for evenings, weekends and bank holidays): 01609 780780</p>
City of York Safeguarding Children's Board (CYSCB)	<p>Child protection and Safeguarding – City of York Council</p> <p>Contact MASH Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm: telephone: 01904 551900</p>

	<p>email: mash@york.gov.uk</p> <p>Contact MASH Early Help Team to make an early help referral or access advice: telephone: 01904 551900 email: earlyhelp@york.gov.uk</p> <p>Outside office hours, at weekends and on public holidays, contact the Emergency Duty Team telephone: 0300 131 2131 email: edt@northyorks.gov.uk</p>
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Note: This policy is made available to Parents via the School Website and hard copies will be supplied on request.

General Information

- Working Together to Safeguard Children website:
[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024:
[Keeping children safe in education 2024 - GOV.UK](#)
- Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for children in need
- Non-emergency or local Police Helpline: **101**
- Department for Education dedicated telephone helpline and mailbox for non-emergency advice for staff and governors: **020 7340 7264**

Arrangements for Safeguarding

The School will safeguard and promote the welfare of girls in the School in accordance with Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and in compliance with the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) September 2024.

As set out in Paragraph 107 - 114 of KCSIE 2024, this policy is consistent with and has been complied with reference to North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board's Guidelines and Procedures. The Policy is intended to ensure that the School contributes to interagency working in line with "Working Together to Safeguard Children" 2023, (HM Government's guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children).

This policy has been written in line with **Part D: Standard 8 (Safeguarding) of the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Boarding Schools (September 2022)**. NMS requires that the school ensures that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

In acknowledgement that the current threat from terrorism and extremism is real and severe and can involve the exploitation of vulnerable people, children and young people, including girls at the School the School maintains a dedicated policy to address the issue of tackling extremism and radicalisation - Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation (Prevent) Policy which should be read together with this policy and forms a subset of it.

In order to safeguard and protect children the school will have regard for the following guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024)
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024:
[Keeping children safe in education 2024 - GOV.UK](#)
 - KCSIE incorporates the additional statutory guidance, Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (September 2018)
[Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 - GOV.UK](#)
 - KCSIE, from September 2024, incorporates the (now withdrawn) DfE guidance Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
 - KCSIE's Annex B contains additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues, including, eg, children missing from education,

cybercrime, mental health, preventing radicalisation, and sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges.

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (WT) 2023
[Working Together to Safeguard Children - GOV.UK](#)
 - WT refers to the non-statutory but important advice: [Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers](#) May 2024
- Children Missing Education September 2024
[Children missing education - GOV.UK](#)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019, updated September 2021)
[Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education - GOV.UK](#)
- Prevent Strategy
 - Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales 2023 (Prevent) [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\) - GOV.UK](#)
 - In the first instance, ring 101- non-emergency Police Helpline or access the following webpage for details:
[Working with Individuals Vulnerable to Extremism](#)
 - Confidential Anti-Terrorism Helpline: 0800 789 321, or email counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk
 - The use of social media for on-line radicalisation (July 2015)
[The use of social media for online radicalisation - GOV.UK](#)
 - www.preventtragedies.co.uk
 - www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
- Forced Marriage
 - Forced Marriage Unit: 020 7008 0151 fmu@fco.gov.uk
- Mandatory Reporting of FGM
 - ***Since 2015, it has been mandatory for teachers to report to the police cases when they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has good reasons not to do so, they should still consider and discuss such a case with the DSL and involve Children's Social Care as appropriate.***
 - Ring 999 in the first instance
 - NSPCC FGM Hotline: 0800 028 3550.
 - [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information - GOV.UK](#)
- Human Rights Act 1998
 - [The Human Rights Act 1998 - GOV.UK](#)
- Equality Act 2010
 - [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#) and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

- It is important that governing bodies and proprietors are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UK GDPR place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure.

I. Legislation and Guidance Underpinning this Policy

This policy is written inline with the Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024) document.

This policy has been written in line with Part D: Standard 8 (safeguarding) of the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Boarding Schools (September 2022). NMS. requires that the school ensures that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The School will safeguard and promote the welfare of girls in the School in accordance with Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and in compliance with the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024) which is available here:

- [Keeping children safe in education 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

As set out in Paragraph 107 - 114 of KCSIE 2024, this policy is consistent with and has been complied with reference to North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board's Guidelines and Procedures. The Policy is intended to ensure that the School contributes to interagency working in line with "Working Together to Safeguard Children" 2024, (HM Government's guide to inter- agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children) which is available here:

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children - GOV.UK](#)

The Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) 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 specific rights applying to schools are:

- Article 3: the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment
- Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life
- Article 14: requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination, and
- Protocol 1, Article 2: protects the right to education

Being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of these rights, depending on the nature of the conduct and the circumstances

The Equality Act 2010 places obligations onto schools. Schools must not discriminate against students because of any protected characteristic. Whilst all protected characteristics are important, KCSIE places importance on how schools are supporting their pupils with regard to particular protected characteristics - including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race.

In acknowledgement that the current threat from terrorism and extremism is real and severe and can involve the exploitation of vulnerable people, children and young people, including girls at the School the School maintains a dedicated policy to address the issue of tackling extremism and radicalisation - Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation (Prevent) Policy which should be read together with this policy and forms a subset of it.

All staff should be familiar with the following policies and documents, which have an integral role in effective safeguarding in Queen Margaret's (QM) and should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Behaviour (Girls)
- Countering Bullying
- Staff Behaviour
- Access to Premises by People Outside the School
- Pupil Access to Risky Areas
- Pupil access to a person independent of the School Staff
- E-Safety
- Acceptable use of IT
- Taking, Storing and Using Images of Children
- Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation (Prevent)
- Recruitment (staff, volunteers and supply staff)
- Low Level Concerns
- SEND and EAL
- Missing girls
- Mental Health
- Attendance and Punctuality

This policy covers:

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[2.27 Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\) \(See also Annex B of KCSIE 2024\)](#)

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[2.29 Child Sexual Exploitation](#)

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2.1 Aims & Objectives

Queen Margaret's is committed to safeguarding children and young people and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment. The school aims to achieve a culture of safety, equality and protection where the school will endeavour to act in the best interests of all pupils. Adults working at Queen Margaret's are committed to promoting the welfare of all girls, regardless of age, special needs or disability, racial/cultural heritage, religious belief or sexual orientation. It is of paramount importance that the girls at QM feel safe, secure and free from any form of abuse.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024) as providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge; protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside, including online; 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 outcomes.

Every pupil should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse which, in this policy, means any kind of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, or beliefs. No child or group of children should be treated any less favorably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs.

The school is committed to the protection and promotion of the girls' welfare and providing an environment in which they may thrive and are encouraged to talk to staff about any worries they may have. The school will always assess the risks and issues in the wider community (contextual safeguarding) when considering wellbeing and the safety of our students. This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy forms a fundamental part of our approach to providing excellent Pastoral Care for all girls.

2.2 Responsibility

All of us, regardless of our role in the School, have a responsibility to protect girls from bullying, physical, sexual or emotional abuse and/or neglect and to report any suspicion of abuse of a girl at the school whether the alleged abuse is at school, at home or outside the school. Any report should be made to the DSL. Confidentiality is guaranteed to any member of staff who use the School's Low Level Concern Policy and reports suspicions of a colleague or other person on site or otherwise who has contact with QM girls. The School's Whistleblowing Policy reinforces that protection. The NSPCC runs a whistleblowing helpline on behalf of the government: 08088 005000.

All staff at Queen Margaret's are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. School staff are not expected or trained to diagnose mental health conditions but may notice behaviours that may be of concern and should therefore take immediate action by speaking with the DSL.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purpose of keeping children safe. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent where there is good reason to do so, and that the sharing of information will enhance the safeguarding of a child in a timely manner, but it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.

We take a child-centred approach and try to ensure that pupils have a voice and are able to express any concerns that they may have. We 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. We are reminded that **it could happen here** and that we must always take the concerns of pupils seriously. **Safeguarding trumps everything else** – we must without fail make time to listen to any pupil who shows signs of distress or wishes to confide in us.

We all have a responsibility to attend child protection training when requested to do so and to familiarise ourselves with this policy and its associated policies. All concerns should be shared promptly with the DSL (or Deputy DSL in their absence) either in person, by email or through the relevant section in CPOMS.

Referral of Low Level Concerns about staff behaviour are set out in the Low Level Concerns Policy.

2.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Board responsibility

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for QM appointed by the Board of Governors is the Deputy Head Pastoral, Tania Davidson; her telephone number is on the first page of this policy. She is supported by the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads Claire Rhodes, Nicola Dudley and Paula Edwards whose telephone numbers are also there. As senior colleagues they take part in strategic discussions and attend inter-agency meetings as necessary. Liaison with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board (NYSCB) and the Family Services Department is their responsibility. However, always remember, any member of staff may make a referral to Child Social Care if necessary.

Annex C of KCSIE sets out the role of the DSL as follows:

- Manage referrals
- Work with others
- Share information and manage the child protection file
 - Records should 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.
- Raise awareness
- Training, knowledge and skills
- Provide support to staff
- Understand the views of the child
- Hold and share information

The main responsibilities of the DSL are;

- To be the first point of contact for parents, girls staff and outside agencies on all issues concerning safeguarding
- To coordinate the safeguarding procedures as well as regular staff training in the School
- To promote and maintain a positive awareness of safeguarding for all School employees through training and other means, including defining the distinctions between Children in Need (s17) and Children at Risk (s47), and the necessity of Early Help strategies and local Early Help processes
- To ensure that the Deputy DSLs have at least the same level of Safeguarding training as the DSL

- To be responsible for the maintenance, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to safeguarding
- To liaise as necessary with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board and/or the City of York Safeguarding Children Board
- To take lead responsibility for online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place (as per post holder's job description)
- To provide guidance to all staff on how to respond and manage reports of sexual violence or harassment
- To advise the Head on any perceived risk of harm to pupils
- To inform the Governors on how members of staff may contribute to the Safeguarding Policy at Queen Margaret's School and to actively encourage members of staff to do so
- Ensure child protection files are kept up to date

Mrs Sue King is the nominated Governor for Safeguarding including filtering and monitoring and the Prevent Strategy. She sits as a member of and Chairman of the Governors' Pastoral Committee and as a member of the Full Board. Her role is to liaise with the DSL on Safeguarding matters. The Board then receives and considers the information in order to discharge its safeguarding responsibility. Sue King is also the nominated person responsible for liaising with the Local Authority and/or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Head.

The role of The Board is to take leadership responsibility for Queen Margaret's safeguarding arrangements. The Board will ensure that the DSL and their Deputies have the appropriate authority and status, and the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters; to take part in strategy discussions and interagency meetings and/or to support other staff to do so and to contribute to the assessment of children. The Board will ensure that the School has written recruitment and selection policies and procedures in place that secure the full and effective delivery of Safer Recruitment standards.

The DSL submits a report on Safeguarding to the Governors' Pastoral Committee termly, outlining (anonymised) the current pastoral concerns in the School and how they are being managed.

The Board of Governors receives and considers a report on Safeguarding at each of its Board meetings and formally considers Safeguarding and Child Protection issues once a year; it is responsible for carrying out a review of the School's Child Protection policies and a review of the procedures that the School has in place and the implementation of those procedures. This policy will be reviewed annually and submitted by the Pastoral Committee of the Board to the Full Board for discussion and approval at its meeting in the Autumn Term.

Amendments necessitated by changes of personnel or changes in legislation or guidance will be made as often as necessary and reported to the Pastoral Committee.

2.4 Induction and Training

The School follows the guidance on training provided by the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board. The DSL keeps up to date with safeguarding issues by attending training and conferences both locally and nationally. The DSL and Deputies update their training on safeguarding and inter-agency working every two years, and records are kept of all training completed. In addition the school subscribes to and receives weekly updates on safeguarding issues from leading professionals in the field which are considered and appropriately

disseminated by the DSL.

One member of the nursing team is a Level 3 Safeguarding trained by North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership NHS Nursing safeguarding lead.

All Governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction and annual refresher sessions.

All members of staff are given links to the latest versions (September 2024) of Part One and Annex A of the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education. All departments are required to keep a paper copy in their areas for ease of access. Following update training staff are required to sign and return receipts to acknowledge that they have read and understood the documents and the training and the receipts are kept on file. All staff receive appropriate Child Protection training which is regularly monitored, updated and logged. Staff are further trained in the prevention of FGM and Forced Marriage and, in line with the Schools Prevent Policy, complete the Channel Awareness online course: [Prevent duty training](#).

The DSL, or an external agency, provides regular refresher training for teaching and boarding staff, as well as more detailed training every three years for all staff, records of which are kept. In addition, the DSL also provides regular, logged Safeguarding updates, as and when required, throughout the course of the school year, usually during training days. Further, the DSL gives training to girls on the aspects of Safeguarding and Active Listening at the start of the academic year. All new members of staff must be made familiar with the Staff Behaviour Policy and our Children Missing from Education procedures- see below.

All prefects and senior girls with positions of responsibility are given Safeguarding training as part of their induction programme. All girls receive training to enable them to keep themselves safe from a comprehensively identified range of threats both online and in the physical world.

Before starting employment at Queen Margaret's, all new members of staff (including temporary staff or volunteers) are required to attend a safeguarding training with the DSL who will make them aware of the provisions of this policy.

Queen Margaret's School will provide training, policies and procedures on the following:

- Safeguarding
- Behaviour (girls)
- Staff Behaviour, including the staff code of conduct/ safeguarding code of conduct/whistleblowing/ low level concerns
- E-Safety and Acceptable use of IT
- Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation (Prevent) Policy and Channel Prevent Awareness-see above
- Part One of the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024)
- Girls Missing in Education- see below
- The identity and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies

This may be as part of induction, or regular CPD/Inset training.

2.5 The Staff Code of Conduct

The staff code of conduct (see Staff Behaviour Policy) and the Safeguarding Code of Conduct provides guidance to all members of staff on interaction with girls. Having been provided with

that guidance, failure to adhere to it will be regarded as a serious breach of discipline that may, in appropriate circumstances, result in summary dismissal.

2.6 Relationships between pupils

Queen Margaret's School acknowledges that there may be relationships of a romantic or sexual nature that develops between pupils in the school community. Whilst the school does not actively encourage relationships between pupils, it does provide pupils with a strong understanding of healthy and respectful relationships, particularly through the PSHE programme and PSHE Drop Down days. Pupils are taught about the importance of boundaries and respect within all relationships including romantic and sexual relationships. Pupils and boarders in particular are aware that bed spaces are personal spaces which shouldn't be encroached on by other members of the school community.

2.7 Concerns about a pupil

We follow specific procedures to protect children who are suffering harm or at risk of suffering harm as a result of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse or neglect in accordance with Section 157 of the Education Act 2002. If you are told of any incident or have a strong suspicion of physical, emotional or sexual child abuse or neglect (including attempts to radicalise or coerce individuals to hold extreme political or religious views) occurring in the school, outside the school linked to members of school staff and their families or to a pupil of the school at home or outside the school, you must report this the same day to the DSL or in his absence, the (immediate) report should be made to one of the Deputy DSLs.

If the allegation concerns a member of staff the matter must be reported immediately to the Head. If the allegation or suspicion is about the Head, the report should be made to the Safeguarding Governor, Sue King (0113 204 5708) or directly to the Safeguarding Children Board without informing the Head.

Child abuse to be reported includes abuse (including online abuse) of a pupil by a staff member or other adult, abuse at home which a pupil reports to staff, abuse by a stranger outside the school, and abuse of one pupil or pupils by another pupil or group of pupils.

School staff (including the DSL, the Deputies and the Head) must not investigate reports of abuse themselves. Alleged victims, perpetrators, those reporting abuse and others involved should not be interviewed by school staff beyond the point at which it is clear that there is an allegation of abuse.

If someone tells you about an allegation of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect you must follow the procedure below (the 'Six R's'). You should record in writing all concerns, discussions and decisions (together with reasons) made under these procedures. This record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and detail of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed by the person writing it.

The school holds contact information for each pupil and where possible holds more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.

2.8 What to do if someone makes a disclosure

Be READY • A pupil may wish to talk to you at any point - if this involves safeguarding you must be prepared to listen immediately. • Do not ask her to come back later or to make an appointment.

RECEIVE • The pupil has chosen you - you are in a position of trust. • Listen carefully to what she says • Do not show shock or disbelief. • Take it seriously

REASSURE • Tell the pupil that they have done the right thing by speaking out. • Do not promise confidentiality - you have a duty to refer. You can, however, state that information will only be shared with the people who need to know. • Alleviate guilt - the pupil is not to blame and they did the right thing in coming to you.

RESPOND • Do not ask leading questions (eg 'did X do this to you?') or interrogate them. • Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator. • Do not ask the pupil to repeat the matter to another member of staff. Explain that you need to talk to the DSL. • Do not investigate the matter yourself.

RECORD • Make brief notes if you can during the meeting, or if not, immediately afterwards. • Keep your original notes. • Record the date, time, place and the actual words used by the pupil. • Record statements and actions rather than your interpretation.

REPORT • Immediately contact the school DSL or the Head as appropriate. If the suspicion concerns abuse by one or more girls of another girl, when there is reasonable cause to suspect that she is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, such abuse should be reported and will be dealt with under the procedures set out in this policy in the expectation that all girls involved, whether perceived perpetrator or victim, shall be treated as being at risk. The School may discuss such issues, when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a girl is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm (whether as victim or perpetrator) with a Team Manager in Children's Social Care.

REMEMBER • It is your responsibility to inform the DSL immediately of any suspicion, (of whatever perceived severity). If she is not available, then you must inform one of the Deputies and/or the Head.

You may, if you think it right to do so, report the matter directly to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. QM falls under the remit of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board. In the case of suspected abuse where someone other than a member of staff is suspected, the DSL will contact the Local Authority Children and Young People's Service, Children's Social Care. A Case Worker will provide immediate guidance; the matter will be dealt with under the Child Protection Procedures maintained by the Safeguarding Children Boards.

Parental consent is **not** required to make a referral to the statutory agencies. Therefore, if you suspect abuse:

- Report the information to the DSL on the same day. If the allegation implicates the DSL or another member of staff, then the report should be made to the Head- see below. If there is a risk of serious harm to a child, anyone can make a referral to the Local Authority Children and Young People's Service or the City of York Safeguarding Children's Board immediately. If a child's situation does not appear to be improving, the member of staff should press for reconsideration.
- Do not attempt to investigate the report or suspicion yourself. There is a danger that you may compromise any further investigation by the police.

2.9 Procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff

If you are concerned about the behaviour of a colleague towards a pupil or pupils you may

worry that you have misunderstood the situation or wonder whether a report could jeopardise a colleague's career. However, any concern about a member of staff must be raised immediately regardless of how unlikely it seems that there would be any substance to the concern. No further action may be necessary but it is important that such information is brought to the school's attention as soon as possible. You must remember that in all situations the welfare of the child is paramount.

If an allegation is made against a member of staff this must be processed immediately. Allegations should be referred to the DSL or the Head. If the DSL or Head are implicated, the Chair of Governors and/ or Nominated Safeguarding Governor should be informed immediately without informing the Head. All matters will be harms tested as appropriate. All matters, which are deemed to have crossed the 'harm threshold' must be referred to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) on the same day for advice on how the matter should be handled, and in the most serious cases, the Police consulted. Matters which are considered to fall into the category of our Low Level Concerns policy will be managed in line with the Low Level Concerns Policy. School will not initiate any safeguarding investigation prior to referral to and only in consultation with the LADO.

QM falls under the remit of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board. Susan Crawford is the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) for the Selby district of North Yorkshire under which QM falls and she can be contacted directly on **01609 532477**.

Early consideration will be given in discussion with the LADO as to the nature, content and context of the allegation and a course of action agreed, which may include any involvement of the Police. A record will be made of those discussions and the terms of communications with both the staff member and the girl's parents agreed.

Giving full weight to the advice of the LADO, a decision will be made about whether to suspend the member of staff or whether alternative arrangements should be put in place.

If a member of staff is suspended pending the investigation of a Child Protection matter he/she will be required, for the duration of that investigation, to live in accommodation away from girls and if this requires the member of staff to live outside the boundary of the School premises and he or she has no convenient accommodation of his/her own the School will meet the cost of providing that accommodation, reserving the right to seek recovery of that expense if the allegations are admitted or proved and justify dismissal.

There are restrictions on the reporting or publishing of allegations against teachers (in force since 01 October 2012). All possible efforts will be made to maintain confidentiality, and, up to the point where the staff member is charged with an offence, or there is information published about the investigation or a decision by a regulatory body, the School will make no communication about the allegation.

The School will, in cases where a teacher has been dismissed for matters associated with a safeguarding allegation (or would have been dismissed had he/she not resigned) make a referral to the Teacher Regulation Agency, which replaced the National College for Teaching and Leadership in April 2018.

The School will comply with its statutory duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service an individual where the School considers that there is a risk that he or she has caused harm or poses a risk of harm to children. That referral will be made as soon as possible and, in any event, within one month of the School's ceasing to use the individual's services because he or she has been considered unsuitable to work with children. Ceasing to use services may be as a result of dismissal, resignation, and non-renewal of a fixed term contract or any other

change in circumstances that results in the relationship between the School and the individual being brought to an end.

In the case of an unsubstantiated, false, malicious or unfounded case the school will formally review the incident in order to learn lessons and improve procedures, the outcome of these findings will be reported to the safeguarding lead.

2.10 Girls' Awareness and Preventative Education

QM's Health and Wellbeing Policies and the PSHE Policy are available to supplement the supportive pastoral system which includes the Centre for Health and Wellbeing; Wellbeing Practitioner; a resident Chaplain, plus House Staff, Tutors and Senior Tutors. Important contact details are published in the girls' planners, including the Child Line number and the contact details for the Children's Rights Director and these are also contained in the Health and Wellbeing Policy.

The Countering Bullying Policy provides girls with clear guidance as to what is not acceptable behaviour on the part of their fellow students and sets out procedures whereby abuse by one or more girls against another girl will be identified, can be reported and will be dealt with. ***It should be recognised by staff and girls that whilst any incident of alleged bullying is always treated very seriously, certain sorts of bullying can amount to pupil-on-pupil abuse. Here, the recognised threshold for the distinction is that the bullying is causing risk of serious harm- see 2.11 below.***

As set out in detail in the School's E-Safety Policy, girls are taught to keep themselves and others safe on-line and through our extensive PSHE programme as we as in our Year Group and whole school assemblies and drop down days.

At Queen Margaret's, we understand the importance of preventative education and that it is most effective in the context of a whole-school approach that prepares pupils and students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment. We are aware that dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

2.11 Staff Recruitment

All members of staff appointed to QM who will be in regulated activity are required to have an enhanced DBS check and are recruited under a policy that complies with the Independent School Standards Regulations. Shortlisted candidates will be informed that an online search will be carried out as part of due diligence checks. The QM Recruitment Policy must be adhered to and has been written to ensure compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education. **Before supply staff or agency staff are permitted to start work, the recruitment checklist must be completed and checked by the HR Manager or Bursar and any supplementary checks required carried out.**

2.12 Volunteers

In compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, QM operates a pre-recruitment checking policy for volunteers. A risk assessment as to whether or not an Enhanced DBS check needs to be made for each volunteer must be made by the HR Manager and no volunteer may participate in any School activity until that decision has been made, and a record made of it in the volunteer's section of the School's Central Register by the HR Manager or the Bursar..

In the event that the proposed volunteer is a person about whom little is known the pre-appointment checks for staff set out in the Recruitment Staff and Supply Staff Policy must

be followed in full. No volunteer may have contact with girls whether in a supervised or unsupervised manner until the Head has confirmed that appropriate checks and enquiries have been made and the Clerk has confirmed that the Single Central Register entries have been made. In other circumstances, where the DSL can be assured that the volunteer's role will be one-off, such as accompanying girls and teachers on a day outing, such measures will not be required, provided the volunteer is not to be left alone and unsupervised in charge of girls.

Where volunteers recruited by another organisation work in the school, for example sports coaches, the DSL must be informed before that volunteer does any work in School and the Clerk will require assurance from that organisation that all proper vetting procedures are in place.

2.13 Indicators of abuse and neglect

The NSPCC defines child abuse as: "Child abuse is the term used when an adult harms a child or a young person under the age of 18... Child abuse can take four forms, all of which can cause long term damage to a child: physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and child sexual abuse. Bullying and domestic violence are also forms of child abuse. Abuse can take place wholly online or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

All school staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

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

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

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for

example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child on child abuse) in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect may also manifest itself in a lack of supervision when a pupil is at home, for example if parents are not at home for significant periods of time, leaving a pupil unsupervised. In addition it may be seen by inappropriate arrangements being made for travel, Leave Out Weekends or other periods when the pupil is not in the care of the school. The level of appropriate supervision and the appropriateness of travel arrangements is dependent upon the age, stage and vulnerabilities of the pupil and these nuances must be considered at all times.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of neglect:

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe;
- Children who are left hungry or dirty;
- Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat;
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e. around drugs, alcohol or violence;
- Children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm;
- Children who fail to receive basic health care; and
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual abuse:

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age;
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have;
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games; and
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy.

Staff and volunteers in School are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop. **It is not the responsibility of School staff to decide whether child abuse is occurring but we are required to act and report on any concerns.**

2.14 Children who have suffered/ are likely to suffer serious harm and children in need

This Safeguarding policy notes that Safeguarding, and promoting the welfare of children, is a

broader term than Child Protection. It encompasses protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; and ensuring children grow up in safe circumstances.

Child Protection is part of this definition and the subsections below refer to definitions and strategies undertaken to prevent children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. If girls are considered to be likely to suffer significant harm, cases will be referred to Children's Social Care, amongst other agencies. All staff receive training and are therefore aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, **without the provision of services**; or a child who is disabled. If a member of staff has any concerns about a girl in need they must act immediately and inform the DSL. Help can be provided either internally by utilising the extensive pastoral support system we have available at QM, or by referring to universal services or to statutory services if appropriate.

If staff suspect or receive reports that a girl is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care and if appropriate the police, (see [WHEN TO CALL THE POLICE](#)) is made immediately. Referrals should follow the local referral process.

NYSCB operate a universal referral form for early help as well as s17 and s47 cases which can be found on the NYSCB website:

<http://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/worried-about-child>

The dedicated helpline for more urgent cases: 01609 780780

Staff receive regular training on the above ways to make a referral and are aware that anybody within QM can make a referral directly; however, there is an expectation that the DSL will be informed as soon after the referral has been made as possible. A referral to statutory agencies does not require parental consent.

For girls who are in need of additional support at school owing to a variety of other reasons, the School has a variety of channels of help and support. Each girl is assigned a Personal Tutor when they arrive at QM and the girls are informed that they may always seek guidance and emotional support from their tutors, in addition to their Housemistress and the DSL. In addition, the girls may seek extra support from the Emotional Wellbeing Practitioner, who comes to school on a weekly basis. If it is felt that a girl needs more intensive therapeutic help, QM can support families, along with the Medical Officer, to find an appropriate psychologist to provide support for a pupil, if required. If it is deemed appropriate, a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) may be written by the DSL with the consent of an individual girl and her parent or guardian. This may lead to a TAC- Team around the Child- multi-agency approach. The Health and Wellbeing Centre is available throughout the day and a registered nurse is available on call 24 hours per day Monday - Saturday.

The contact numbers for the Health and Wellbeing Centre:	
Health and Wellbeing Centre treatment room: extension 608	[At night, 608 is transferred to the Sister first on call]
HWBC: 01904 727608	[This rings in the Health and Wellbeing Centre and all Sisters' accommodation]
HWBC: 07970 039782	[Please note that poor signal in some areas of school may mean this phone is not always answered on the first ring]

2.15 Early Help, Child in Need, Child at Risk

Concerns about a pupil may fall into one or more of several categories, of which the most important are as follows:

Early Help

Some pupils may benefit from early help, and you are expected to try to identify such pupils where possible. 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. In the first instance, if you consider that a pupil may benefit from early help you should discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will consider the appropriate action to take in accordance with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board's referral thresholds. The DSL will liaise with external agencies and professionals in an interagency assessment, as appropriate. If early help is appropriate, this will be arranged by the Safeguarding Children Board who will allocate an Early Help worker to the child and may intervene using local processes including use of the 'Common Assessment Framework' (CAF) and 'Team Around the Child' (TAC) approaches. Any pupil may benefit from early help, but you should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care,
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage

- is a privately fostered child

A Child in Need refers to a pupil whose circumstances may require them to have extra support in order for them to live a life which does not compromise their ability to fulfil their potential. These pupils will be referred to Children's Services and will benefit from additional support which should be put in place as soon as a problem is identified. The school or the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board's team may also refer to external agencies for further advice and support.

A Child at Risk is a pupil who is at risk of significant harm (which may or may not be abuse).

Such cases will be referred to the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board immediately in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy. The North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board's thresholds will determine the level of support the pupil requires.

Pupil at risk of immediate harm

If you believe that a pupil is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, you should make an immediate referral to children's social care and/or the Police. Anyone can make a referral. Any such referral must be made immediately and in any event within 24 hours (one working day) of you becoming aware of the risk. Parental consent is not needed for referrals to statutory agencies such as the police and children's social care. If anyone other than the DSL makes a referral, you should inform the DSL as soon as possible that a referral has been made. You should challenge any inaction and follow this up with the DSL and children's social care as appropriate. All concerns, verbal communications, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing.

Annex B of KCSIE 2024 contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. All staff should read this Annex.

2.16 Children who are potentially at greater risk of harm.

Whilst all children should be protected, it is important to recognise that some groups are potentially at greater risk of harm than others, this list is not exhaustive.

Children with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues

Children with SEND are three times more likely to be abused than their peers and it is crucial that any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) and the special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) or the named person with oversight for SEND at QM.

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. At QM we are aware that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in these groups of children.

These can include

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration;
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children;
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly

- showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges
- cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

At QM we provide additional support for these children, along with ensuring any appropriate support for communication is in place, for example through the PASS department.

Children missing from education

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about others safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay. We will always ensure that there is parental/ carer communication in relation to pupil absence using the two up-to-date contact numbers in iSAMS. Parents are regularly reminded to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) the school has:

- Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
- Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).
- Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
- Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:
 - leave school to be home educated
 - move away from the school's location
 - remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
 - are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or
 - are permanently excluded

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

When a pupil leaves the school, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date and transfer any Child Protection and Safeguarding records as appropriate.

Attendance is registered in accordance with Department for Education requirements and staff are aware of how to deal with situations where pupils go missing either from school or on a school trip. Details of these procedures are outlined in the Missing Pupil Policy. We have a thorough Attendance and Punctuality Policy and there are clear procedures in place to deal with instances of pupils going missing from school.

All members of staff must be mindful that a girl missing from education could be a vital sign of a possible safeguarding issue such as FGM, CSE or Forced Marriage- see below. If a girl is missing from education and it is suspected that she may have joined an extremist organisation or travelled to countries such as Syria or Iraq with the intention joining an extremist group of marrying a member of a terrorist group, it will be reported as part of the Prevent Duty- see the following website for details: [Prevent duty guidance](#)

In all other cases of unexplained absences from school, the School should take guidance from Part 3 of Schedule 1 to the Independent School Standards (England) Regulations 2014 (SI 2010/1997).

2.17 Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning

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

The fact that a child or young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However children who are LGBT can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, a child who is perceived by their peers to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.

LGBT inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships and Sex education curriculum.

2.18 Pupil at risk of radicalisation

We are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our pupils. Every member of staff recognises that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different to safeguarding against any other vulnerability in today's society. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. 'Extremism' is defined in the Prevent strategy as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Signs of radicalisation

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Background factors may contribute to vulnerability and are often combined with influences such as family, friends or online, and with particular needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people. As with managing other safeguarding risks, you should be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. You should use your professional judgement in identifying pupils who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately. Such cases may involve a referral to the Channel programme or to children's social care depending on the level of risk. Channel is a voluntary programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. We recognise that some pupils may be in danger of being drawn into terrorism or other forms of extremism and carry out appropriate risk assessments to ensure our safeguarding arrangements are sufficiently robust to help prevent and protect children from being drawn into terrorism.

We take appropriate measures to ensure that visiting speakers are vetted and that they are always accompanied while on school premises. Pupils are encouraged to critically assess the information they receive and oversight ensures that the ideas disseminated are aligned with the values of the school and fundamental British values.

The DSL and the Deputy DSLs have undertaken Prevent awareness training and are able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation. All staff have been made aware of the Prevent duty through training.

We use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet. We are committed to ensuring that our pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching the school's core values alongside the fundamental British Values supports quality teaching and learning, whilst making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society.

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes
- glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.)
- secretive behaviour
- online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- advocating violence towards others

Suitable filtering is provided and periodically reviewed to keep pupils safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school. If you are concerned that a pupil may be exposed to radicalisation the normal referral processes apply i.e. you should discuss your concerns with the DSL, who will follow the safeguarding procedures outlined in this policy and may also make a referral to the Channel programme. Borderline cases will be discussed with the Channel Panel on a no-names basis.

For further advice about extremism the DfE provide a dedicated telephone helpline and mailbox for non-emergency advice for staff and governors: they can be contacted on 020 7340 7264 or counterextremism@education.gsi.gov.uk or contact 101 (non-emergency number for the police).

2.19 Child-on-child sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. As set out in Part one of Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE), all staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'**.

It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not

disrupted. It is also important that other children, adult students and staff are supported and protected as appropriate.

Along with providing support to children who are victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment, we will provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. A child abusing another child may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of the school. Taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support will occur at the same time if necessary.

When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003¹⁴ as defined below:

- Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (Schools should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)
- When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment by other pupils can include:

- Sexual comments such as telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothing or appearance and calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting.
- Physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes or displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature.
- Upskirting.
- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos, sexualised online bullying, unwanted sexual comments and messages and online sexual exploitation, coercion and threats.

If there is an alleged case involving one or more other schools, we recognise the importance of information sharing and effective multi-agency working, especially where children involved in allegations of sexual violence or sexual harassment.

If it is necessary for a pupil to be interviewed by the police in relation to allegations of sexual violence or harassment, we will ensure that, subject to the advice of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), parents are informed as soon as possible and that the pupil is supported during the interview by an appropriate adult. In the case of pupils whose parents are abroad, the pupil's Guardian will be requested to provide support to the pupil. On occasions when the Police decide that no further action will be taken in a case, the School will still continue to engage with specialist support as required.

In the event of a member of staff being subjected to an alleged case of sexual violence or harassment by a girl at QM, robust support measures will be put into place to support the member of staff.

2.20 Child on Child abuse

We must recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and any allegations of child-on-child abuse will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. We also recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and it is simply not being reported. There is an understanding at QM that girls with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities may be more vulnerable to child-on-child abuse than other girls. In addition we recognise that the nature of the boarding environment places boarding pupils and particularly full boarding pupils at a greater level of vulnerability due to shared dorms, bathrooms and the potential lack of contact with parents and carers. QM does its utmost to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse and whilst we recognise that there may be a gender nature to child-on-child abuse we still approach this topic with an attitude that it can happen here. Our approach to minimising the risk of child-on-child abuse as set out in paragraph 97 of KCSIE include

- being a relatively small school with an enviable staff – student ratio which allows staff to pick up on problems, issues and change in behaviour straight away
- we have many layers of pastoral support including very small tutor groups where often one to one discussions take place.
- All our prefects receive safeguarding training including child-on-child abuse
- Raising awareness of child-on-child abuse in PSHE and YG assemblies
- Promoting a culture where any concerns can be shared with any member of staff
- All staff are trained to understand that it is important to challenge inappropriate behaviour amongst peers
- Developing a clear understanding amongst QM students as to what defines unacceptable behaviour.

We recognise that there are different types of child-on-child abuse which may include, but is not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may

include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);

- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

We have a zero tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse and do not accept that it can be passed off as banter or part of growing up. Any member of staff receiving a report about child-on-child abuse should take time to listen carefully to the girl and reassure her that she has done the right thing to come forward. The member of staff must not ask leading questions or promise confidentiality and should, as soon as practicable, write a summary of the disclosure using the exact words of the girl. Where the disclosure includes an online element staff are aware not to view or forward illegal images of a child. All the information, including written summary, should be passed to the DSL at the earliest opportunity. In cases where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm due to a pupil or a group of pupils abusing them the DSL will work with pastoral staff in School to ensure the absolute safety of the child. If appropriate, such abuse will be referred to Local Outside Agencies and the parents of the child and other children involved will be informed. It is an expectation that in the event of such a disclosure, all children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, would be treated as being 'at risk'.

Victims of child-on-child abuse should be supported as they would be if they were the victim of any other form of abuse, in accordance with this policy. If the threshold does not reach the level to constitute a safeguarding investigation, perpetrators will be dealt with in accordance with our Behaviour Policy. Further information can be found in the Countering Bullying Policy. Following a report of child-on-child abuse, the DSL will conduct a 'risks and needs' assessment for all children affected by the child-on-child abuse which may include a safety and/ or segregation plan.

As a boarding school we must be particularly alert to safeguarding pupils against the risk of child on child abuse. Children may be particularly vulnerable in residential settings. In reflection of that, there are additional requirements for boarding schools that are set out in the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

Child on child abuse can take the form of

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children;
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Staff must always take seriously any allegation of sexual misconduct, and follow the procedures outlined in this policy if they are made aware of reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Staff should be aware that rape, assault by penetration or other forms of sexual assault (including upskirting) are crimes and will be reported to the Police as well as to children's services. Remember that sharing sexual images of a person under the age of 18 ('sexting') is still illegal even if the participants are under 18 or if the picture is of themselves. We will at all times follow the guidance given to schools and colleges by the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS): Sharing nudes and semi-nudes (December 2020).

Much child on child abuse takes place online. It can take place wholly online or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Pupils are regularly reminded of the school's policy on bullying and on cyberbullying, and sign an Acceptable Use Agreement which governs their behaviour on the school network. We work with pupils through e-Safety education to ensure that our policies are as up-to-date and effective as possible.

Child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways both between pupils at Queen Margaret's and between pupils at Queen Margaret's and those of other schools. Some forms of child on child abuse are: Child Sexual Exploitation: involves young people aged under 18 who are sexually abused or coerced into sexual activity in the context of exploitative relationships by a person of any age, including another young person. Child Criminal Exploitation: refers to the use of a child in criminal activities for economic gain, and is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

2.21 Upskirting

Upskirting is a form of abuse which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It has now been classed as a criminal offence. This behaviour, if witnessed, should be notified to the DSL immediately. It is important to note that whilst the phrase is 'upskirting' it can equally apply to men and women as in addition to skirts it also includes photographs taken of people wearing kilts, cassocks, shorts or trousers.

2.22 Serious Violence, child criminal exploitation and County Lines

We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation.

CCE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;

- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

County Lines

A prolific form of child criminal exploitation is where older individuals or groups of older individuals exploit younger people to carry drugs or other contraband from urban areas to suburban and rural areas ('county lines'). Such criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines activity. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of the victim. County lines is the police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or "deal lines". It involves child criminal exploitation (CCE) as gangs use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money. Gangs establish a base in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing'. County lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons; and the response to tackle it involves the police, the National Crime Agency, a wide range of Government departments, local government agencies and VCS (voluntary and community sector) organisations. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families if they attempt to leave the county lines network).

Indicators that may signal a pupil is at risk from or involved with serious violent crime can include increased absences, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that pupils have been approached by, or are involved with individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs. If you are concerned you should contact a member of the safeguarding team. Additional advice can be found in:

Preventing Youth Violence and Gang Involvement

[Preventing youth violence and gang involvement - Practical advice for schools and colleges](#)

Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults: County Lines

[Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance - GOV.UK](#)

2.3 Youth-produced sexual imagery (sometimes referred to as sexting)

This is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. Pressuring someone into sending a nude or sexually explicit picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever their age, gender or sexual preference, but extra vigilance is required in a residential setting. Once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and these images could end up anywhere or be stored indefinitely. Possessing or distributing indecent images of a person under 18 is a crime under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Owing to the prevalence of 'youth-produced sexual imagery', formerly known as 'sexting', the Government has introduced guidelines on how schools and colleges can respond to such

incidents: [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK](#)

2.24 Online safety

See also: Online Safety and Acceptable use of IT policies

The School controls the times that girls have access to devices thus being able to connect to the internet; this allows the school to control the amount of time girls may spend online in a manner appropriate to their age group. Many of the concerns described above (for example sexual abuse, severe bullying and extremism and radicalisation) may occur online. We ensure that the school network is appropriately filtered and monitored and pupils and staff are guided in the acceptable use of our network and the internet in general (all advice is in line with the Department of Education guidance document, [Teaching Online Safety in School updated 2023](#)).

We recognise that pupils are able to access the internet via 3G/ 4G/ 5G whilst at school and that there is a risk of sexual harassment via mobile phones, sharing of indecent images (consensually and non-consensually) and viewing and sharing pornography and other harmful content.

QM recognises that children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G) which means that children may consensually and/or non-consensually share indecent images, sexually harass their peers via mobile and smart technology, and view and share pornography and other harmful content whilst at school undetected.

To minimise risk, we ask that pupils read, understand and sign an Acceptable Use Agreement; in addition, the school minimises inappropriate use by teaching the girls on keeping safe online through computer technology lessons, specific lectures on e-Safety and within our PSHE course. Our pupils are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

Filtering and monitoring

The DfE has published filtering and monitoring standards to support schools to meet their duty to have appropriate and effective systems in place. [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

Filtering and monitoring are both important parts of safeguarding pupils and staff from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. The DSL will take the lead responsibility for online safety including understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at QM. The DSL will oversee and act on filtering and monitoring reports, safeguarding concerns and will complete checks on the filtering and monitoring systems in place.

QM has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place to safeguard children from potentially harmful and inappropriate material online when using the School's IT system.

Such systems aim to reduce the risk of children being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful materials online (content risk); reduce the risk of children being subjected to harmful online interaction with others including commercial advertising and grooming (contact risk); restrict access to online risks such as online gambling, phishing or financial scams (commerce risk); and help manage online behaviour that can increase a child's likelihood of, or causes, harm for example making, sending and receiving explicit images.

The School ensures compliance with the DfE's 'filtering and monitoring standards for schools' by;

- Identifying and assigning roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
- Reviewing the filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- Blocking harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- Having effective monitoring strategies in place that meet our safeguarding needs.

Further detail of the School's policy and procedures in relation to online safety can be found in the E-Safety Policy and IT Acceptable Use, these include the School's management of the associated risks, and the School's filtering and monitoring arrangements to ensure that children are safe from harmful and inappropriate content, including terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet through the School's systems.

The School will liaise with parents to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and the systems the School uses to filter and monitor online use. Parents and carers will be made aware of what their children are being asked to do online when undertaking remote learning, including the sites they will be asked to access and who from the School their child is going to be interacting with online.

Any evidence that a pupil may be at risk online or indeed being harmed online should be brought to the immediate attention of the DSL or one of her Deputies so that it can be taken forward as a child protection issue.

Staff receive training relating to online safety as part of their regularly updated safeguarding training as well as within their bespoke annual training sessions for academic and house staff. In cases of pupils sexting or sharing pornographic images online, you are reminded that it is illegal to possess, store or distribute an image containing sexual imagery of a child under 18, even if the possessor is under 18 and/or the image shared is of themselves, therefore when taking a disclosure from a pupil concerning this issue you should avoid viewing or forwarding the image and instead alert the DSL or DDSL to the image's existence.

2.25 Bullying

See also: Countering Bullying Policy

Definition of Bullying

We define bullying as the desire to intentionally hurt, humiliate, threaten or frighten someone. Bullying is a process repeated over time rather than a single act. It can take the form of racial, religious, cultural, sexist, special educational needs and disability or sexuality related harassment. It can involve physical (including sexual) and emotional intimidation, cyber bullying, verbal intimidation, threats, ostracism or the spreading of malicious rumours. Cyberbullying can be via email, text messaging, social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), e-photos sent via Instagram or Snapchat.

A bully may well involve a third party e.g. using a friend to tease or torment her victim. The bully can often influence others to take no action to prevent the bullying of the victim, often through fear that they might in time become victims. Bullying can be overt and intimidatory

but is often hidden and subtle. Bullying can focus on race, sexuality, gender orientation, special educational needs and disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). It can cause serious psychological damage and even suicide.

Harassment and threatening behaviour are criminal offences. QM treats bullying seriously. It is entirely unacceptable to view bullying as a part of growing up or as a means of “toughening up” young people.

Cyberbullying

See also: E-safety, Acceptable use of IT and Countering Bullying Policies

Queen Margaret's School embraces the advantages of modern technology in terms of the educational benefits it brings; however, the school is mindful of the potential for bullying to occur. Central to the school's Countering Bullying Policy are the beliefs that all girls have the right not to be bullied and that bullying is always unacceptable. QM also recognises that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside school which spills over into the school.

It is unlawful to disseminate information in any media, including internet sites for the purposes of bullying. Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communication network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. The Protection from Harassment Act of 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

Definition of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend herself.

By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

- Bullying by means of texts or messages on mobile phones
- The use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation
- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, blogs, social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube
- Hijacking or cloning email accounts

QM educates its girls about the serious consequences of cyberbullying and, in the PSHE curriculum, continues to inform and educate the girls about these emergent technologies.

QM trains its staff to respond effectively to reports of cyberbullying or harassment and has robust systems in place to respond to it. Queen Margaret's actively endeavors to block access to inappropriate websites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems. Where appropriate and responsible, QM audits ICT communications and regularly reviews the security arrangements in place.

Queen Margaret's reserves the right to take action against those who take part in cyberbullying:

- Queen Margaret's supports victims of cyberbullying and, when necessary, will work with the Police to detect those involved in criminal acts.
- Queen Margaret's will use, as appropriate, the full range of sanctions to correct,

punish or remove girls who bully other girls or members of staff in this way, both in and out of school.

- Queen Margaret's will use its powers of confiscation where necessary to prevent girls from committing crimes or misusing equipment.
- All members of Queen Margaret's community are aware that they have a duty to bring to the attention of the Deputy Head Pastoral (DSL) Tania Davidson, any example of cyberbullying or harassment that they know about or suspect

2.26 Honour based Abuse

So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

2.27 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) (*See also Annex B of KCSIE 2024*)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to personally 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.. This duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases.

It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM. It involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

Why is it carried out? There may be a belief that:

- FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage
- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Part of being a woman / rite of passage
- Upholds family honour
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfills a religious requirement
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean / hygienic
- Is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

Is FGM legal?

FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights of girls and women. It is **illegal** in most countries including the UK.

- Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening:

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

The most obvious signs that a girl may have been the victim of FGM include the prolonged absence from school (Missing Girls) and other activities and behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued. However, other signs and symptoms that FGM may have taken place include:

- difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating.
- spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems.
- frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- prolonged or repeated absences from school or college, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.
- confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

As with Forced Marriage, there is the 'One Chance' rule. It is mandatory for teachers to report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss such a case with the DSL and involve Child Social Care as appropriate. In case of immediate emergency, you should ring 999 in the first instance. Help and advice may also be sought by ringing the NSPCC Helpline on: 08088 005000.

Procedural details may be found at the following website:

[Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation – procedural information - GOV.UK](#)

Further information on FGM can be found within Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines:

[HM Government - Multi-agency statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation](#)

2.28 Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is an appalling and indefensible practice and is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they are bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse can also be a factor.

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry. This includes:

- Taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place)
- Marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured to or not)
- Breaching a Forced Marriage Protection Order is also a criminal offence.

If you have concerns that a girl may be in danger of becoming a victim of Forced Marriage, you should contact the DSL or Deputy immediately. This case will then be disclosed to the Forced Marriage Unit, which may be contacted at the following number: 020 7008 0151. In an emergency, always dial 999.

Further information on Forced Marriage can be found within Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines at: [Forced marriage - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage)

2.29 Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child 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 (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (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.

Indicators of child sexual exploitation may include:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc without plausible explanation;
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks;
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work;
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late;
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls;
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections;
- Evidence of/suspicions of physical or sexual assault;
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups;
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers); • Frequenting areas known for sex work;
- Concerning use of internet or other social media;
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours; and
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

Potential vulnerabilities include:

Although the following vulnerabilities increase the risk of child sexual exploitation, it must be remembered that not all children with these indicators will be exploited. Child sexual exploitation can occur without any of these issues.

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example);
- Recent bereavement or loss;
- Social isolation or social difficulties;
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality;
- Economic vulnerability;

- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status;
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited;
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work;
- Having a physical or learning disability;
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories); and
- Sexual identity

There are three main types of CSE:

1. Inappropriate relationships – this usually involves one perpetrator who has inappropriate power or control over a young person. There is often a significant age gap and the victim may believe they are in a loving relationship.
2. 'Boyfriend' model – the perpetrator befriends and grooms the young person into a 'relationship' and then convinces or forces them to have sex with friends or associates. This is sometimes associated with gang activity. Peer exploitation is where young people are forced or coerced into sexual activity by peers and associates. Sometimes this can be associated with gang activity, but not always.
3. Organised sexual exploitation – young people are passed through networks, possibly over geographical distances, where they are forced into sexual activity with multiple men. This often occurs at 'sex parties' and the young people may be used to recruit others into the network. Some of this activity is described as serious organised crime and can involve the organised 'buying and selling' of young people by perpetrators.

What to do:

If you have any concerns that a child you know may be a victim of Child Sexual Exploitation report it to the DSL. In an emergency or if a crime is ongoing, always dial 999.

2.30 Domestic Abuse

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person. The definition can be found here: [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/1/section/77)

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

At QM we recognise that domestic abuse can have a long term impact on children's health, well-being, development and ability to learn. We understand that domestic abuse of all types can be under reported in a setting such as this. Staff are mindful of the need for additional vigilance and sensitivity when domestic abuse is suspected.

Definition

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- A. physical or sexual abuse;
- B. violent or threatening behaviour;

- C. controlling or coercive behaviour;
- D. economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and
- E. psychological, emotional or other abuse.

People are 'personally connected' when they are, or have been married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. If the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives.

The National Domestic Abuse helpline can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.

2.31 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 (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 family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.)

At QM we may from time to time liaise with parents to help arrange a private fostering arrangement for the purpose of avoiding that an overseas girl may need to be put under undue stress by having to travel home at times of severe travel restrictions. In such cases the parents and girl may prefer for her to stay with a host family in the UK including for longer than 28 days during holiday time.

Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority prior to the fostering arrangement and Queen Margaret's follows its mandatory duty to report to the local authority where we are aware that a QM girl is subject to a private fostering arrangement. Although we have a duty to inform the local authority, there is no duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the school. However, it should be clear to QM who has parental responsibility.

As part of the admission process to register with QM, the admissions team always take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child who is being registered.

2.32 Remedying defects in this Policy

The effective protection of girls is the first duty of all members of the QM community. If a deficiency in the safeguarding arrangements is detected by anyone, they must report that to the DSL immediately and he will take steps to remedy it without delay.

2.33 Complaints Procedure

If there is a need to complain about the operation of this Policy, this can be done following Queen Margaret's Complaints Policy, which is available on the school website:
www.queenmargarets.com

2.34 Other Sources of Help

More detailed information including online training materials can be received from the North

Yorkshire Safeguarding Children's Board as well as general guidance and advice which are available on their website, www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk

Advice if you are worried about a child may be obtained by visiting: [Children and family care | North Yorkshire Council](#) or telephoning 01609 536993.

Tania Davidson
Deputy Head Pastoral & Designated Safeguarding Lead

Nicola Dudley
Head

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