



(Policy Name) Policy

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| Policy Code: | AB08 |
| Policy Start Date: | September 2024 |
| Policy Review Date: | December 2024 |

Please read this policy in conjunction with the policies listed below:

- HR6 Data Protection Policy
- SW5 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SW4 Pupil Behaviour and Discipline Policy





Stockton Secondary School is committed to prioritising the health and best interests of all children. We recognize that every child and young adult (up to 18 years old, as defined by law and in this policy) has the right to be heard, with their wishes and feelings respected. Regardless of age, gender, culture, race, religion, or sexual identity, every child is entitled to equal protection in alignment with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). At Stockton, our staff maintain a vigilant and empathetic approach, grounded in the belief that safeguarding concerns can arise anywhere. In matters concerning a child's welfare, our staff will always act in the child's best interests, ensuring that any safeguarding concerns are addressed immediately. This policy is relevant to any child protection concerns involving students from Stockton or other schools within the ro-schooling sector. Our guidelines mirror those that real-life schools adhere to, as mandated by governmental standards. Stockton is deeply committed to fostering a safe and healthy environment within our learning spaces and across our campus. We respect our students and actively encourage open and honest communication, whether with us, their peers, or trusted family members outside of school. We are dedicated to considering children's perspectives in determining appropriate safeguarding actions and the provision of services that support their well-being. Additionally, Stockton places significant importance on adopting a trauma-informed approach to safeguarding, recognizing the need to understand the root causes of a child's behaviour, including any underlying trauma that may have contributed to negative changes in their Actions.

Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy 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 the home, 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
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the child(ren)
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and is defined as activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.



Stockton acknowledges that safeguarding includes a wide range of specific issues including:

- Abuse and neglect
 - Bullying, including cyberbullying
 - Child-on-child abuse
 - Children with family members in prison
 - Children who are absent or missing from education
 - Child missing from home or care
 - Illnesses
 - Faith
 - Gender based abuse and violence
 - Hate
 - Homelessness
 - Mental health
 - Online safety
 - Private fostering
 - Relationship abuse
 - Serious violence
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- This policy is one of a series in Stockton and should be read and actioned in conjunction with the policies as listed below:
 - Anti-bullying
 - Attendance
 - Behaviour, including behaviour management and use of physical intervention
 - Complaints
 - Confidentiality
 - Data protection and information sharing
 - Emergency procedures such as evacuations and lockdowns
 - Health and safety, including plans for school reopening
 - First aid and accidents, including medication and managing illness, allergies, health, and infection
 - Image use



This policy is enacted in strict accordance with statutory guidance from the Department for Education, specifically 'Keeping Children Safe in Education,' which mandates that every school and college maintains an effective child protection policy.

The policy is rooted in the principles established by the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004, along with other key guidelines, including but not limited to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Ofsted: Education Inspection Framework
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families 2000
- Early Years and Foundation Stage Framework
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education Regulations 2014
- The Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a legal duty on governing bodies, local education authorities, and further education institutions to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children enrolled at a school or those under the age of 18. Stockton is committed to adhering to both local and national guidance when responding to emergencies or concerns related to child welfare. This policy, along with our established procedures, will be diligently followed in all circumstances, ensuring that our safeguarding practices consistently prioritise the well-being of every child.

We also acknowledge the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which may have exposed members of our community to traumatic experiences and heightened anxiety. As a response, we are committed to collaborating and providing additional support to ensure that every individual receives the necessary care and assistance during these challenging times.



1.2) Key Responsibilities

Governance and Leadership

The governing bodies will facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring it is a collective effort. Their foremost priority is to make certain that child protection remains at the heart of every decision, process, and policy development. This commitment ensures that all systems and practices operate with the best interests of the child in mind. The leadership team holds strategic responsibility for our safeguarding arrangements and will dutifully follow their obligations under the law. They are acutely aware of their responsibilities as outlined by the Human Rights Act (1998) and the Equality Act (2010).

The leadership team will guarantee that all safeguarding policies and procedures are both in place and rigorously followed, ensuring that the welfare of the children is always promoted. The Headteacher will take the lead in ensuring that these child protection and safeguarding policies are understood and adhered to by every staff member at Stockton. Both the Headteacher and governing bodies will also ensure that a suitable member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is appointed as the Safeguarding Lead, and that this individual is well-supported in their role to foster a safe school environment.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSLs) & Officers

Each school within our framework will appoint a member of the Senior Leadership Team to serve as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL is entrusted with the overarching responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including the crucial area of online safety and the effective monitoring of school systems. They oversee the welfare of each student and manage the safeguarding officers (SOs) under their supervision. The DSL and SOs are expected to possess or acquire the necessary training to address any child's welfare needs competently.

The role of the DSL encompasses various critical functions as outlined in Annex C of KCSIE. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, serving as the central point of contact for all staff with safeguarding concerns, maintaining a confidential system for recording child protection issues, and coordinating safeguarding actions for individual children. When working with children who have a social worker or are looked after, the DSL must maintain communication with the child's social worker and the virtual school head from the authority responsible for the child.

The DSL is also tasked with liaising with other agencies and professionals in line with KCSIE and WTSC guidelines. They must ensure that locally established procedures, such as those from the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) or other relevant Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs), are followed, particularly concerning referrals.

Additionally, the DSL represents the school at multi-agency safeguarding meetings, manages the school's role in any multi-agency plan for a child, and ensures that adequate DSL cover is in place for out-of-term activities and school closures. They also take the lead on online safety, ensuring The school's filtering and monitoring systems are robust and effective. Lastly, the DSL plays a



pivotal role in promoting educational outcomes by sharing information about the welfare and safeguarding issues affecting children, including those with a social worker, with teaching and school leadership staff. The DSL ensures that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and stay updated in line with KCSIE recommendations. They must also keep the Headteacher informed of any safeguarding issues, especially ongoing inquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and any police investigations, ensuring that an Appropriate Adult is present for children under these circumstances, as per PACE Code C 2019.

Members of Staff

Our staff are uniquely positioned to observe any changes in a child's behaviour or appearance, identify early concerns, provide assistance, promote welfare, and prevent issues from escalating. Every staff member is entrusted with the responsibility to:

- Create and maintain a safe environment for learning.
- Recognize the indicators of abuse and neglect to identify children who may need help or protection.
- Know the appropriate actions to take if a child discloses abuse, neglect, or exploitation and understand the impact such experiences can have on a child.
- Identify and address early signs that a child may be developing mental health issues.
- Identify children who may benefit from early intervention.
- Understand and engage with the early help process and their role within it.
- Be familiar with and follow the school's safeguarding policies and systems.
- Participate in regular and updated safeguarding training.
- Understand the process for making referrals to children's social care and statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.
- Maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality in all matters.
- Reassure children who report concerns that they are being taken seriously, supported, and kept safe.
- Act in accordance with the Teachers' Standards 2012, which require teachers, including Headteachers, to safeguard children's well-being and maintain public trust in the profession.

Staff at Stockton recognize that children may be reluctant or unsure how to report abuse, exploitation, or neglect, or may not recognize their experiences as harmful. This should not deter staff from exercising professional curiosity and speaking with a DSL if they have concerns about a child. Staff will also work to build trusted relationships with children, young people, and their parents or carers to facilitate appropriate communication, in line with existing policies, such as our staff behaviour and pupil/student behaviour policies.



Children and Young People

Children and young people have the right to:

- Feel safe, be listened to, and have their wishes and feelings considered.
- Confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be taken seriously, and that they can safely express their views and provide feedback.
- Contribute to the development of school safeguarding policies.
- Receive support from a trusted adult.
- Learn how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have the responsibility to:

- Understand and comply with relevant school policies and procedures.
- Discuss safeguarding issues with their children and support the school's safeguarding efforts.
- Identify behaviours that may indicate their child is at risk of harm, including online risks.
- Seek help and support from the school or other agencies when needed.

1.3) Child Protection Procedure

Recognizing Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

Staff will uphold a vigilant mindset, adopting the principle of 'it could happen here' whenever safeguarding concerns arise. When it comes to a child's welfare, the paramount priority for staff is to act in the best interests of the child at all times.

All staff members are thoroughly trained and made aware of the definitions and indicators of abuse and neglect, as outlined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education.' At Stockton, we recognize the critical importance of early identification and intervention, understanding that abuse can manifest in various forms. Specifically, there are four primary categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect

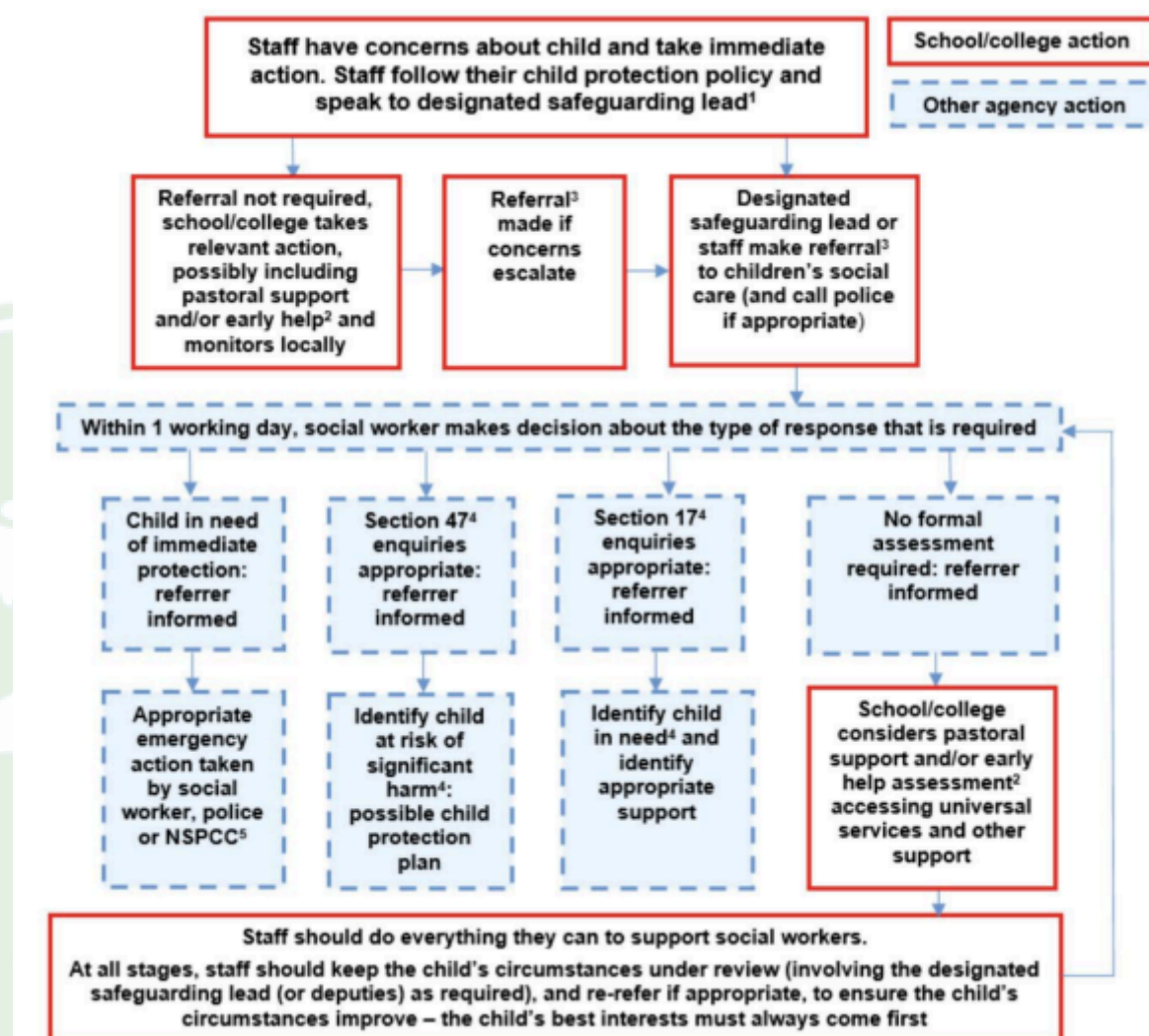


Understanding these indicators is essential for enabling early responses to concerns, ensuring that the appropriate support and services are provided to the child and their family as soon as possible. To ensure that all staff are prepared to respond effectively, they are expected to follow the procedures outlined below whenever they have concerns about a child's well-being:

1. **Recognize the Signs:** Be vigilant for any changes in behaviour, physical signs, or other indicators that may suggest a child is experiencing abuse or neglect.
2. **Record Concerns:** Document any observations or disclosures made by the child, ensuring that details are recorded accurately and promptly.
3. **Report Immediately:** Any concerns should be reported without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or another member of the safeguarding team.
4. **Reassure the Child:** If a child discloses abuse, it is vital to reassure them that they are being taken seriously, and their safety is the priority.
5. **Remain Confidential:** Maintain the confidentiality of the child's situation, sharing information only with those who need to know in order to protect the child. By adhering to these practices, our staff can help to safeguard children effectively and ensure that those at risk receive the care and protection they need.

- **Action where there are concerns about a child:**





Stockton acknowledges that concerns about a child's welfare can emerge in a variety of contexts, ranging widely in their nature and severity. It is understood that the signs of abuse and neglect may differ from child to child. As children develop at different rates, behaviours that might be alarming in a younger child could be typical for an older one. It's crucial to recognize that while indicators of abuse or neglect do not necessarily confirm that a child is being harmed, every concern must be taken seriously and will be thoroughly investigated by the Safeguarding Lead on an individual basis.

Stockton is aware that issues related to abuse, neglect, and safeguarding are rarely isolated incidents and often involve multiple, overlapping factors. Therefore, staff are always encouraged to remain vigilant and report any concerns to the Safeguarding Lead, ensuring a comprehensive approach to each situation.

Staff are also trained to recognize that parental behaviours can be indicative of abuse or neglect.



This may include situations where a parent is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or where there is a sudden shift in their mental health. Children may disclose abuse affecting themselves, their peers, our family members, and every such report made to staff will be treated with utmost seriousness, adhering strictly to the school's safeguarding policy.

In today's digital age, Stockton recognizes that technology plays a significant role in many safeguarding and well-being issues. Children may face risks of abuse from individuals they know or

strangers they encounter online. Abuse can occur through online interactions or in their daily lives.

Stockton also recognizes that some children have additional or complex needs, requiring more intensive or specialised services to support their well-being.

When concerns arise about a child's safety or welfare, any necessary searches, screenings, and confiscation of items, including electronic devices, will be conducted according to the school's behaviour policy, which aligns with the Department for Education's guidance on 'Searching, Screening, and Confiscation at School.' The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or their deputy will be informed of any searches conducted on the suspicion that a pupil is in possession of prohibited items as defined by the behaviour policy. The DSL (or deputy) will then assess the situation to determine if there are broader safeguarding concerns.

Responding to Child Protection Concerns

If staff become aware of a child protection concern, they are expected to:

- Listen attentively to the child, reflecting back their concern.
- Use the child's own language.
- Maintain a non-judgmental attitude.
- Avoid leading questions; only use open-ended questions to clarify information, such as "Who?", "What?", "Where?", "When?" or using the "Tell, Explain, Describe"(TED) approach.
- Not promise confidentiality, as the concern will need to be shared with the DSL and potentially with Integrated Children's Services.
- Clearly outline the boundaries of confidentiality and explain how the report will be handled.
- Record the concern based on the facts as the child presents them, following the school's record-keeping guidelines.
- Notify the DSL (or deputy) as soon as possible.

If any staff member has concerns about a child's welfare, they must act on them immediately. If unsure whether something constitutes a safeguarding issue, they should consult the DSL (or deputy) for guidance.



The DSL or a deputy should always be accessible for discussions on safeguarding concerns. If, in rare circumstances, the DSL is unavailable, so staff should not hesitate to take appropriate action. They should contact a senior leadership team member, seek advice from the Education

Safeguarding Service, or consult with a social worker from the Front Door. Any actions taken under these circumstances must be promptly communicated to the DSL.

All staff are informed that early sharing of information is critical for effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate services, whether a problem is emerging or the child is already known to other agencies. Staff should not assume that a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that could be crucial for the child's safety.

Staff are also briefed on the process for making referrals to Integrated Children's Services and statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, particularly under section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (children at risk of significant harm). They are informed of the roles they may be expected to play in such assessments.

If a child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm or is in immediate danger (under section 17 or 47 of the Children Act), a 'request for support' will be made immediately to Stockton Integrated Children's Services (via the 'Front Door') and/or the police, following KSCMP procedures.

Recording Concerns

When concerns about a child's well-being arise, the following steps must be taken:

1. Complete a safeguarding report form.
2. Notify the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) that a report has been made.
3. Ensure the SLT has the child's relevant details and knows their whereabouts.
4. Collaborate with the Safeguarding Officer to gather necessary information.
5. Allow the Safeguarding Officer to manage the case.

All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions, and the reasons for those decisions will be documented in writing within the school's safeguarding system (e.g., CPOMs) and forwarded promptly to the DSL. Incident and welfare concerns are to be recorded on the designated platform (e.g., Google Forms).

Records should be completed as soon as possible after the event, using the child's own words, and signed and dated by the staff member. Child protection records should contain factual information rather than personal opinions. If visible injuries are observed, a body map should be included. If there is an immediate safeguarding concern, the staff member should consult with the DSL before completing the form, prioritising urgent reporting.

Child protection records will include a comprehensive summary of the concern, details on how the concern was addressed, and information about any actions taken, decisions reached, and the outcomes. These records are kept confidential and stored securely. They are maintained



separately from other records relating to the child within the school, in compliance with data protection legislation. All child protection records will be transferred securely to the child's new

school, under confidential and separate cover, as soon as possible—within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of a new term. The new DSL will confirm receipt of these records. In addition to the child protection file, the DSL will consider whether to share any pertinent information with the DSL at the child's new school or college before the child leaves, ensuring continuity of support.

Specific Safeguarding Concerns

Stockton is aware of the wide range of specific safeguarding issues and circumstances that may place children at greater risk of harm. Beyond the general guidance, DSLs, school leaders, and staff working directly with children will familiarise themselves with Annex B of KCSIE, which provides critical additional information on specific forms of abuse and safeguarding concerns.

When staff are uncertain about how to handle a specific safeguarding issue, they should refer to the procedures outlined in part 3 of this policy and seek advice from the DSL or deputy.

Child-on-Child Abuse

At Stockton, we acknowledge that children can abuse their peers, an issue referred to as child-on-child abuse (formerly known as 'peer-on-peer' abuse), which can occur both within and outside the school setting, as well as online.

Child-on-child abuse can manifest in various forms, including but not limited to:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based, and discriminatory bullying
- Abuse in intimate relationships between children
- Physical abuse, such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair-pulling, or inflicting other forms of physical harm
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images or videos (commonly referred to as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery)
- Coercing someone into sexual activity without their consent
- Upskirting (which is a criminal offense), typically involving taking images under a person's clothing without permission, intending to view their genitals or buttocks for sexual gratification, or to cause the victim humiliation, distress,



- Initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals

Any allegations of child-on-child abuse will be documented, investigated, and handled in according to this child protection policy and KCSIE (especially parts two and five).

Stockton takes a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse. Abuse is never acceptable and will not be dismissed as “just banter,” “just having a laugh,” “part of growing up,” or “boys being boys.” Such attitudes can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, creating an unsafe

environment and normalising abuse, which may deter children from reporting their experiences.

Staff are trained to challenge inappropriate behaviours among children. They understand that factors such as gender, age, ability, and cultural background can influence the dynamics of child-on-child abuse. For example, in cases of gender-based abuse, girls are more often victims, while boys are more often perpetrators. Stockton acknowledges that even if no cases of child-on-child abuse have been reported, this does not mean such abuse is not occurring.

Therefore, staff are urged to

discuss any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse with the DSL (or deputy). To reduce the risk of child-on-child abuse, Stockton ensures that appropriate curriculum time is allocated to help children recognize and understand abusive behaviours and to identify warning signs. This education will also direct children to internal and external sources of support, such as the local police or Childline. Further Information can be found in related policies, such as PSHE, Citizenship, Sex and Relationships Education, and Computing. Concerns about students' behaviour, including offsite incidents of child-on-child abuse, will be addressed collaboratively with students and parents/carers. Offsite behaviour concerns will be recorded and managed according to relevant policies, such as the anti-bullying, acceptable use, behaviour, and child protection policies

1.5) Supporting Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm

While all children need protection, Stockton recognizes that certain groups of children may be at an increased risk of harm. Safeguarding Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) Stockton acknowledges that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or specific health conditions may encounter additional challenges in safeguarding, making it is harder to recognize and respond to abuse and neglect. Stockton understands that children with SEND may have additional communication barriers and difficulties in expressing or reporting abuse or other challenges. Efforts will be made to ensure that these children are supported in communicating effectively so their voices are heard and their concerns are acted upon. Staff are encouraged to thoroughly investigate potential indicators of abuse, such as changes in behaviour, mood, or unexplained injuries, rather than attributing these signs solely to the child's disability. It's



important to note that children with SEND or specific medical conditions may be more vulnerable to issues such as bullying, without showing obvious signs of distress. Staff should also be aware that children with SEND can be more susceptible to safeguarding concerns like exploitation, isolation from peers, or bullying, including prejudice-based bullying. To address these challenges, the school will consider providing additional pastoral support and attention for children with SEND. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will collaborate closely with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to plan and implement necessary support. Our school maintains comprehensive intimate and personal care policies that prioritise the health, safety, independence, and well-being of children while ensuring their dignity and privacy. These arrangements are transparent and supported by thorough documentation. For more details, please refer to our policies. Children Requiring Mental Health Support Stockton plays a crucial role in supporting the mental health and well-being of our students. Mental health issues can sometimes indicate that a child has experienced or is at risk of experiencing abuse, neglect, or exploitation. If staff have concerns about a student's mental health, they should inform the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy without delay. The school will provide age-appropriate education to promote positive mental health, well-being, and resilience among students.

Children Missing Education

Prolonged or frequent absences from education can be a critical warning sign of various safeguarding issues, including neglect, child sexual exploitation, and child criminal exploitation, particularly in the context of county lines. A strong response to prolonged or repeated absences from education will aid in identifying such risks and may help prevent future incidents of children going missing. This is particularly important when issues are first emerging or when children are already known to Stockton Integrated Children's Services or have a social worker (e.g., children in need, those with a child protection plan, looked-after children), as these children may face heightened safeguarding risks within their families or communities. Where possible, the school will maintain more than one emergency contact number for each student, providing additional avenues to contact a responsible adult if a child missing education is identified as a welfare or safeguarding concern.

Children with a Social Worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)

The DSL will keep records of social workers assigned to children within the school to ensure that decisions prioritise the child's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes. When children have a social worker, this information will guide the school's decisions regarding their safety and well-being, such as addressing unauthorised absences and providing appropriate pastoral and academic support.



1.4) Staff Engagements and Expectations

Staff Awareness, Induction and Training

All new employees and volunteers, including agency and third-party personnel, undergo safeguarding and child protection training as part of their induction. This training includes online safety, ensuring they understand the roles, responsibilities, and expectations regarding filtering and monitoring. The training aligns with local safeguarding partner guidance and includes understanding Stockton's specific safeguarding procedures. This initial training is regularly updated. Every staff member, including agency and third-party workers, receives child protection training (including online safety) that is refreshed at least annually. This training covers a broad spectrum of safeguarding issues and procedures for reporting concerns.

Online safety training for staff is incorporated into the broader safeguarding strategy and is integrated with overall staff training and curriculum planning. In addition to formal child protection training, staff receive regular updates on safeguarding and child protection at least once a year. These updates ensure that staff maintain the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively safeguard children. Stockton values the expertise staff develop through ongoing safeguarding training and daily management of safeguarding concerns. Staff are encouraged to contribute to the development of the school's safeguarding arrangements and child protection policies. All governors and trustees receive safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, during their induction. This equips them to provide strategic oversight and ensure the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. This training is regularly updated. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and headteacher will present an annual report to the governing body, detailing the safeguarding training undertaken by staff and maintaining an up-to-date record of trained personnel.

Safer Working Practices

Stockton takes proactive measures, as outlined in this and other relevant policies, to ensure that processes are in place to promote continuous vigilance and maintain an environment that prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behavior. All staff members must adhere to the clear guidelines on safer working practices outlined in the school's code of conduct. The DSL ensures that all staff, including contractors and volunteers, understand the school's expectations for safe and professional conduct. Staff are also made aware of the school's behavior management and physical intervention policies. They are expected to manage behavior effectively to create a safe educational environment and understand the needs of all children. Any use of physical intervention or reasonable force will comply with the school's policies and national guidelines. Staff will be informed about the professional risks associated



with the use of social media and electronic communication, such as email, mobile phones, and social networking. All staff must adhere to relevant school policies, including the

staff code of conduct, digital safety policy, and Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs)

Supervision and Support

The induction process includes an introduction to child protection responsibilities and procedures for reporting concerns about a child's safety or welfare. Stockton ensures that staff working in the foundation stage receive appropriate supervision in line with the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The school provides supervision and support for all staff to ensure they are competent in their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The DSL supports all staff in their safeguarding roles and ensures that staff regularly review their practice to improve over Time.

Staff affected by issues related to concerns for children's welfare or safety can seek support from the DSL. The DSL will also facilitate connections with external agencies for professional support if requested. Staff can also directly approach organisations such as their