# Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

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This policy has been reviewed in line with the Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation and Disability. We will continue to monitor this policy and to ensure that it has equal access and does not discriminate against anyone, especially any person/s listed under any protected characteristic.

# Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

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# Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

## 1. Purpose

1.1. This policy states the responsibilities of the college in relation to safeguarding children and adults at risk, in line with current legislation and guidance.

## 2. Scope

2.1 Throughout the policy and supporting documentation, reference is made to 'children'. This term is used to mean those under the age of 18. The College recognises that some adults are also vulnerable to abuse therefore the procedures may be applied (with appropriate adaptions) to allegations of abuse and the protection of adults at risk.

## 3. Policy Statement

3.1. The Bedford College Group (TBCG) aims to maintain a safe and welcoming environment on all its sites for staff, students (including residential students) and visitors. It is committed to meeting its duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk and recognises its role in identifying cases of suspected abuse and making referrals to the appropriate investigating agency.

3.2. It takes its obligation seriously to deliver the outcomes specified in the Ofsted Education and Skills Inspection Framework. In the context of this policy, inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management by evaluating the extent to which leaders, managers and governors help and protect all students and keep them safe.

3.3. The college recognises the need to work with other agencies in performing its duties under the Education Act 2011 and Children Act 2004. These are, in summary:

- to have in place and follow procedures in keeping with local inter-agency (Local Safeguarding Children's Board) guidelines
- to operate safer recruitment procedures
- to have in place procedures to deal with allegations against staff
- to designate a senior member of staff as having lead responsibility for safeguarding children, and ensure that they receive appropriate training
- to liaise with schools regarding pre-16 students
- to ensure all staff working with children under 18, receive appropriate safeguarding training and are aware of their responsibilities
- to review policies and procedures annually
- to represent the college on the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

3.4. The safety and well-being of children are paramount, and all concerns of abuse are taken seriously.

3.5. The college is committed to applying these principles in respect of those felt to be 'vulnerable'.

3.6 The College supports lawful freedom of speech, academic freedom and respectful debate. While students and staff are encouraged to express lawful

views and engage in open discussion, the College also has a statutory duty to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk from abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, harassment and unlawful discrimination. Safeguarding concerns will be assessed on a proportionate and evidence-based basis, balancing freedom of expression with safeguarding, equality and Prevent responsibilities.

3.7 The Group Director of Safeguarding and Wellbeing and the Group Director of HR are nominated to co-ordinate and manage procedures relating to the protection and safeguarding of children and adults at risk, including safer recruitment and staff training.

3.8 The Group reserves the right to refuse admission to any student who may pose a risk to children or adults at risk and has an appropriate student admissions procedure in place.

## 4. Legal Framework

4.1 The Bedford College Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk. The college fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities in accordance with current legislation and statutory guidance, including the Children Act 1989 and 2004, the Education Act 2002, the Care Act 2014, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and the current editions of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. Responsibility for ensuring effective safeguarding arrangements rests with the Corporation Board, whilst all staff, governors, volunteers and contractors are responsible for carrying out their duties in accordance with this policy and maintaining a culture that promotes the safety, wellbeing and welfare of students.

4.2 The Bedford College Group is not an investigating agency. Responsibility for investigating safeguarding concerns rests with Children's Social Care, Adult Safeguarding Services, the Police and other agencies with statutory powers. The Group will work collaboratively with safeguarding partners across all local authority areas in which it operates, sharing information appropriately, supporting early intervention and contributing to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements where required. The college also recognises its statutory responsibilities under the Prevent Duty and will take appropriate action to protect children and adults at risk from abuse, neglect, exploitation, radicalisation and other forms of harm.

## 5. Local and National Safeguarding Priorities

5.1 The Bedford College Group actively monitors and responds to emerging local, regional and national safeguarding priorities through collaboration with safeguarding partners and relevant agencies. We recognise that safeguarding risks continue to evolve and may include, but are not limited to, child sexual

exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), serious violence, harmful sexual behaviour, child-on-child abuse, sexual violence and harassment, domestic abuse, mental health concerns, radicalisation, female genital mutilation (FGM), online harm, technology-facilitated abuse, and risks associated with artificial intelligence and digital technologies.

5.2 In addition to its statutory safeguarding responsibilities, the college is committed to promoting student wellbeing, resilience and safe decision-making. Through its curriculum, tutorial framework, enrichment programme and awareness campaigns or events, the college provides opportunities for students to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to recognise risk, access support and maintain their own safety and wellbeing.

## 6. Equality and Diversity Statement

6.1. The Bedford College Group is committed to the promotion and development of equality and diversity. We aim to provide a working and learning environment which values individuals equally and does not discriminate on any grounds including age, disability, race, sex (gender), sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

6.2. This policy and procedure will be implemented in accordance with our policy on equality and diversity, and decisions/actions taken in relation to a potential safeguarding or child protection incident will not be influenced by the background or situation of any persons involved. Each case will be dealt with on its own merits.

6.3. This policy is subject to equality impact analysis.

## 7. Monitoring and Review

7.1. Implementation of this policy will be monitored through termly committee meetings and an annual report to the Board of Governors.

7.2. The policy will be reviewed at least annually by The Bedford College Group Safeguarding Committee and agreed by the College Executive and Board of Governors.

## 8. Supporting Documentation

8.1. The following documents give further guidance on the application of this policy and matters relating to the wider child protection and agenda:

- Admissions Policy
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Confidentiality Procedure
- Dealing with Criminal Convictions Policy
- Disclosure or Display of Potentially Harmful Behaviours Procedure for Applicants
- Education Act 2002 (s175)

- Freedom of Speech Policy
- Fitness to Study Policy
- Further Education Residential Accommodation: National Minimum Standards (latest edition)
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People in Education Settings (2019)
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy (inc the filtering & monitoring college devices and networks)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest edition)
- Looked After Children Policy
- Student Missing from Education Procedure
- Netiquette Guidelines for Staff
- Netiquette Guidelines for Students
- Prevent Duty Guidance for Further Education (2019)
- Visiting Speakers and Events Policy
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Raising Concern (Low Level) Policy
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Safer Work Placement
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy & Procedures
- Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes
- Social Media Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff Disciplinary Procedures
- Positive Behaviour & Engagement Policy
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (latest edition)

## Child Protection & Safeguarding Procedures

These guidelines apply to all adults, including volunteers, working in or on behalf of the College.

It is commonly accepted that College staff spend so much time in contact with children that they are in a good position to discern whether they may be a victim of abuse or not. However, all staff must be aware that children may not feel ready or may not know how to tell someone they are being abused/neglected. They also might not be able to identify their experiences as harmful. It is important to know what this abuse is and how it can be picked up on.

The four principal categories of harm suffered by children are set out in national guidance. These are used to assist those responsible for the welfare and protection of children to understand and recognise the symptoms of abuse.

The diagnosis of abuse is difficult, even for experts. It is not the role of College staff to define or attempt to diagnose whether a child or vulnerable adult has suffered

abuse within certain categories. An understanding of the categories is, however, important to enable staff to recognise symptoms of abuse.

The following procedures relate to child protection incidents.
Definitions

8.2. Throughout this document the following definitions apply:
**Child:** a person under the age of 18
Adult at Risk: a person aged 18 or over who has care and support needs and is unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect.
**Safeguarding:** includes promotion of health and well-being as well as protection of specific individuals
**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** the staff member designated by the Bedford College Group as having responsibility for liaising with the investigating agency
**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child.
**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.
**Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development.
**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or adult at risk to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether they are 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.
**Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child or adult at risk's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.

## 9. Specific Safeguarding Issues

9.1. All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children or adults at risk, at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put them in danger.

9.2. All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can also manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- consensual and non-consensual sharing nudes and semi-nude images and or videos
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual harassment

- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
- upskirting.

9.3. The College has a zero-tolerance policy for Child-on-Child abuse, and this will be dealt with via the Positive Engagement & Behaviour Policy unless of a sexual nature and then it will be dealt with initially via the Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy & Procedures.

9.4. Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues.

9.5. Specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues can include:

- Child on Child Abuse
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Domestic Abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Mental Health
- Serious Violence.

9.6. For more specific detail regarding the above categories and others, please see Annex A.

## 10. Designated Staff

10.1. The College maintains appropriately trained Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads across the Group with trained Safeguarding Advisors across campuses and provisions, to ensure safeguarding advice, support and decision-making are always available during the college day and up to 9pm during term time. A reduced structure is also in place across the Group to ensure cover during College holidays.

**The designated staff are as follows:**

Ann Harris - Link Governor Safeguarding and Child Protection
Jess Leech - Executive Lead for Safeguarding
Gilda Rughoobeer - Group Director of Safeguarding & Wellbeing, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The designated governor is a member of The Bedford College Group Safeguarding Committee and is responsible for ensuring the College has policies and procedures in place which are considered annually by the Board of Governors. The Corporation Board also receives safeguarding assurance through regular reporting, safeguarding committee activity, policy review and annual safeguarding reporting.

## 11. Safeguarding Information for Students

11.1. The College is committed to ensuring that students are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. All students know that there is a Safeguarding Team and how to contact them. The College will inform students of whom they might talk to, both in and out of college, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm. This information is delivered to students at the start of their course and reinforced throughout their programme of study. It is also available on the College websites.

11.2. College's arrangements for consulting with and listening to students are through the Students' Union and Student Forums.
11.3. Students are made aware of these arrangements by presentations, the Tutorial Programme and poster campaigns, the induction programme and College documents including Handbooks.
11.4. The College recognises that prevention is key when it comes to safeguarding our students and therefore the Tutorial programme is full of awareness and information in relation to keeping safe.

## 12. Responding to a Disclosure or Suspicion of Abuse

12.1. It is not the responsibility of the College's staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly, all concerns regarding the welfare of students will be recorded on CPOMS with appropriate next steps considered.
12.2. If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral will be made to children's social care. If a student's situation does not appear to be improving the safeguarding team will press for re-consideration. Concerns raised will always seek an or actions that sustain change for the student it involves.
12.3. Any member of staff who has knowledge of, or a suspicion that, a child or adult at risk is or has been suffering significant harm must refer their concern to a member of the safeguarding team immediately. In exceptional circumstances such as out of hours, if no designated staff member is available, this should be referred to the Duty Manager who will liaise with the DSL directly.
12.4. In exceptional circumstances where there is no member of the safeguarding team available or the DSL, staff must ensure that the process for referring a student to external agencies is not delayed.
12.5. All allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously. The student must be advised that this information cannot be kept confidential and will be passed on to the safeguarding team in the first instance.
12.6. Staff who receive an allegation or disclosure of abuse will submit an incident on CPOMS as soon as possible but within 24 hours if not urgent, including the following information:
- nature of alleged abuse including perpetrator, if known
- description of any injuries observed, if any
- any other information given, including siblings, if relevant
- distinguish between observation, fact and opinion
- confirm that the student has been advised of the next steps

12.7. Questions should be kept to the minimum required for clarity, and leading questions must be avoided.
12.8. Staff should be aware that when making a safeguarding referral, they may be asked to contribute towards assessments by external agencies.
12.9. Where a child is subject to a Police interview / discussion, an appropriate member of staff must be present within the meeting.

## 13. Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

13.1. The Bedford College Group adopts a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence, sexual harassment and all forms of unwanted sexual behaviour.
13.2. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between children, between adults, or between children and adults. Incidents may occur online, face-to-face or through a combination of both. Behaviour may include sexualised comments, unwanted touching, coercive behaviour, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, image-based abuse, sharing of intimate images without consent, upskirting, online sexual harassment and other forms of harmful sexual behaviour.
13.3. Reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment will always be taken seriously. The Group will work with victims to ensure they are supported, protected and heard, whilst managing alleged perpetrators fairly and proportionately in accordance with safeguarding, disciplinary and legal processes.
13.4. The wishes of the victim will be carefully considered wherever possible; however, the Group may need to take protective action where there are concerns regarding safety, ongoing risk or wider safeguarding issues. Risk assessments, support plans and multi-agency referrals will be implemented as appropriate.
13.5. The Group recognises that sexual violence and sexual harassment can have a significant impact on educational participation, emotional wellbeing and achievement and is committed to creating a culture where concerns can be raised safely and responded to effectively.

## 14. Contextual Safeguarding

14.1. The Bedford College Group recognises that safeguarding risks may arise outside the home and can be influenced by an individual's relationships, peer groups, educational settings, work placements, accommodation, communities and online environments. This approach, commonly referred to as Contextual Safeguarding, acknowledges that harm can occur in a wide range of settings and may not always be linked to parental or familial factors.
14.2. Safeguarding assessments and interventions will therefore consider the wider context in which a student lives, learns, works and socialises. This includes risks associated with peer-on-peer abuse, criminal exploitation, county lines activity, sexual exploitation, serious violence, harmful online behaviour, homelessness, community-based risks and student accommodation.
14.3. Where contextual risks are identified, the Group will work collaboratively with students, families, employers, accommodation providers, safeguarding partners, local authorities and other agencies to reduce risk and improve safety.
14.4. By adopting a contextual safeguarding approach, the Group seeks to strengthen its understanding of vulnerability, support earlier intervention and provide learners with holistic and effective safeguarding support.

## 15. Safeguarding Students with Additional Learning Needs or a Disability

15.1. Children or adults at risk with additional learning needs (ALS) and/or disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges have additional barriers. Staff must be aware of recognising signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

15.2. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- being more prone to peer group isolation than other children or adults at risk
- the potential for children or adults at risk with ALS and disabilities being disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

15.3. The safeguarding team will liaise with the Additional Learning Support Team (ALS) where appropriate to ensure the students are supported correctly.

## 16. Safeguarding Residential Students

16.1. Provision for residential students based at our Shuttleworth College complies with the guidelines outlined in the Further Education Residential Accommodation National Minimum Standards (latest edition).

16.2. The National Minimum Care Standards are applicable to Further Education Colleges accommodating students under 18 and are intended to safeguard and promote the welfare of children for who accommodation is provided.

16.3. The National Minimum Care Standards are not applicable to those students 18 or over, although the policies and procedures in place, including the provision of a team of trained Residential Officers, are relevant to all residential students regardless of age.

16.4. Compliance with the National Minimum Care Standards is monitored through external inspection by Ofsted.

### 16.5. Residential Officer Partners and DBS

16.6. Where Residential Officer partners require a DBS check to be completed, these will be processed through the recruitment team in HR.

16.7. Partners (or children over the age of 18) will sign a contract with the College under the Tenancy Agreement to ensure professional boundaries are being adhered to. This will be audited yearly.

## 17. Safeguarding Students Working Online / Blended Learning

17.1. It is important that all staff who interact with our students, including online, continue to look out for signs a child or adult at risk may be exposed to harm. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per this policy and where

appropriate, referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the Police.

17.2. The Bedford College Group will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and DPA/UKGDPR requirements.

17.3. The Bedford College Group has written Netiquette Guidelines for students which will be shared during induction. These will also be reinforced throughout the year.

17.4. The Bedford College Group has ICT Acceptable User Guidelines which should be read in conjunction with this section. The policy includes the filtering and monitoring procedures to check and monitor unacceptable use, to safeguard students and staff. These are shared with students and staff at induction and reinforced throughout the year.

## 18. Work Placements (alternative provision)

18.1. Staff responsible for co-ordinating work placements/work experience must have received the relevant training. They must take the safeguarding of students, whether children or vulnerable adults, into account at the planning stage when assessing the suitability of the placement and as part of the College's health and safety procedures. All placements must be assessed for safeguarding risks.

18.2. It is however recognised that in these circumstances the employer has primary responsibility for the health and safety of the student, and the College should therefore be satisfied that the employer understands and is managing the risks, including safeguarding, associated with young people in the workplace.

18.3. The statutory guidance specifies that colleges may not request enhanced DBS checks for staff supervising children aged 16 or 17 on work experience. However, if the person working with the student in the workplace is unsupervised and in frequent contact with them, the employer may be asked to ensure that that person is not on the barred list.

18.4. All students on work placement should have a regular point of contact within College and be made aware that they can discuss with that person or with a Work Placement Coordinator should they have any concerns about their placement. They can also contact the safeguarding team directly. Any concerns raised about their work placement or any suspicions of abuse must be recorded on CPOMS and procedures followed as outlined in section 13.

18.5. Students should be appropriately prepared for their work placement to ensure they understand how to keep themselves safe (protective behaviours) as well as their own responsibilities to others in the workplace.

18.6. Where a student's placement is classed as 'regulated activity', the student will normally be required to have an enhanced DBS check.

18.7. Where students access alternative provision, appropriate quality assurance, safeguarding checks and information-sharing arrangements will be implemented.

## 19. Working with Employers (Apprenticeship Provision)

19.1. Employers have a responsibility to safeguard their students and the procedure they should follow if they have concerns for a student can be found on the College's website. Employers will be provided with a link to the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

19.2. A number of safeguards will be in place to support the apprenticeship provision including:

- Risk Assessment process of employers linked to Health and Safety and Equality and Diversity
- Sharing the College's safeguarding procedures and guidelines with employers and ensuring they have read it
- Risk assessing where there is a criminal conviction.

## 20. Supporting the Student and Partnership with Parents & Carers

20.1. The College recognises that the child or adult at risk's welfare is paramount, however good safeguarding practice and outcomes rely on a positive, open and honest working partnership with parents/carers.

20.2. Whilst we may, on occasion, need to make referrals without consultation with parents/guardians or carers, we will make every effort to maintain a positive working relationship with them whilst fulfilling our duties to protect any student.

20.3. We will provide a secure, caring, supportive and protective relationship for the student.

20.4. Students will be given a proper explanation (appropriate to age and understanding) of what action is being taken on their behalf and why.

20.5. We will endeavour always to preserve the privacy, dignity and right to confidentiality of the student and parents/carers. The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will determine which members of staff "need to know" personal information and what they "need to know" for the purpose of supporting and protecting the child or adult at risk.

## 21. Information Sharing

21.1. Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse.

21.2. Whilst the Data Protection Act 2018 places duties on organisations to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure, this is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

21.3. Where children leave the school or college, the DSL should ensure their child protection file is transferred as soon as possible, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.

21.4. In addition to file, the DSL should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new establishment in advance of them leaving, that would allow the new College to continue supporting them as necessary.

## 22. Confidentiality

22.1. A good working relationship between staff and students depends largely on the establishment of trust. This may be described as a 'confidential relationship'. However, guarantees of absolute confidentiality should not be given as it may prove necessary to make a referral to an appropriate agency.
22.2. If a student discloses abuse to a member of staff, it is important that the boundaries of confidentiality and the need to pass on that information are explained to the student. It is often easier to explain to the student that you have a responsibility to pass on information on certain matters than to get into a situation where you break confidence.

## 23. Record Keeping

23.1. All wellbeing concerns and safeguarding referrals will be confidentially recorded on CPOMS. These will be detailed, accurate and include a full audit trail.
23.2. All written records must be uploaded to CPOMS, for example statements written by the students, minutes of meetings.
23.3. Records will include discussions held and decisions made, as well as reasons for closure of record.
23.4. Records will be kept securely, and held until the student's 25th birthday (or, for vulnerable adults, for 2 years after the end of the academic year in which the referral was made) unless there has been Social Care involvement in which case, it will be longer.
23.5. Records are confidential. They may be accessed by the subject of the record but not by any third party other than a DSL and/or the originator.
23.6. Staff must not personally retain any records relating to a safeguarding issue.

## 24. Safer Recruitment of Staff

24.1. The College undertakes all possible actions to ensure that its employees are fit to work with children or adults at risk.
24.2. The College has safer recruitment procedures in place to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and adults at risk and promote safe practice.
24.3. 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' describes the checks that are, or may be, required for any individual working in college.
24.4. In accordance with the regulations, a single central record is kept of all checks and disclosures carried out.
24.5. For more information on the Recruitment process of staff, please see the Safer Recruitment Policy.

## 25. Training of Staff

25.1. Designated staff receive safeguarding training every 2 years, and their knowledge and skills are refreshed regularly, and at least annually, to ensure they are up to date with developing local and national priorities.

25.2. All other staff and governors receive mandatory training as part of their induction and this is refreshed annually, to ensure they are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and of the College's policies and procedures. The training includes recognising signs of abuse, and recording and reporting suspected abuse. All safeguarding mandatory training must be completed during the staff induction period, failure to complete this mandatory training will/could lead to a termination of their employment contracts.
25.3. All staff are required to read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version) and the Staff Code of Conduct document within specified time frame as set out by Learning and Development.
25.4. For staff members who do not work directly with our students, for example, cleaning staff, the College will ensure that they have read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version) and have access to other relevant safeguarding training applicable to their role during the course of the year.
25.5. All staff should be familiar with what to do if they are worried a child or adult at risk is being abused.

## 26. Safe Practice

26.1. The College ensures that all staff are safe and aware of behaviours which should be avoided.
26.2. Safe working practice ensures that all staff:

- are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- work in an open and transparent way
- discuss and/or take advice from the DSL or Deputy over any incident which may give rise to concern
- record any incidents or decisions made
- apply the same professional standards regardless of any protected characteristic(s)are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines or policies could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them
- undertake appropriate risk assessments for their work area

## 27. Allegations of Abuse against Staff including Low Level Concerns

27.1. The College has in place a Staff Code of Conduct which sets out clearly its expectations in terms of staff behaviours and provides guidance to staff on keeping themselves safe. Nevertheless, allegations against staff may occur.
27.2. Netiquette Guidelines for Staff have been produced to ensure that staff also keep themselves safe when liaising with students online, both when teaching and providing 1-1 sessions.
27.3. All allegations and concerns in relation to staff will be taken seriousl and will be reported in line with the College's Raising Concerns (Low Level) Policy.
27.4. Where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the relevant disciplinary procedures may be invoked as well as reporting the case to the

appropriate authorities, normally the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Following this, any investigation taken under Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures or by the Police must take precedence over internal College procedures.

27.5. If an allegation of abuse is made against a designated member of staff, the allegation must be referred directly to the HR Department who will report the matter to the appropriate authorities. An allegation against the Principal must be dealt with by a member of the Board of Governors.

27.6. Where an allegation is made by a student aged 18+, it will be investigated through internal college procedures, unless the student is deemed to be an adult at risk.

27.7. If it is subsequently found that a student has made a false allegation, or that the allegation was prompted by the student's inappropriate behaviour, the matter will be investigated.

27.8. Staff also have a duty to report any issue in their personal life that may constitute a safeguarding concern, and this should be reported to their manager and HR at the earliest possible opportunity.

27.9. Allegations against external customers/visitors will be subject to the College safeguarding processes and procedures.

## 28. Support for the Safeguarding Team

28.1. The safeguarding team will have access to supervision on a termly basis (as required), or more regularly depending on a case that has been dealt with. Additional reflective practice and peer support will be provided to the wider team.

## 29. Support for Staff

29.1. This policy document is available to all staff via Connect and the College websites. An up-to-date list of the Safeguarding team is available on Connect and visible throughout the College.

29.2. Where a member of staff finds a disclosure particularly distressing, they may wish to seek support through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). Details of the EAP are available on Connect or from Human Resources. Alternatively, they may talk through their concerns with a DSL or with HR.

29.3. A staff Code of Conduct document is in place and was developed in consultation with staff. It outlines expected standards of conduct for staff and provides support and guidance on professional boundaries and keeping themselves safe.

29.4. Any member of staff who has dealt with a safeguarding concern will be offered support, should they require it.

## 30. Safeguarding Groups

30.1. A cross-college safeguarding committee meets three times per year. It includes representation from across the college.

30.2. The group reports to the college Executive and Corporation and its terms of reference include monitoring the effectiveness of the college's safeguarding arrangements, advising on the development and review of related policies, and developing a safeguarding plan.
30.3. The safeguarding group concerns itself with the wider safeguarding agenda.
30.4. The safeguarding teams across Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire meet termly to share best practice, develop, review and ensure consistency of procedures, and to consider feedback from the local safeguarding children board.

## 31. Preventing Violent Extremism – The 'Prevent' Agenda

31.1. The Counterterrorism and Security Act (2015) places duties on the College to take best endeavours to prevent students from being drawn into terrorist and extremist activity, and statutory guidance is in place. In College, Prevent is embedded within our safeguarding procedures, and this document should therefore be read in conjunction with the Prevent Policy.
31.2. Staff and Governors will be trained through the Workshop for Raising Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) programme.
31.3. Staff should be aware of the signs of extremism and report any such concerns through the safeguarding process. The College will take such concerns and act as is necessary, including referring to our local Police contacts, the Channel panel, the multi-agency support hubs and/or providing support through our own internal structures.
31.4. The College will also promote the ethos of the 'Prevent' agenda by encouraging free and open debate but challenging extreme views. Through its classroom practice, theme weeks and induction activities, it will encourage equality of opportunity and celebrate diversity.
31.5. The College will not host or allow its premises to be used by extreme groups and will seek to prevent the distribution of extreme literature. Promotion of any organisations linked to violent extremism is contrary to the values of the College and would constitute misconduct.
31.6. Computer searches will be monitored, and any key words will be flagged to the safeguarding team. Where appropriate, these will be investigated.

## 32. Early Intervention and Family Help

32.1. The Bedford College Group recognises the importance of early intervention in improving outcomes for children, adults at risk and families and is committed to identifying and responding to emerging needs at the earliest opportunity. The College will work collaboratively with students, parents/carers, young carers, safeguarding partners and other agencies to provide timely support, contribute to multi-agency assessments and participate in Family Help arrangements where appropriate. Where concerns are identified, the College will seek to ensure that students receive the right support, at the right time, to prevent needs from escalating and to promote safety, wellbeing, attendance, engagement and positive outcomes.

32.2. As an education partner, the College will contribute to local safeguarding and Family Help arrangements across all local authority areas in which it operates. Staff are expected to maintain professional curiosity, identify signs of vulnerability or emerging risk, and work with the safeguarding team to ensure concerns are appropriately assessed, recorded and responded to in accordance with statutory guidance and the College's safeguarding procedures.

## 33. Students with Social Worker Involvement

33.1. The safeguarding team will hold information on students where there has been social worker involvement to ensure that any decisions can be made in the best interests of the child or adult at risk's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.
33.2. This information will be used to inform decisions about safeguarding and promoting welfare.
33.3. Students with social worker involvement will also be regularly tracked by the safeguarding team to ensure that any early intervention can be put in place, if needed.

## 34. LGBTQIA+

34.1. The College is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for all students, including those who identify as LGBTQIA+. In line with safeguarding responsibilities, the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998 and the principles of Keeping Children Safe in Education, the College will take appropriate action to prevent and respond to bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation or harmful behaviour based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or gender reassignment. The College recognises and respects the rights, dignity, beliefs and individual liberty of all members of its community, promoting a culture in which diverse views can be expressed lawfully and respectfully, while ensuring that the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and adults at risk remain paramount.
34.2. The College recognises that child-on-child abuse may include misogyny, racism, faith-based abuse, homophobia, transphobia and other forms of prejudice-based behaviour. Such behaviour can have a significant impact on a student's safety, wellbeing and educational experience and will be managed robustly through safeguarding and disciplinary processes where appropriate, and in collaboration with the College Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

## 35. Students Requiring Mental Health Support

35.1. The College recognises that changes in attendance, engagement, behaviour, presentation or wellbeing may be indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation or emerging safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding responses should therefore

be considered alongside the Fitness to Study Policy, Positive Behaviour and Engagement Policy and wider wellbeing support arrangements to provide coordinated and appropriate support.

35.2. The College has a Fitness to Study Policy to ensure that the students are not disadvantaged in any way and that reasonable adjustments can be made to their programme of study and any barriers to learning are removed.

35.3. The College has a team of Mental Health Practitioners and Mental Health First Aiders to support the health and wellbeing of students.

35.4. The College is working with external agencies to ensure that links between the College and the agencies are strengthened so that students have the support that they require, particularly when there are long waiting lists for external counselling services.

## 36. Looked After Children/ Previously Looked After / Leaving Care & Special Guardianship

36.1. Local Authorities work closely with the College to promote the educational achievement of Looked after Children / Children in Care / Previously Looked After, those leaving care or who are under the arrangement of a Special Guardianship.

36.2. Looked After Children are regularly supported by a team of external agencies and have a Personal Education Plan (PEP). The PEP is used to support the personalised learning of the child – both academically and otherwise. Staff will be asked to contribute to the PEP and attend meetings regarding that student.

36.3. Looked After Children / Children in Care / Previously Looked After / Leaving Care and those with a Special Guardianship must be regularly monitored and supported whilst they are at College. Staff will be required to provide updates to the Designated Teacher for Looked after Children.

36.4. Attendance for Looked After Children / Children in Care will be monitored weekly by the safeguarding team and shared with the local authorities and children's services.

36.5. The Designated Teacher for these students will meet on a regular basis with the Virtual School Heads to promote the educational achievement of this group of vulnerable students.

36.6. All members of the safeguarding team are trained in how to contribute effectively to a PEP meeting.

## 37. Young Carers

The College recognises that young carers may experience additional barriers to attendance, participation, achievement and wellbeing due to caring responsibilities. The College will seek to identify and support young carers and ensure that appropriate interventions and reasonable support are made available to help them engage successfully in education.

## 38. IT

### 38.1. Emerging Technologies, Artificial Intelligence and Online Harm

The College recognises the increasing safeguarding risks associated with artificial intelligence (AI), generative AI tools, synthetic media and deepfake technology. These technologies may be used to facilitate bullying, harassment, exploitation, image-based abuse, the creation or sharing of sexually explicit content, misinformation or coercive behaviour. Staff should remain alert to emerging online risks and report concerns in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

### 38.2. Technology-Facilitated Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse may be facilitated through technology and can occur both online and offline. This may include image-based abuse, online harassment, coercive or controlling behaviour, the non-consensual sharing of images, cyberbullying, and abuse involving AI-generated or manipulated images. Such behaviour will be treated seriously and managed in accordance with the College's safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

### 38.3. Filtering and Monitoring

The College maintains appropriate filtering and monitoring systems to support the safety and wellbeing of students when accessing College networks and devices. These arrangements are subject to regular review to ensure they remain effective, proportionate and responsive to emerging online risks and technologies. The Corporation Board receives assurance regarding the effectiveness of filtering and monitoring arrangements and associated safeguarding risks through established governance processes.

### 38.4. Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either ‘cyber-enabled’ (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or ‘cyber dependent’ (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal ‘hacking’), for example accessing a computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded
- ‘Denial of Service’ (Dos or DDoS) attacks or ‘booting’. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources, and,
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Those with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

Note that Cyber Choices does not currently cover ‘cyber-enabled’ crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety.

Additional advice can be found at: Cyber Choices, 'NPCC- When to call the Police' and National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK.

## 39. Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom

39.1. The Bedford College Group is committed to fostering an environment where freedom of speech, academic freedom and open discussion can take place lawfully and safely. The Group recognises that students and staff may express a wide range of views, beliefs and opinions and is committed to promoting respectful debate, critical thinking and intellectual challenge.

39.2. The exercise of freedom of speech does not override safeguarding responsibilities or permit behaviour that is unlawful, abusive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, extremist or otherwise places others at risk of harm. Safeguarding concerns will be assessed on the basis of risk, vulnerability, behaviour and impact, rather than an individual's lawful beliefs, protected characteristics or personal viewpoints.

39.3. The Group will seek to balance its duties relating to freedom of speech, equality, inclusion, Prevent and safeguarding, ensuring that students can participate in debate and discussion while remaining safe, respected and supported.

Annex A – Specific Safeguarding Issues & Prevent

**Child Abduction and Community Safety Incidents**
Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff.

It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers.

**Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**
We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation.

In some cases, the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or in groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.

Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including, sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

- appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions
- associate with other children involved in exploitation
- suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- misuse alcohol and other drugs
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late, and
- regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Children who have been exploited will need additional support to help keep them in education.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Some additional specific indicators that may be present in CSE are children who:

- have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and
- suffer from sexually transmitted infections, display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development or become pregnant.

Further information on signs of a child's involvement in sexual exploitation is available in Home Office guidance.

**County Lines**

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and adults at risk are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children and adults at risk can be targeted and recruited into county lines in several locations including any type of education provider and beyond.

Children or adults at risk are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. They can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child or adult at risk is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines include:

- going missing and subsequently found in areas away from their home
- have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
- are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a 'trap house or cuckooing' or hotel room where there is drug activity
- owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office and The Children's Society County Lines Toolkit For Professionals.

**Children Missing from Education**
All staff should be aware that children or adults at risk going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse, neglect and exploitation, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

The Group recognises that poor attendance, persistent absence and students missing education may be indicators of wider safeguarding concerns and will be monitored and responded to accordingly.

**Domestic Abuse**
The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected" (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).

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. The government will issue statutory guidance to provide further information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including the impact on children.

Students can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Children or adults at risk can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age, this may not be recognised in

law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed, and both alleged victims and alleged perpetrators should be offered support.

**Operation Encompass**
Operation Encompass operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and educational establishments to work together to provide emotional and practical help. The system ensures that when the police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult (usually the DSL (or deputy)) before the following day. This ensures that the safeguarding team has up to date relevant information about the circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the need. Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, the police and/or colleges should make a referral to local authority children's social care if they are concerned about someone's welfare.

Additional advice on identifying those who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

- NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects
- Refuge what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children
- SafeLives: young people and domestic abuse.

**Homelessness**
Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a person's welfare. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into 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 or adult at risk has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The new duties shift focus to early intervention and encourage those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

In most cases college staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children or adults at risk who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16- and 17-year-olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention

and support. Social services will be the lead agency, and the DSL (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the circumstances.

**Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism**
Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in Statutory Guidance Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK.

**Preventing Radicalisation**
Children and adults at risk are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting them from other forms of harm and abuse, protecting them from this risk should be a part of a colleges' safeguarding approach.

- **Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- **Terrorism** is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat **must** be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Although there is no single way of identifying whether someone is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology, there are possible indicators that should be taken into consideration alongside other factors and contexts. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to someone's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home).

However, it is possible to protect vulnerable people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being radicalised. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in behaviour which could indicate that a student may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying those who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the DSL (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

Although not a cause for concern on their own, possible indicators when taken into consideration alongside other factors or context may be a sign of being radicalised. Further information and a list of such indicators can be found at Radicalisation and Extremism - Examples and Behavioural Traits (educateagainsthate.com).

**The Prevent Duty**
All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard17 to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.
The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations.

**Channel**
Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, who will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the school or college may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) should consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with a new college in advance of a student leaving. For example, information that would allow the new college to continue supporting victims of abuse or those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

**Additional Support**
The department has published advice for colleges on the Prevent duty. The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts other sources of advice and support.

The Home Office has developed three e-learning modules:
- Prevent awareness e-learning offers an introduction to the Prevent duty.
- Prevent referrals e-learning supports staff to make Prevent referrals that are robust, informed and with good intention.
- Channel awareness e-learning is aimed at staff who may be asked to contribute to or sit on a multi-agency Channel panel.

**Educate Against Hate** is a government website designed to support staff and leaders to help them safeguard their students from radicalisation and extremism. The platform provides free information and resources to help staff identify and address the risks, as well as build resilience to radicalisation.

**Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges**

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

Those who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, likely, 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 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.

**Serious Violence**
There are several indicators, which may signal students are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include:

- increased absence
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- a significant decline in performance
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

The likelihood of involvement in serious violence may be increased by factors such as:

- being male
- having been frequently absent or permanently excluded
- having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

A fuller list of risk factors can be found in the Home Office's Serious Violence Strategy.

**So-Called 'Honour-Based' Abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)**
So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) 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 HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**
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/lecturers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the Police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions.

**Martyn's Law**
The Group remains committed to strengthening preparedness in response to emerging legislation and risks relating to public protection, site security and hostile threat response.