

Current Safeguarding Issues – 2018/2019

The following Safeguarding issues are all considered to be child protection issues and should be referred immediately to the most relevant agency.

Further support and guidance can be found on the Southend-on-Sea safeguarding board website at www.southend.gov.uk.

So-called 'honour-based' violence

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. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. It is important to be alert to signs of distress and indications such as self-harm, absence from the Academy and truancy, infections resulting from female genital mutilation, isolation from peers, being monitored by family, not participating in Academy activities and unreasonable restrictions at home. Where it is suspected that a child/young person is at risk from Honour based violence, Westcliff High School for Girls will report those concerns to the appropriate agency in order to prevent this form of abuse taking place.

Some members of our communities hold beliefs that may be common within particular cultures but which are against the law of England. We do not condone practices that are illegal and which are harmful to children. Examples of particular practices are:

Forced Marriage

We do not support the idea of forcing someone to marry without their consent.

Under-age Marriage

In England, a young person cannot legally marry until they are 16 years old (without the consent of their parents or carers) nor have sexual relationships.

Genital Mutilation / Female Circumcision

This is against the law yet for some communities it is considered a religious act and cultural requirement. It is illegal for someone to arrange for a child to go abroad with the intention of having her circumcised. If any of the above areas of concern is brought to our attention, we will report those concerns to the appropriate agency in order to prevent this form of abuse taking place.

Ritualistic Abuse

Some faiths believe that spirits and demons can possess people (including children). What should never be considered is the use of any physical or psychological violence to get rid of the possessing spirit. This is abusive and will result in the criminal conviction of those using this form of abuse even if the intention is to help the child.

Children Missing Education

“Basic to safeguarding children is to ensure their attendance at school.” (OFSTED). Children are best protected by regularly attending school where they will be safe from harm and where there are professionals to monitor their well-being. At Westcliff High School for Girls, we will encourage the full attendance of all of our children at school. Where we have concerns that a child is missing education because of suspected abuse, we will liaise with the appropriate agency including the Education Attendance Service to effectively manage the risks and to prevent abuse from taking place.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School and college staff should follow the school’s or college’s procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Schools should put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

Sexually Active under Eighteen years old

It is acknowledged by those working with young people that most young people under the age of 18 will have an interest in sex and sexual relationships. The Protocol for Sexually Active Young People under 18 years old has been designed to assist those working with children and young people to identify where these relationships may be abusive, and the children and young people may need the provision of protection or additional services. At Westcliff High School for Girls we will ensure our policy for managing this issue links to the available protocol.

Safeguarding Disabled Children

Disabled children have exactly the same human rights to be safe from abuse and neglect, to be protected from harm and achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes as non-disabled children.

Disabled children do however require additional action. This is because they experience greater risks and ‘*created vulnerability*’ as a result of negative attitudes about disabled children and unequal access to services and resources, and because they may have additional needs relating to physical, sensory, cognitive and/ or communication impairment (*Safeguarding Children, DCSF, July 2018*) Westcliff High School for Girls will ensure that our disabled students are listened to and responded to appropriately where they have concerns regarding abuse. In order to do this we will ensure that our staff and volunteers receive the relevant training to raise awareness and have access to specialist staff in the event they have concerns regarding abuse of a child.

Safer Recruitment & Selection

It is a requirement for all agencies to ensure that all staff recruited to work with children and young people are properly selected and checked. At Westcliff High School for Girls, we ensure that we have a member on every recruitment panel who has received the appropriate recruitment and selection training. That all of our staff are appropriately qualified and have the relevant employment history and

checks to ensure they are safe to work with children in compliance with the Key Safeguarding Employment Standards.

Trafficked Children

Child trafficking involves moving children across or within national or international borders for the purposes of exploitation. Exploitation includes children being used for sex work, domestic work, restaurant/ sweatshop, drug dealing, shoplifting and benefit fraud. Where Westcliff High School for Girls is made aware of a child is suspected of or actually being trafficked/exploited, we will report our concerns to the appropriate agency.

Domestic Abuse

The Government defines domestic abuse as **“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality”**.

Staff need to understand what is required of them if children are members of the household where domestic abuse is known or suspected to be taking place. Our policy includes action to be taken regarding referrals to the Police and Children and Young People’s Services and any action to be taken where a member of staff is the alleged perpetrator or victim of domestic abuse. At Westcliff High School for Girls, we will follow our safeguarding policy and report any suspected concerns regarding Domestic Abuse to the relevant agency.

Private Fostering

Private fostering is an arrangement made between the parent and the private foster carer, who then becomes responsible for caring for the child in such a way as to safeguard and promote his/her welfare.

A privately fostered child means a child under the age of 16 (18 if a disabled child) who is cared for and provided with accommodation by someone other than:

- a parent
- a person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility
- a close relative
- a Local Authority

for more than 28 days and where the care is intended to continue. It is a statutory duty for us at Westcliff High School for Girls to inform the Local Authority where we are made aware of a child or young person who may be subject to private fostering arrangements.

Child sexual exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities.

Child criminal exploitation: County Lines

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism 12 should be considered. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; 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.

Online Safety

Children and young people can be exploited and suffer bullying through their use of modern technology such as the internet, mobile phones and social networking sites. In order to minimize the risks to our children and young people, Westcliff High School for Girls will ensure that we have in place appropriate measures such as security filtering, and an acceptable use policy linked to our e-safety policy. We will ensure that staff are aware of how not to compromise their position of trust in or outside of the Academy and are aware of the dangers associated with social networking sites.

Our e-safety policy will clearly state that mobile phone or electronic communications with a student at Westcliff High School for Girls is not acceptable other than for approved school business e.g. coursework, mentoring. Where it is suspected that a child is at risk from internet abuse or cyber bullying we will report our concerns to the appropriate agency.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes in to the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Peer on peer abuse

Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as peer on peer abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

The above list is not exhaustive and as new policy guidance and legislation develops within the remit of Safeguarding we will review and update our policies and procedures as appropriate and in line with the Local Authority.