Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
2026 – 2027

All staff should have access to this policy and sign to the effect that they have read and understood its contents.

Date of last review:	Sept 2026	Author:	Molly Devlin
Date of next review:	Sept 2027	Owner:	Director of Ark Start
Type of policy:	☐ Network-wide ☐ Set for school ☒ Tailored	Approval:	Programme Board
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Key Contacts - Ark Start Nurseries

In the event you need to talk to any of the below named key contacts, please telephone/email on the below information and ask to speak to or meet with the key person named below:

Ark Start – Safeguarding Key Contacts		
Organisational DSLs		
Name	Role	Email
Katie Oliver	Managing Director	katie.oliver@arkonline.org
Molly Devlin	Director DSL for Ark Start	molly.devlin@arkstart.org.uk
Sarah Charlton	Head of Teaching and Learning DDSL	sarah.charlton@arkstart.org.uk
Kristy Bartlett	Area Manager DDSL	kristy.bartlett@arkstart.org.uk
Ciara O'Carroll	Head of Inclusion DDSL	ciara.o'carroll@arkstart.org.uk
Rachael Gillies	Deputy Director of Ark Start DDSL	rachael.gillies@arkstart.org.uk

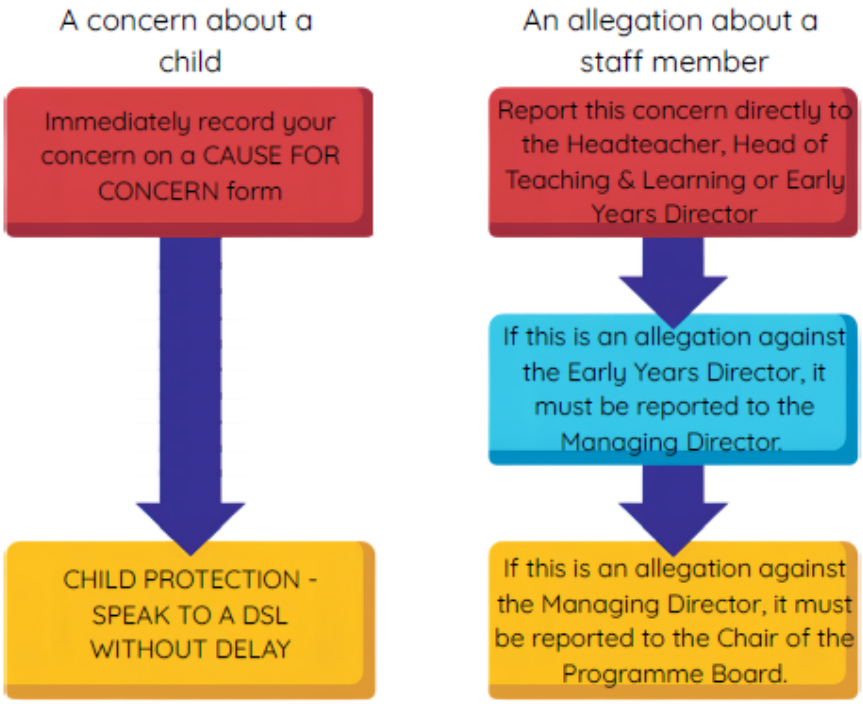
DSLs in Nurseries		
Name	Site	Email
Rachel Thompson	Ark Start Oval	rachel.thompson@arkstart.org.uk
Kristy Bartlett	Ark Start John Archer	kristy.bartlett@arkstart.org.uk
Thushnika Bandaranayake	Ark Start St Clement	thush.bandaranayake@arkstart.org.uk
Emma Lima	Ark Start Brunel	emma.lima@arkstart.org.uk
Mellesha McCoy	Ark Start Globe	mellesha.mccoy@arkstart.org.uk
Edina Viragh	Ark Start South Acton	edina.viragh@arkstart.org.uk
Martell Quamina	Ark Start Earls Court	marterll.quamina@arkstart.org.uk
Rachael Gillies	Ark Start Priestthorpe	rachael.gillies@arkstart.org.uk

What to do if you have a safeguarding concern at Ark Start

Why are you concerned?

- Disclosure /voice of the child /online violation/contextual
- Child's appearance/inappropriate or unsuitable clothing
- Behaviour change /overhear conversation/unseen/truancy
- Witnessed concerning behaviour/ risk to self and others
- Allegation/concern against staff /volunteer (follow managing allegations procedure)

Identify the type of allegation



Ensure your follow up actions...

- Reassure the child and remain with them if they are in immediate danger.
- Never promise the child confidentiality.
- Respond only to clarify the child's concerns.
- Ask open questions; avoid closed or leading questions.
- Clarify the concern by establishing who, what, where, when, why and how.
- Sign and date paper Cause for Concern forms.
- Record the time, day, date and location of the conversation, and who was present.
- Record the child's exact words and any questions you asked. Include sufficient detail.
- Record any marks or bruises, including their location, size and colour (for example, "fingerprint bruise on the right arm, above the elbow, approximately the size of a 2p coin and yellowing", rather than "small bruise on right arm").
- Record facts only; avoid judgements or opinions.
- Act professionally. Do not discuss the matter with others or where you may be overheard.
- Share child protection and safeguarding information only on a need-to-know basis.
- Decide whether a staff allegation is low-level or meets the threshold for referral to the LADO.

Designated Safeguarding Lead reviews referral and makes a decision about next steps. Feedback (on a need to know basis) is given to staff/ referrer on next steps. Seek support for yourself if required from DSL.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Ethos

Ark Start is a community and all those directly connected (staff, parents, families and children) have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure. Ark Start recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children with their best interests at the centre of our work.

Ark Start incorporates our values of **Aim High, Be Kind, Be Brave and Keep Learning** in our safeguarding ethos.

Ark Start recognises the importance of providing an ethos and environment that will help children to feel safe, secure and respected; encourage them to talk openly about anything that worries them; and enable them to feel confident that they will be listened to. Adults take all welfare concerns seriously and are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect; and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

Our safeguarding principles are:

- That nursery is an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children.
- It is everyone's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children as its paramount concern.
- All children regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- All children have a right to be heard and to have their wishes and feelings taken into account.
- All staff understand safe professional practice (inc. role requirements) and adhere to our code of conduct and other associated policies.
- All staff have a responsibility to recognise vulnerability in children and act on any concern in accordance with this guidance.

There are four main elements to our safeguarding policy:

- **Prevention** (e.g., risk assessments, safeguarding policies and procedures, positive, supportive, safe school culture, curriculum and pastoral opportunities for children, safer recruitment procedures);
- **Protection** (by following the agreed procedures, monitoring for compliance against our policies, ensuring all staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to safeguarding concerns);
- **Support** (for all children, parents and staff, and where appropriate specific intervention for those who may be at risk of harm);
- **Working with parents and other agencies** (to ensure appropriate communications and actions are undertaken).

1.2. Definition of safeguarding

Safeguarding is defined as: 'to protect from harm and damage with an appropriate measure' In a nursery, safeguarding involves making sure the children in your nursery are safe from abuse and maltreatment, including but limited to:

- Child protection

- The welfare and safety of a child at home and at nursery
- Recruitment of suitable people
- Medication
- Accidents
- Illness and emergencies
- Safer sleep and safer eating
- Attendance
- Whether the premises and equipment are safe and all health and safety within the nursery

Ark Start's definition of safeguarding includes all the requirements set out in the EYFS Statutory framework: EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers

Child protection is part of this definition, an aspect and refers to activities undertaken on how we respond to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

Children in need: A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local safeguarding partners are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare.

Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Where appropriate we will work with the procedures in place through the three local safeguarding partners.

Ark Start acknowledges that safeguarding is what we do for all children.

Every member of staff at Ark Start recognises that children experiencing specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues identified above are no different to safeguarding against any other vulnerability or concern and will be approached and responded to in the same way as protecting children from any other risks. Staff members are aware that children might not tell them about their abuse and that it maybe that a member of staff overhears a conversation or the child's behaviour changes.

1.3. Meeting the needs of all children

Some children have an increased risk of abuse and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising it or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face. All staff are particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- has special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities or health conditions (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan - EHCP). These children may be more prone to peer group isolation than other children and therefore additional pastoral support is provided.
- is at risk of Child abduction, community safety incidents or exploitation
- whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from nursery to be home educated
- is showing signs of mental health problems can in some cases be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

- is showing signs of Trauma
- has a bereaved parent, grandparent, family member, friend or prominent community link,
- may experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion or heritage
- may experience discrimination due to their gender identification or sexuality (LGBTQ+)
- has English as an additional language
- living with parents who misuse drugs or alcohol
- is known to be living in difficult circumstances, for example living in temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse
- is at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, radicalisation or online grooming
- is an asylum seeker
- is a looked after child, previously looked after or has returned home to their family from care (a 'care leaver')
- is a privately fostered child
- has a parent sent to prison. The National Information Centre of Children of Offenders (NICCO): https://www.nicco.org.uk/ provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

2. KEY ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

2.1. Organisational DSLs/DDSLs /Nursery DSL/DDSLs

Ark Start has an appointed member of the senior leadership team as the Organisational Designated Safeguarding Lead (ODSL). The Ark Start ODSL is Molly Devlin. The DSL takes lead responsibility for the day-to-day oversight and support of safeguarding and child protection systems and wider safeguarding across Ark Start, including centralised services and all nurseries, alongside support from ODSLs.

The ODSL team will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters.
- Help promote educational outcomes, academic progress by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and leadership staff.
- Contribute to the review of records relevant to freedom of information and subject access requests.
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly.

- Keep the Director informed of any safeguarding topics, provide regular data reports, analysis of cases, pattern and trends and informed of any serious safeguarding issues relating to children and staff.
- Liaise with Ark's Head of Safeguarding in reporting serious safeguarding issues relating to children and in matters relating to staff.

The Organisational DSL and DDSLs will undergo appropriate and specific training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role.

It is the role of the Ark Start Nursery DSLs to:

- **Maintain accurate child case records:**
  recording concerns, actions, referrals and updates on FAMLY – safeguarding recording tool, oversight and quality assurance of all cases inc. CiC/PCiC and pupils with a social worker, behaviour, manage and monitor the nursery's part in Early Help / Child in Need / Child Protection / TAC/ TAS plans.
- **Raise awareness about safeguarding:**
  annual audit, training, briefings, network hubs, DSL Champions, digital strategy/awareness & resilience.
- **To make referrals and liaise with other services:**
  to strengthen safeguarding response to Local Authority (MASH/localised), Early Help, leaver/in-year transition, CAMHS, counselling –universal, targeted, specialist interventions and safeguarding partners and other agencies and Professionals as necessary.
- **To support and advise staff**
  Act as the central contact point for all staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns, code of conduct, position of trust, staff concerns, allegations & vulnerabilities, duty of care, professional curiosity and well-being.
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so, ensuring the school is appropriately represented (including Child Protection conferences).
- Contribute to the assessment of children by appropriately sharing information about pupil's welfare, safeguarding or CP concerns with relevant staff and external services.
- Have a good understanding of harmful sexual behaviour, violence and harassment.
- Be confident that they know what local specialist support is available to support all children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment and be confident as to how to access this support.

The DSL and DDSLs will undergo appropriate and specific training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role.

The DSL will share any information about welfare, safeguarding and child protection with the relevant staff. They should ensure that relevant staff know who these children are. This will help the staff understand these pupils' progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high expectations for them.

The DSL will ensure that child chronologies are up to date.

The Director will be kept informed of any significant safeguarding issues that require escalation, developing patterns/trends or additional needs, by the DSL.

The DSL will ensure that the nursery has more than one available emergency contact for pupils. Nursery should have at least two emergency contacts for every child in the school in case of emergencies, and in case, there are welfare concerns at the home.

2.2. The Ark UK Programmes Board

The Ark UK Programmes Board retains statutory responsibility for ensuring that all legal responsibilities in connection with Safeguarding are discharged. The Board adopts the safeguarding policy and procedure adopted by the Ark Schools Board, which itself appoints a Safeguarding Link Trustee to act as the link between the Trustees and the Ark Schools Safeguarding team.

2.3. Members of Staff

All members of staff have a responsibility to:

- provide a safe environment in which children can learn
- maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'** where safeguarding is concerned and to always act in the best interests of the child
- understand Ark Start systems which support safeguarding, including the child protection and safeguarding procedure laid out in the staff handbook, the staff code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs, the Behaviour policy.
- record promptly any safeguarding concern, ~~online violation,~~ or physical restraint incident that you have about a child on a cause for concern form; know the signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines)
- know what to do if a child tells them he/she or that another peer or sibling is being abused or neglected. Members of staff know to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality whilst at the same time liaising with relevant professionals such as the DSL and other agencies as appropriate. Members of staff know they must never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a concern or allegation as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child.

The welfare and safety of children are the responsibility of all staff and ANY concern for a pupil's welfare MUST always be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or DDSL.

If outside of school hours staff have concerns about a child or if you're worried a child in the community is being radicalised, is involved in or at risk from gangs or any other child safety concerns (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger or harm) the NSPCC has a dedicated helpline you can contact: 0800 800 5000 or you can contact the charity at: help@NSPCC.org.uk. If a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999 straight away or call 101 for non-emergency concerns.

3. PROCEDURES FOR SAFEGUARDING A CHILD IN A NURSERY

3.1. Safer sleep

We know that the risk of sleep not handled in a safe way is death.
At Ark Start we:

- Ensure that children sleep in approved and safe sleep equipment; cots for under 12 months, coracles for 12 months-18 months, floor mattresses for 18 months up
- Ensure that children only sleep with safe cellular blankets and otherwise keep the sleep area clear
- Label each child's sleep equipment and clean these at least every two days, or when it is visibly dirty
- Support a child to sleep with; calm sounds, gentle reassurance and help to sleep through rubbing a child's back with only light pressure
- For children 2 or under, they are always placed to sleep on their back. If the move during sleep, we do not move them back, but supervise to ensure that the child remains safely breathing during the rest of their sleep.
- **Never restrain a child, hold them down, cover the heads or put any force to keep a child in a sleep space**
- **Never leave a child in a room unsupervised while sleeping**
- Complete a visible check on sleeping children every 10 minutes for breath movements and a clear airway
- Accurately record a child's nap timings, and any notes where needed on Famly for parents to see

We know that the risk of sleep not handled in a safe way is death.

3.2. Safer eating

We know that children can come to harm through choking, allergies, unsafe food practices or inadequate supervision during mealtimes.
At Ark Start we:

- Gather information about children's allergies, dietary requirements and medical needs before they start nursery
- Create and follow healthcare plans for children with allergies or medical conditions that affect eating
- Ensure all staff are aware of children's allergies and dietary requirements
- Use clear systems, including placemats and food labelling, to prevent children receiving incorrect food
- Supervise children closely while they are eating and drinking – staff sit at the table with children to supervise eating at all times
- Support children to sit safely and eat at a pace appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Prepare, store and serve food in line with food hygiene requirements

- Ensure food is appropriate for children's age and developmental stage to reduce the risk of choking
- Maintain staff training in paediatric first aid, including responding to choking incidents
- Record meals and any relevant concerns on Famly for parents and carers to see

We know that children can come to harm through choking, allergies, unsafe food practices or inadequate supervision during mealtimes.

3.3. Allergies

At Ark Start we:

- Have banned nuts from all Ark Start nurseries, due to the high risk involved in nut allergies
- Ask all parents to share all allergy information during registration
- Meet with all parents before a child starts to confirm all details of any medical needs or allergies as part of the onboarding process
- Create a health care plan for any child with a known allergy, including all information shared by GP or healthcare professionals, which is displayed in nursery and shared with all staff in advance of the child starting
- Create a placemat for the child, colour coded for their need, which is present at every mealtime.
- Uphold the details as per the child's healthcare plan at all times
- Accurately record all children's meals, and any notes where needed on Famly for parents to see

3.4. Attendance

We know that it is our responsibility to understand why a child is not in nursery and ensure that they are safe at home when not attending on a planned day.
At Ark Start we:

- Always log a child's on entry and dismissal time on the Famly app – as close to accurate timings as possible
- Contact a parent about a child not attending nursery on the first day of absence
- If the parent has logged the child's absence on the Famly app, we do not need to reach out for further information, unless the reason for absence is unexpected or unusual
- Contact parents in a way that builds on what we already know about the context of the Famly, eg messaging via the Famly app, a phone call or text, or when collecting a sibling
- Log why the child is absent on Famly registers to keep a record of absence
- Continue to try to contact the family if we do not hear from them
- If a child is absent for an extended period of time, and nursery are unable to get in contact with the family, we will treat this as a safeguarding concern and act appropriately

3.5. Risk Assessments

We know that children can be harmed if risks are not identified and managed appropriately.
At Ark Start we:

- Complete risk assessments for the nursery environment, activities, routines and outings
- Review risk assessments regularly and update them when circumstances change
- Use risk assessments as a dynamic and ongoing process rather than a one-off exercise
- Share relevant risk assessments with staff so everyone understands how to keep children safe
- Take reasonable precautions to reduce risks while allowing children opportunities to learn and develop through age-appropriate challenge and exploration

3.6. Opening and Closing Checklists

We know that children can be harmed when the nursery environment is not safe, secure and ready for use.
At Ark Start we:

- Complete opening and closing checks every day
- Ensure indoor and outdoor environments are safe before children arrive
- Identify and address hazards, damaged equipment or security concerns immediately
- Check that exits, gates and access points are secure
- Report and record any concerns to the nursery leadership team without delay

3.7. Pre-existing Injuries

We know that accurate recording of injuries helps us safeguard children and identify concerns appropriately.
At Ark Start we:

- Ask parents and carers to inform us of any injuries sustained before arriving at nursery
- Record pre-existing injuries accurately, including the location and appearance of any visible mark
- Ensure records are agreed with parents or carers and stored securely
- Monitor any injuries that raise concerns and report safeguarding concerns in line with our safeguarding procedures
- Share concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead where appropriate

3.8. Accidents

We know that prompt and accurate recording of accidents helps keep children safe and supports effective safeguarding.
At Ark Start we:

- Provide appropriate first aid following any accident or injury
- Record all accidents on Famly, regardless of whether a visible mark is left
- Inform parents or carers of accidents and any treatment given on the same day

- Ensure accident records include the context, location of injury and first aid provided
- Monitor accident patterns and review environments, equipment and supervision where needed

3.9. Supervision of Children

We know that children can come to harm if they are not actively supervised.
At Ark Start we:

- Maintain appropriate supervision of children at all times
- Position ourselves so that we can see and hear children during play and routines
- Regularly scan the environment and remain aware of potential risks
- Communicate effectively as a team to ensure all areas remain supervised
- Never leave children unattended or in the care of unauthorised adults

3.10. Free Play and Resources

We know that children learn through play but can be harmed if resources and environments are not used safely.
At Ark Start we:

- Check resources regularly to ensure they are safe, suitable and in good condition
- Remove broken, damaged or unsafe equipment immediately
- Teach children how to use resources safely and respectfully
- Maintain environments that minimise avoidable risks such as slips, trips and collisions
- Supervise children's play and support them to make safe choices

3.11. On Entry and Dismissal

We know that children are particularly vulnerable during arrivals and departures.
At Ark Start we:

- Record children's arrival and departure times on Famly
- Only hand children over to authorised adults
- Use agreed password systems where required
- Ensure the handover of responsibility between nursery and parent is clear and observed
- Prevent unauthorised visitors from accessing areas used by children

3.12. Medication

We know that incorrect administration of medication can place children at significant risk.
At Ark Start we:

- Only administer medication when appropriate permissions have been obtained
- Require medication to be in its original packaging and labelled with the child's details and dosage instructions
- Record all medication administration on Famly

- Follow healthcare plans and medical guidance for children with ongoing medical needs
- Store medication safely and securely, out of children's reach

3.13. Positive Handling

We know that children's safety and dignity must be protected at all times.
At Ark Start we:

- Recognise that behaviour is a form of communication
- Use positive and non-physical strategies to support children wherever possible
- Only use physical intervention as a last resort to prevent harm or maintain safety
- Never use force as a punishment or in a way that causes pain, distress or humiliation
- Record and review any significant incidents involving positive handling

3.14. Safer Recruitment

We know that children can be harmed if unsuitable adults are allowed to work with them.
At Ark Start we:

- Follow safer recruitment procedures when appointing staff and volunteers
- Complete all required suitability and background checks before employment begins
- Verify identity, qualifications and employment history
- Explore any gaps, anomalies or concerns during the recruitment process
- Ensure all staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities from the outset of employment

3.15. Online Safety and Devices

We know that children can be exposed to harm through unsafe use of technology and online content.
At Ark Start we:

- Ensure children only access age-appropriate digital resources
- Supervise the use of technology at all times
- Use secure systems and devices to store children's information
- Respond to online safety concerns in line with safeguarding procedures
- Support children to develop safe and positive attitudes towards technology

3.16. Mobile Phones and Smart Devices

We know that unrestricted use of personal devices can create safeguarding risks for children.
At Ark Start we:

- Ensure personal mobile phones and smart devices are not used in areas where children are present
- Require staff to store personal devices in designated areas during working hours

- Only use nursery-approved devices for recording, communication and observation purposes
- Prohibit the taking of photographs, videos or recordings on personal devices
- Report any misuse of devices immediately to the nursery leadership team or Designated Safeguarding Lead

4. PROCEDURES FOR SAFEGUARDING A CHILD AT HOME

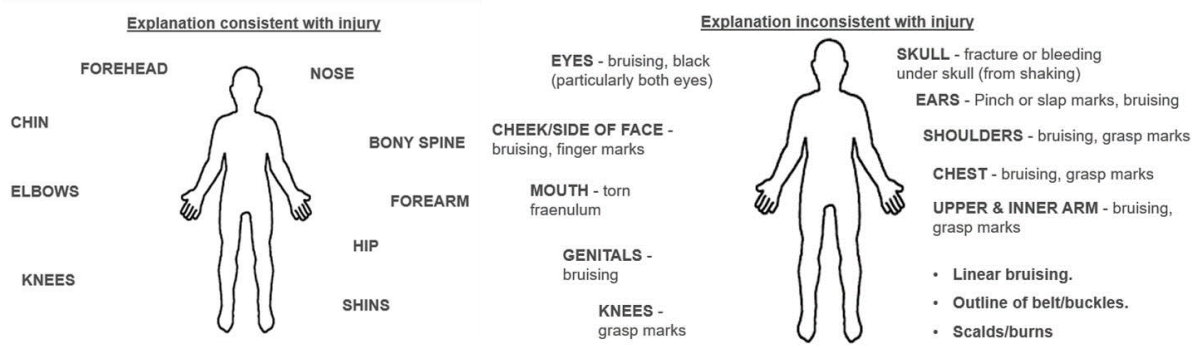
4.1. Indicators of abuse

Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. These threats can take a variety of different forms, including: sexual, physical, and emotional abuse; neglect; exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Whatever the form of abuse or neglect, practitioners should **put the needs of children first** when determining what action to take. It is important to know the signs of abuse and to be alert to the need to consult further and to act if abuse is suspected or taking place.
All staff should be aware of the definitions, signs, and symptoms of abuse. There are four categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Physical Abuse
Hitting, Shaking, Throwing, Poisoning, Burning or Scalding, Drowning, Suffocating, Inducing Illness, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical Symptoms	Behavioural Indicators
• Scratches • Bite marks or welts • Bruises in places difficult to mark (behind ears, groin) • Burns • Untreated injuries	• Self-mutilation tendencies • Chronic runaway (Refers to any young person who persistently tries to runaway) • Aggressive or withdrawn • Fear of returning home • Undue fear of adults • Fearful watchfulness • Going missing/staying out late



Emotional Abuse

May involve conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued insofar as they meet the needs of others.

Physical Symptoms	Behavioural Indicators
• Sudden speech disorders • Wetting and soiling • Signs of mutilation • Frequent vomiting • Substance/alcohol misuse	• Rocking, thumb sucking • Fear of change • Chronic runaway (Refers to any young person who persistently tries to runaway) • Poor peer relationships • Attention seeking behaviour

Sexual Abuse

May involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Physical Symptoms	Behavioural Indicators
• Sore/itching/bleeding in genital areas • Torn/stained/bloody underclothes • Chronic ailments – stomach pains and headaches • Difficulty in walking or sitting • Frequent urinary or yeast infections • STI or STD • Unexplained pregnancy • Bruises inner thighs/buttocks • Anorexic/Bulimic	• Depression/suicide • Inappropriately seductive or precocious • Sexually explicit language • Low self-esteem • Nightmares • Fear of dark • Outbursts of anger or hysteria • Overly protective of siblings • Association with older people • Increased phone activity

Neglect

May involve failure to

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including inadequate caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Respond to a child's basic emotional needs.

Physical Symptoms	Behavioural Indicators
• Constant hunger • Poor state of hygiene or clothing • Medical issues • Emaciation or distended stomach • Tiredness • Exposed to danger, lack of supervision	• Tiredness • Lack of social relationships • Compulsive stealing/begging/scavenging • Frequent absence or lateness • Low self esteem • Lack of focus and ability to concentrate

Further details of the signs and indicators of harm and abuse are included in the Appendix 5 below.

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

Members of staff are aware that child welfare concerns may arise in many different contexts and can vary greatly in terms of their nature and seriousness. For example, children may be abused in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or by a stranger. An adult or adults, or another child or children may abuse them. Their peers, family members, by unknown, or in some cases unidentifiable individuals, may abuse children via the internet. In the case of honour-based abuse, including forced marriage and female genital mutilation, children may be taken out of the country to be abused. An abused child may often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives.

Abuse and neglect can happen over a period of time but can also be a one-off event. This can have major long-term impacts on all aspects of a child's health, development and well-being. Harm can include ill treatment that isn't physical, as well as witnessing the ill treatment of others - for example, the impact of all forms of domestic abuse on children.

The warning signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect can vary from child to child. Children also develop and mature at different rates, so what appears to be worrying behaviour for a younger child might be normal for an older child. Parental behaviours' may also indicate child abuse or neglect, so staff should also be alert to parent-child interactions or concerning parental behaviour's; this could include parents who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if there is a sudden change in their mental health.

By understanding the warning signs, we can respond to problems as early as possible and provide the right support and services for the child and their family. It is important to recognise that a warning sign does not automatically mean a child is being abused.

Ark Start recognises that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected, and/or they might not recognise their experiences as harmful. Children may feel embarrassed, humiliated or threatened due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers. None of this should stop staff from having a 'professional curiosity' and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

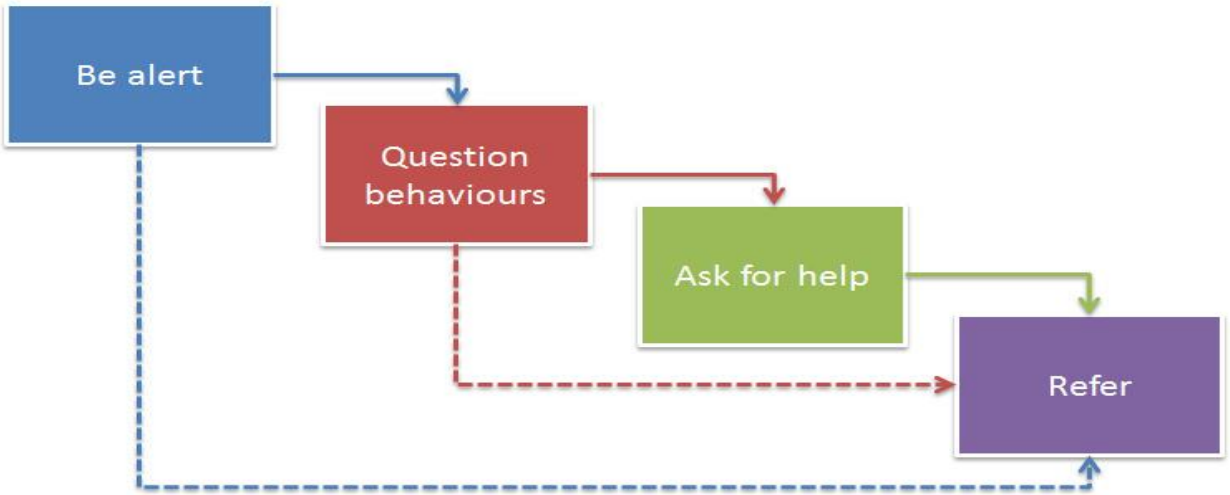
Ark Start staff recognise that knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school or persistent absence or unknown leavers can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may raise concerns about other safeguarding

issues, including the criminal exploitation of children. We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

4.2. Disclosures and concerns

'What to do if you are worried about a child being abused' (DfE 2015) p.12 (s.24) identifies that there are four key steps for professionals to follow to help identify and respond appropriately to possible abuse and/or neglect.

All members of staff are expected to be aware of and follow this approach:



It may not always be appropriate to go through all four stages sequentially and if a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children's social care and/or the police.

The role of the nursery in situations where there are child protection concerns is NOT to investigate but to recognize and refer to children's services and/or the police **immediately,** if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm or is in immediate danger. **Anyone can make a referral** e.g. GOV.UK webpage for reporting child abuse to your local council: https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council

Tell the DSL as soon as possible if you make a referral directly to an external agency.

It is the responsibility of the DSL to receive and collate information regarding individual children, to make immediate and on-going assessments of potential risk and to decide actions necessary (with parents / carers in most cases). This includes the need to make referrals to partner agencies and services.

- To help with this decision s/he may choose to consult with the LA multi agency safeguarding hub (MASH) / social care duty team/ Early Help team.
- Advice may also be sought from Ark Head of Safeguarding.
- Issues discussed during consultations may include the urgency and gravity of the concerns for a child or young person and the extent to which parents/carers are made aware of these.

When to call the police (NPCC)
Ark Start follows the advice 'When to call the police'.

This advice covers the following situations:

- Assault
- Criminal damage
- Cyber crime
- Drugs
- Harassment
- Sexual offences
- Theft
- Weapons

In all but the most exceptional circumstances, parents /carers will be made aware of the concerns felt for a child or young person at the earliest possible stage. In the event of a referral to the LA social care team being necessary, parents/carers will be informed and consent to this will be sought unless there is a valid reason not to do so or if it will place the pupil at further harm or risk.

Responding to disclosures

- Listen – non-judgementally.
- If appropriate, ask open questions to clarify, but do not investigate. (e.g. “Who caused that mark?” Not, “Did your dad hit you?”)
- Do not promise confidentiality – assure him/her that you will try to help but you will have to tell other people to do this. State who this will be (DSL)
- Reassure the student, tell them it is not their fault, and communicate to them that they have a right to be safe and protected.
- Refer - Inform the designated member of staff about your concerns immediately (see DSL)
- Record your concerns on a cause for concern form.
- Seek appropriate support for yourself. Speak with the DSL/DDSL in the first instance.

Recording Concerns

- Record the conversation/concern onto a cause for concern form as soon as possible.
- Record time, day, date, location of conversation and who was present.
- What the child said – using the child’s words. Include any questions you may have asked. Detail is key.
- Make a note of any marks/bruises. This includes placement, size, colour (e.g. “fingerprint bruise on right arm, above the elbow, around the size of a 2p, yellowing in colour”. Not, “small bruise on right arm).
- Avoid recording any judgments or opinions. Remain factual
- Be professional. Do not discuss the matter with others or where you can be overheard.
- Remember that Child Protection and Safeguarding information is only shared on a need to know basis.
- <u>Key Points: if a child discloses abuse, it may be the beginning of a legal process. You could be called to give evidence in court. Ensure your recording is accurate and professional.</u>

- Also be aware that proceedings against a perpetrator can be seriously affected by a suggestion that the child has been led by another person.

4.3. Early Help

All members of staff are made aware of the Early Help process and understand their role within it. This includes identifying emerging problems, liaising with the designated safeguarding lead, sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment and, in some cases, acting as the lead professional in undertaking an early help assessment.
If Early Help is assessed to be appropriate, then the DSL or DDSL will support staff members involved with the family in liaising with other agencies and submitting an Early Help Notification Form. The DSL will keep all early help cases under constant review and will consider making a referral to social care if the situation does not appear to be improving for the child. New referrals to services will be made using the agreed LA multi agency referral form.

4.4. Child on Child Incidents

At Ark Start all staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of nursery.
At Ark Start it is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.
All staff should be clear as to the school's policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.
At Ark Start we will support the victims of child-on-child abuse.

All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports in their school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding child-on-child abuse, they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying with the intent to harm, intimidate or coerce (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- physical abuse with intent to harm such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm

Further information about child-on-child abuse including definitions and indicators is included in KCSIE '23 Annex B and in relation to the school's approach to child-on-child abuse can be found in the Rewards, Praise and Behaviour Policy.

4.5. Radicalisation

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, and nurseries have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'.
Where staff are concerned that children and their families are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalised, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have. The DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency this concern should be referred. This could include Channel guidance, the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, that the headteacher can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321.
Further information about the Prevent Duty and to Prevent Radicalisation including definitions and indicators is included in KCSIE '23 Annex B.

4.6. Our Curriculum and Staying Safe

Ark Start recognise that education settings play an essential role in helping children to understand and identify the parameters of what is appropriate child and adult behaviour; what is 'safe'; to recognise when they and others close to them are not safe; and how to seek advice and support when they are concerned.

At Ark Start children are taught about safeguarding through various teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. Children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

Ark Start will use the curriculum to provide opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, social and emotional understanding, assertiveness and decision making so that pupils have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others.

Ark Start children will be taught about understanding boundaries with their peers, friendships and families in all contexts including online. Children should know how to report concerns and seek advice when they suspect or know something is wrong.

Ark Start plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of an approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain and a culture of zero tolerance to sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by our:

- Behaviour management policy
- Play partner system
- Planned curriculum content that teaches the ideas below in an age-appropriate way:
  - Healthy and respectful relationships
  - Boundaries and consent
  - Inclusivity, prejudice and equality
  - Managing self and self-esteem
  - What it looks like to be a good friend
  - How to fully participate in cultures and communities

Further information in relation to the school's approach to teaching personal, social and emotional development can be found in this policy which is included in the Appendix 3 below.

5. STAFF TRAINING

All members of staff will be trained in the Ark Start Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures (see appendix 2). SLT will also be provided with a copy of part one of the "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (2023) and the Ark Schools Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which covers Safeguarding information. Leaders will read the entire document. Members of staff will sign to confirm that they have read and understood the Ark Start Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures annually.

SLT will read and complete the Ark online KCSIE module to assist further to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities.

The key training elements are:
DSLs – attend LA training every two years; and in addition to formal training, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed at regular intervals, at least annually.

All other staff –will receive appropriate training to ensure they are aware of a range of safeguarding issues (see definition of safeguarding).

All members of staff will be:

- made aware of Ark Start's expectations regarding safe and professional practice via the staff behaviour policy, staff code of conduct and the IT Acceptable Use policy, which is provided and discussed as part of the induction process.
- will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

Safer Recruitment training is available to all relevant staff and governors who are involved in the recruitment process.

Ark Start recognises the expertise, which members of staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns on a daily basis. Opportunity is therefore, provided for all staff to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and the safeguarding policy via involvement in staff departmental meetings.

5.1. Induction

Induction Training – this is mandatory for all new staff and will include;

- the safeguarding and child protection policy;
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies)
- the praise, rewards and behaviour policy;
- the staff Code of Conduct (guiding principals, general conduct, dress code, use of language and communication, banned substances, anti-discrimination, safeguarding and DfE Standards)
- visitors' policy
- site security and access (DBS staff, lanyard protocol, keys and fobbed access, fire exits, lockdown and evacuation procedures)
- school systems, which include (Famly and FAMLY)

5.2. Training

The DSL will ensure that all new staff, including those from Ark central team are appropriately inducted as regards the school's internal safeguarding procedures and communication lines. A summary Safeguarding Handbook is provided for staff and an information leaflet is available to be visitors and volunteers to support this process.

All staff members will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (organised by the DSL) which will enable them to:

- **Recognise** potential safeguarding and child protection concerns involving pupils and adults (colleagues, other professionals and parents/carers)
- **Respond** appropriately to safeguarding issues and take action in line with this policy
- **Record** concerns in line with the school policies
- **Refer** concerns to the DSL and be able to seek support external to the school if required

All staff members and **must** receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) which is regularly updated. In addition, all staff should receive safeguarding and child protection updates (including online safety) (for example, via emails, ebulletins and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to provide them with the skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

This safeguarding policy requires that:

- all staff must be aware of their statutory responsibilities in respect to safeguarding.
- Senior staff **must** read and understand part 1 and annex B of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) and review this guidance at least annually
- all staff **must** sign a declaration at the beginning of each academic year or at induction for in year starters to say that they have read and reviewed the Ark Start safeguarding procedures
- all staff to take appropriate action in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare
- staff complete the e-learning training module on Prevent, produced by the Home Office to equip individuals with the knowledge necessary to help prevent vulnerable people from being exploited and drawn into terrorism and having extremist views.
- all staff read and sign to indicate their understanding of the Ark IT Acceptable Use Agreement when they start at Ark Start.

5.3. Staff Conduct

- All Ark Start members of staff are required to work within clear guidelines on Safe Working Practice outlined within our staff handbook **(also called the staff Code of Conduct).**
- Children may make allegations against staff in situations where they feel vulnerable or where they perceive there to be a possible risk to their welfare. As such, all staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position regarding child protection or potential allegations. For example, it is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in agreed assigned areas.
- Staff should be aware of the guidance on reasonable force. Physical intervention should only be used when the child is endangering him/herself or others Staff should be aware of the school's Behaviour Management Policy; position of trust guidance and

any physical interventions must be in line with agreed policy and procedure in which appropriate training should be provided.

5.4. Managing allegations

Ark Start recognises that it is possible for staff and volunteers to behave in a way that might cause harm to children and takes seriously any allegation received.

We understand that on occasions pupils may make allegations against a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer or contractor however, staff should also take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a pupil where an allegation can be made.

If such an allegation is made;

- the member of staff receiving the allegation will not investigate
- the member of staff will immediately inform the headteacher, in their absence, the member of staff must report the allegation to the Ark Start Director.
- if the allegation concerns the Manager, this must go directly to the Headteacher
- if the allegation concerns the Headteacher, this must go directly to the Director

Ark Start ensures that anything that constitutes an allegation/concern, against a member of staff, volunteer, supply teacher or professional will be dealt with under the specific '**Procedure for Managing Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors'** (Appendix 3). This procedure will be case managed by the Headteacher. All allegations and concerns must be logged on FAMLY by the Headteacher as either meeting threshold (LADO referral) or a low-level concern not meeting threshold.

The Designated Officer (LADO) must be informed of all allegations that come to the headteacher's attention and appear to meet the criteria to discuss the content of the allegation. Ark Start also recognises that, at times, malicious allegations may be made against staff. In such cases, it is important to safeguard the member of staff and support their wellbeing, alongside investigating the reasons why the malicious allegation was made and supporting the child and family through the process of investigation and resolution.
Any historic allegations regarding previous staff or students will be referred to the relevant agencies, including the police.

Low-level concerns
A low-level concern is one which does not meet the threshold as defined above, this does not mean that the concern is insignificant. No matter how small a staff member may perceive their concern if an adult working in or on behalf of the organisation has acted in a way which is:

- inconsistent with the academy's behavioural standards as set out in the code of conduct, disciplinary policy and safeguarding and child protection policy, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- does not meet the threshold or would not be considered serious enough to consider a referral to LADO.

Ark Start recognises that:

- Low-level concerns can arise in several ways from various sources, e.g. suspicion, complaint or a disclosure
- That this behaviour exists on a wide spectrum from thoughtless, context specific actions or that which is intended to enable abuse. It is crucial that all staff feel enabled to raise

such concerns with their manager or DSL and to ensure that such concerns are recorded and dealt with promptly and appropriately
- If you're in any doubt as to whether a low-level concern meets the harm threshold, the Headteacher must consult the local authority designated officer (LADO)

Low-level concerns should be recorded on FAMLY by the Headteacher as ether meeting threshold or not meeting threshold. This record must include:
- name of individual sharing their concerns
- details of the concern
- context in which the concern arose
- action taken

Records must be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and is recommended that it is kept at least until the individual leaves their employment. Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, Ark Start will decide on a course of action, either through its disciplinary procedures or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold, in which case it should be referred to the LADO. Consideration should also be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

Duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service
Ark Start recognises the duty laid out in KCSIE 2022 to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in incidences where an allegation leads to the removal an individual from regulated activity (or would have removed an individual had they not left), if the nursery believes the individual has:
- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults,
- satisfied the harm test in relation to children and/or vulnerable adults; or
- been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence

Ark Start will ensure referrals are made as soon as possible when an individual is removed from regulated activity. This could include when an individual is suspended, redeployed to work that is not regulated activity, dismissed or when they have resigned.

Duty to consider referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency
Ark Start also recognises the duty to consider referring to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as set out in KCSIE 2022 paras. 350 to 351.

5.5. Whistleblowing

A whistleblowing disclosure must be about something that affects the general public such as:
- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- a legal obligation has been breached
- there has been a miscarriage of justice
- the health or safety of any individual has been endangered
- the environment has been damaged
- information about any of the above has been concealed

All staff should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and the senior leadership team will always take such concerns seriously.

All members of staff are made aware of the school's Whistleblowing procedure and that it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child, young person or vulnerable adult at risk. The Ark Whistleblowing Policy should be used in conjunction with the 'Procedure for Managing Safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors' (policy available on the Ark Library; see also Appendix 3 of this policy for more details).

The NSPCC runs a whistleblowing helpline on behalf of the government. Members of Staff can also access this helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding failures internally. Staff can call: **0800 028 0285** (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

5.6. Safer Recruitment

Ark Start is committed to ensure that all steps are taken to only recruit staff and volunteers who are safe to work with our pupils and have their welfare and protection as the highest priority.

Safer recruitment is a set of practices and a vital part of creating a safe and positive environment and making a commitment to keep children safe from harm. Ark Start is responsible for implementing robust safer recruitment practices when recruiting, particularly during the advertising, shortlisting, interviewing and assessment process. Safer recruitment should be a continuing process of improvement.

At Ark Start, the use of the Ark Recruitment & Appointment policy (Appendix 8 of this policy) is to ensure that Ark employs appropriately skilled staff, assist Ark to deter, identify and reject people who are unsuitable to work with children, help promote equality of opportunity and ensure that Ark meets its statutory obligations.

More information on Safer Recruitment can also be found in KCSIE '23 Part three, and in relation to the network approach can be found in The Recruitment and Appointment policy, included in the Appendix 8 below.

6. ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITIES

Ark Start recognises that a key part of safeguarding is proactive, early intervention. To ensure that vulnerable pupils are identified and supported at the earliest opportunity, our staff pay particular attention to early risk factors, particularly those relating to behaviour, mental health and low levels of wellbeing and involvement. It is important that all staff are aware of the link between behaviour, attendance, SEND and safeguarding issues and how they may indicate a child is at risk of harm. Staff must monitor and analyse behaviour and attendance data frequently in order to detect emerging patterns of behaviours or absence.

6.1. Behaviour

Staff should be aware of all procedures in place that monitor children's behaviour and wellbeing.

Ark Start has its own behaviour policy and staff code of conduct which sets out expectations for appropriate behaviour of staff and pupils.

6.2. Attendance

Managers **must be aware of all procedures that monitor children's attendance and absences.**
All staff should be aware that children who are absent from education, going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a significant warning sign. Children going missing may be an early indicator of a range of abuse, such as neglect, including sexual abuse, child criminal exploitation, mental health difficulties, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Children who are absent from education may be at a significant risk of:

- not meeting their academic potential and underachieving
- becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training) in later life
- being victims of harm, abuse or exploitation
- involvement in criminal or gang-related activity.

Ark Start staff recognise that there is a higher proportion of children recorded as missing education when there is a link to poverty, deprivation or involvement with social services.

All Ark Start **staff record attendance on the management information system**.
Emerging patterns of non-attendance should be identified and followed up.

6.3. Mental Health

All staff at Ark Start should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
Education staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

Where staff have a mental health concern about a child that may also be a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken in reporting this concern to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

The DSL will ensure at induction and through regular training that staff are aware of the processes for reporting and escalating concerns about mental health. If a member of staff has a concern about the mental health of a pupil, they should speak to the DSL in the first instance.

6.4. SEND

Ark Start acknowledges that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges as they may have

an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, language and communication needs, which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening, may be abused more than their abled peers, and may find it difficult to express their views, needs and opinions.

Ark Start will ensure that children with SEN and disabilities, specifically those with communication difficulties will be supported to ensure that their voice is heard and acted upon.

Members of staff are encouraged to be aware that children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionally impacted by safeguarding concerns. All members of staff will be encouraged to appropriately explore possible indicators of abuse such as behaviour/mood change or injuries and not to assume that they are related to the child's disability and be aware that children with SEN and disabilities may not always outwardly display indicators of abuse.

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges because:

- there may be assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionally impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
- difficulties may arise in overcoming communication barriers

It is important that SEND needs do not automatically indicate abuse or risk of abuse. However, it is important to ensure that relevant information is shared quickly so that professionals can build a comprehensive well-rounded view of the child's needs.

It is essential that the SENCO and DSL share information throughout the course of each term and work in partnership to quickly identify and action the most appropriate level of support for children at risk. This is key in ensuring that holistic support is in place for our vulnerable children, at the very earliest opportunity.

Further information in relation to the school's approach to SEND can be found in our full SEND policy.

6.5. LGBTQ+

We recognise that a child or young person may be LGBTQ+ is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBTQ+ can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBTQ+ (whether or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBTQ+. Children may also be isolated at home or become homeless after coming out as LGBTQ+.

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBTQ+ lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. We endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced for our pupils by having a safe space for them to speak to someone or identifying relevant members of staff to speak with.

6.6. Children with a social worker

At Ark Start we recognise that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that the child is more at risk than most pupils.

This may mean that they are more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and poor mental health.

We take these needs into account when making plans to support pupils who have a social worker.

6.7. Children who are absent from Education

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding.

At Ark Start we monitor attendance carefully while recognising that nursery is not statutory and families may have multiple reasons for removing children from nursery.

We will follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at nursery where we have a concern. In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) the school has:

1. Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).
3. Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

Further information about children who are absent from education including definitions and indicators is included in KCSIE '23 Annex B and our full policy can be found in the Appendix 7 below.

6.8. Domestic abuse

Ark Start recognises that witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse. As such, staff are expected to report concerns using the usual safeguarding procedures.

The statutory definition for Domestic Abuse can be found in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and is included in the Appendix 6 below.

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children who sees, hears, or experiences the effects of, domestic abuse and is related to or under parental responsibility of the person being abused or the perpetrator is also to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse.

At Ark Start we recognise that:

- children who witness domestic abuse are also victims
- witnessing domestic abuse can have a lasting impact on children
- children can be victims, and perpetrators, in their own relationships too
- the abuse can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological or emotional
- extra-familial harms can include sexual harassment and domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationships)
- Added to the definition of abuse that harm can include ill treatment that isn't physical, as well as witnessing the ill treatment of others - for example, the impact of all forms of domestic abuse on children

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 National Domestic Abuse helpline can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Further information can also be found here.

7. RECORD KEEPING

7.1. FAMLY

Staff will record any safeguarding concern, first aid incident or physical restraint incident that they have about a child on a cause for concern form. All referrals must be passed without delay to the DSL. The DSL will record these concerns on FAMLY the safeguarding all-in-one online recording tool. Records will be completed as soon as possible after the incident/event, using the child's words where necessary, and will be signed and dated and uploaded onto FAMLY.

Safeguarding records are kept for individual children and are maintained separately from all other records relating to the child in school. Safeguarding records are kept in accordance with data protection legislation and retained centrally and securely by the DSL and are shared with staff on a 'need to know' basis only.

7.2. Confidentiality, Information Sharing and GDPR

Ark Start recognises that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. The Headteacher or DSL will only disclose information about a pupil to other members of staff on a 'need to know' basis.

All members of staff must be aware that whilst they have duties to keep any information about children, families and colleagues, which have, access to because of their role confidential, they also have a professional responsibility to share information if it is necessary and proportionate with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. Everyone in this school who deals with personal data shares the responsibility for data protection.

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes. Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.

Ark Start has clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes:

If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share

information without consent if: it is not possible to gain consent; it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent; or if to gain consent would place a child at risk. Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests. Further advice on responding to disclosures can be found above and in the Safeguarding Handbook.

Regarding confidentiality if a victim asks the school not to tell anyone **about the sexual violence or sexual harassment** there's no definitive answer. This is because even if a victim doesn't consent to sharing information, staff may still lawfully share it if there's another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies.

- Staff shouldn't promise confidentiality as it might be in the victim's best interest to seek advice and guidance.
- The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children
- The DSL should consider that:
  - Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
  - The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care
  - Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police.

At Ark Start regarding anonymity, all staff will:

- Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system
- Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved
- Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities

All staff are directed to the government's information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners for further information which includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information as set out below:

1. Remember that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the individual (and / or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice from other practitioners, or your information governance lead, if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
4. Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or

requesting personal information from someone, be clear of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.

5. Consider safety and well-being: base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

Ark Start ensures that policies, training and practice give staff the confidence to know when, how and to whom they can share sensitive information when dealing with a safeguarding concern. The annual safeguarding training also covers how to record that information in a neutral and professional manner, focusing on what is necessary for the safeguarding purpose. If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL or Data Protection Officer/Lead.

7.3. Transferring Records

All safeguarding records will be transferred in accordance with data protection legislation to a child's subsequent school/setting, under confidential and separate cover to the new DSL or Headteacher and a receipt of delivery will be obtained.

Appendix 1 – Policies

Intimate care
It is essential that every child is treated as an individual and that care is given as gently and as sensitively as possible. As far as possible, the child should be allowed to exercise choice and should be encouraged to have a positive image of his/her own body. It is important for staff to bear in mind how they would feel in the child's position. Given the right approach, intimate care can provide opportunities to teach children about the value of their own bodies, to develop their safety skills and to enhance their self-esteem. Parents and staff should be aware that matters concerning intimate care will be dealt with confidentially and sensitively and that the young persons' right to privacy and dignity is maintained at all times.

Refer to the Ark Start handbook for further information.

Appendix 2 – Further Information

2.1 Children in Care (CiC – Previously referred to as LAC)
A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a looked after child. Looked after children are also often referred to as children in care, a term which many children and young people prefer.
Looked after children are:

- living with foster parents
- living in a residential children's home or
- living in residential settings like schools or secure units.

There are a variety of reasons why children and young people enter care.

- The child's parents might have agreed to this – for example, if they are too unwell to look after their child or if their child has a disability and needs respite care.
- The child could be an unaccompanied asylum seeker, with no responsible adult to care for them.
- Children's services may have intervened because they felt the child was at significant risk of harm. If this is the case the child is usually the subject of a court-made legal order.

A child stops being looked after when they are adopted, return home or turn 18. However local authorities are required to support children leaving care at 18 until they are at least 21. This may involve them continuing to live with their foster family.

Designated person – Children in Care (CiC) & Previously Children in Care (PCiC)
Ark Start designated leads for Children in Care: Molly Devlin

The designated person will have a critical role in, helping other members of staff to understand how different things, may affect Previous Children in Care - CiC (Previously referred to as Looked After Children - PLAC). They will be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of separation and loss from birth families.
Please visit for further DfE guidance -
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

2.2 The use of premises by other organisations

Ark Start does not share premises with other organisations. However, there may be times when the host site is renting out space to externa organisations. Ark Start must work with the host organisation to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe.

2.3. Site Security
All members of staff have a responsibility for maintaining awareness of buildings and grounds security and for reporting concerns that may become known. Ark Start operate within a whole- community ethos and welcome comments from children, parents and others about areas that may need improvement as well as what we are doing well.
Appropriate checks will be undertaken in respect of visitors and volunteers coming into school as outlined within guidance. Visitors will be expected to sign in and out via the visitors log system and to display a visitor's badge whilst on school site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable should be challenged for clarification and reassurance.

Ark Start will not accept the behaviour of any individual (parent or other) that threatens staff /security or leads others (child or adult) to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse access for that individual onto the school site.

Appendix 3 - Signs and indicators of harm and abuse

What is Child Abuse?
The following definitions are taken from '*working together to safeguard children* HM Government (2018)'. In addition to these definitions, it should be understood that children can also be abused by honour-based violence, forced marriage or female genital mutilation.

What is abuse and neglect?
Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

3.1 What is physical abuse?
Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
Indicators of physical abuse / factors that should increase concern

- Multiple bruising or bruises and scratches (especially on the head and face)
- Clusters of bruises – e.g., fingertip bruising (caused by being grasped)
- Bruises around the neck and behind the ears – the most common abusive injuries are to the head
- Bruises on the back, chest, buttocks, or on the inside of the thighs
- Marks indicating injury by an instrument – e.g., linear bruising (stick), parallel bruising (belt), marks of a buckle
- Bite marks
- Deliberate burning may also be indicated by the pattern of an instrument or object – e.g.electric fire, cooker, cigarette

- Scalds with upward splash marks or *tide marks*
- Untreated injuries
- Recurrent injuries or burns
- Bald patches.

In the social context of the school, it is normal to ask about a noticeable injury. The response to such an enquiry is generally light-hearted and detailed. So, most of all, concern should be increased when:

- the explanation given does not match the injury
- the explanation uses words or phrases that do not match the vocabulary of the child (adult's words)
- no explanation is forthcoming
- the child (or the parent/carer) is secretive or evasive
- the injury is accompanied by allegations of abuse or assault

You should be concerned if the child or young person:

- is reluctant to have parents/carers contacted
- runs away or shows fear of going home
- is aggressive towards themselves or others
- flinches when approached or touched
- is reluctant to undress to change clothing for sport
- wears long sleeves during hot weather
- is unnaturally compliant in the presence of parents/carers.
- has a fear of medical help or attention
- admits to a punishment that appears excessive.

3.2 What is emotional abuse?

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

Indicators of emotional abuse/Developmental issues

- Delays in physical, mental and emotional development
- Poor school performance
- Speech disorders, particularly sudden disorders or changes.

Behaviour

- Acceptance of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation (I'm stupid, ugly, worthless etc)
- Neurotic behaviour (such as rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- Self-mutilation

- Suicide attempts
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging
- Poor trust in significant adults
- Regressive behaviour – e.g., wetting
- Eating disorders
- Destructive tendencies
- Neurotic behaviour
- Arriving early at school, leaving late

Social issues

- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Withdrawal from social interaction
- Over-compliant behaviour
- Insecure, clinging behaviour
- Poor social relationships

Emotional responses

- Extreme fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations (“I deserve this”)
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Self-disgust
- Low self-esteem
- Unusually fearful with adults
- Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

3.3 What is sexual abuse?

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Characteristics of child sexual abuse:

- it is often planned and systematic – people do not sexually abuse children by accident, though sexual abuse can be opportunistic
- grooming the child – people who abuse children take care to choose a vulnerable child and often spend time making them dependent
- grooming the child’s environment – abusers try to ensure that potential adult protectors (parents and other carers especially) are not suspicious of their motives.

Indicators of sexual abuse Physical observations

- Damage to genitalia, anus or mouth
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Unexpected pregnancy, especially in very young girls

- Soreness in genital area, anus or mouth and other medical problems such as chronic itching
- Unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections and discharges or abdominal pain

Behavioural observations

- Sexual knowledge inappropriate for age
- Sexualised behaviour or affection inappropriate for age
- Sexually provocative behaviour/promiscuity
- Hinting at sexual activity Inexplicable decline in school performance
- Depression or other sudden apparent changes in personality as becoming insecure or clinging
- Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness
- Socially isolated or withdrawn
- Overly-compliant behaviour
- Acting out, aggressive behaviour
- Poor trust or fear concerning significant adults
- Regressive behaviour, onset of wetting, by day or night; nightmares
- Onset of insecure, clinging behaviour
- Arriving early at school, leaving late, running away from home
- Suicide attempts, self-mutilation, self-disgust
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Eating disorders or sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism.

3.4 What is Neglect?

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)

- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child 's basic emotional needs. Neglect is a lack of parental care, but poverty and lack of information or adequate services can also be contributory factors.

Physical indicators of neglect

- Constant hunger and stealing food
- Poor personal hygiene - unkempt, dirty or smelly
- Underweight
- Dress unsuitable for weather
- Poor state of clothing
- Illness or injury untreated

Behavioural indicators of neglect

- Constant tiredness
- Frequent absence from school or lateness
- Missing medical appointments
- Isolated among peers
- Frequently unsupervised
- Stealing or scavenging, especially food
- Destructive tendencies

3.5 Signs and Indicators of CCE/CSE/County Lines

Child Sexual Exploitation

Children and young people under the age of sixteen cannot, by law, consent to sexual intercourse and anyone engaging in sexual activity with a child under the age of sixteen is committing an offence. Whilst the age of consent is sixteen, it is illegal for those under eighteen to be paid for sexual services in money or in kind. All children involved in sexual exploitation should be treated as victims of abuse, even those aged between 16 and 18. Concern that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be involved in sexual exploitation or at risk of being drawn into it should always initiate action to ensure child's safety and welfare.

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.
(National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People 2008)

Although the definition of sexual exploitation is long and detailed, in essence such abuse is characterised by children and young people receiving goods, favours or money in return for sexual activities. In all such exploitation, the balance of power remains with the abuser(s) through age, intellect or resources.

Children are at risk of sexual exploitation through the internet and, particularly social media. Young people may be groomed to share indecent images with others on the internet, who may be adults posing as teenagers. The prevalence of 'sexting' is a significant risk factor.

Models of Sexual Exploitation

Three models of sexual exploitation have been identified;

Inappropriate Relationship	**Boyfriend**	**Organised Crime**

One abuser Power and control Physical, emotional, financial Believe abuser is offering a genuine relationship Often a significant age gap	Initially, one abuser, grooming and gaining trust Apparently consensual sexual relationship starts Relationship becomes abusive Victim threatens with violence and forced to engage in sexual activity with others Growth in peer exploitation	Involving criminal gangs trafficking victims around the UK and the world Established networks across the UK move victims from location to location Forced or coerced into sexual activity with multiple partners Involves buying and selling of young people

Sexual exploitation affects both males and female. Services working with sexually exploited young people suggest that around a third of victims are male. There are a number of risk factors which raise the risk of such abuse:

- a history of running away or going missing
- homelessness
- those in care or care--leavers (especially residential care)
- young people with learning difficulties
- migrant children
- unaccompanied asylum--seeking children
- those disengaged from education
- young people involved in substance misuse
- young people in gangs
- poor mental health
- parental drug/alcohol misuse
- disrupted family life
- domestic violence
- history of physical or sexual abuse

Sexual exploitation takes many forms and a range of coercive techniques is used from grooming and the development of a 'consensual' relationship, through to extreme violence. Abusers target areas where children and young people meet with a reduced level of supervision, including shopping centres, takeaways, cinemas, bus or train stations and local parks. Much of this exploitation occurs in private, away from known areas of prostitution, saunas or massage parlours.

Warning Signs

- Going missing for periods of time
- Returning home late
- Disengagement from education
- Poor school attendance (including truancy and school exclusions)
- Appearing with unexplained gifts: clothes, jewellery, trainers, phones, money
- Associating with others involved in sexual exploitation

- Frequently in the company of older people, particularly boyfriends or girlfriends
- Poor sexual health
- Mood swings/poor anger control/changes in emotional well--being
- Drug and alcohol misuse (often a method of increasing compliance)
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour, especially around strangers
- Association with 'risky' adults
- Chronic tiredness
- Secretive behaviour
- Low-level crime, e.g. Shoplifting
- Self-harm
- Talking about visiting different areas, especially at night

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
The Home Office definition
Child criminal exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Criminal exploitation of children… includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft'.

Criminal exploitation has received considerable media coverage in the last year and there is a particular focus on the risks of county lines activity. This is when individuals or gangs use vulnerable children and adults to transport and sell Class A drugs, primarily from urban areas into market or coastal towns or rural areas to establish new drug markets or take over existing ones. They also use children to transport and hide weapons and to secure dwellings of vulnerable people in the area, so that they can use them as a base from which to sell drugs.

Further information:

- The sexual exploitation of children: it couldn't happen here, **could it? (Ofsted 2014)**
- Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation (DCSF 2009)
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/278849/Safeguarding_Children_and_Young_People_from_Sexual_Exploitation.pdf
- Puppet on a string: The urgent need to cut children free from sexual exploitation (Barnardos 2011)
- http://www.barnardos.org.uk/ctf_puppetonastring_report_final.pdf
- If only someone had listened: Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and(Office of the Children's Commissioner 2013)

County Lines
County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line".
Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

Further information about County lines including definitions and indicators is included in KCSIE '23 Annex B.

3.6 Serious Violence

Ark Start staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime.
These may include:

- increased absence from school,
- 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,
- 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.

Ark Start should be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as:

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

Advice for schools is provided in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.

Further information about serious crime is included in KCSIE '23 Annex B.

3.7 Honour based abuse (HBA)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBA, they must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

Further information about 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) including definitions and indicators is included in KCSIE '23 Annex B and in relation to the school's approach to 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) can be found in Appendix A of this policy.

3.8 Signs and symptoms of female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM is an illegal, extremely harmful practice and a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls.

FGM is a collective term for all procedures involving partial or total removal of external female genitalia for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. Typically, it is performed on girls aged between 4 -15 or on older girls before marriage or pregnancy. **It is illegal in the UK and it is also illegal to take a child abroad to undergo FGM. There is a maximum prison sentence of 14 years for anyone found to have aided this procedure in any way.**
Risk factors for FGM include:

- low level of integration into UK society
- mother or a sister who has undergone FGM
- girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- visiting female elder from the country of origin
- being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman

Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), **there is a specific legal duty on teachers.**

Where there is a disclosure of FGM all staff at Ark Start know what their statutory response should be and follow 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022), paragraph 44, *'whilst **all** staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific **legal duty on teachers**. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police*'.

Once concerns have been raised about FGM, there should also be a consideration of potential risk to other girls in the family and practicing community. Professionals should be alert to the fact that any one of the girl children amongst these groups could be identified as being at risk of FGM and may need to be safeguarded from harm.

This link provides full guidance for mandatory reporting.

Further information about FGM, including resources for schools, can be found here: http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/

3.9 Contextual safeguarding
Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.
At Ark Start we work closely with children's social care practitioners, child protection systems and wider safeguarding partnerships to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse beyond their front doors.

At Ark Start all staff assess the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of its pupils.

Extra-familial contexts include young people's peer groups, support networks, online contacts, and local community or neighbourhood. Safeguarding concerns in these contexts

could consist of harassment or violence from their peers, a risk of grooming – whether online or in person – high levels of crime or gang violence in your local area, or even a local park where frequent incident reports have been made.

As well as involving wider consideration of contexts, contextual safeguarding entails a different method of intervention from the traditional approach. In the past, all interventions have taken place with the young person and their family, regardless of where the harm originated from. However, it has been shown that this is inadequate in cases of extra-familial abuse; parents do not have any control over these outside contexts, and cannot change them

Further information about 'Contextual safeguarding including definitions and indicators is included in KCSIE '23 Annex B

3.10 Domestic Abuse

Definition

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

a) physical or sexual abuse;
b) violent or threatening behaviour;
c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
d) economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and
e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.

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

3.11 Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) with someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. It is not private fostering if the arrangement was made by social services.

Examples of private fostering situations include:

- children and teenagers living apart from their families for a variety of reasons e.g. if a parent is ill, has had to temporarily move for work or there has been an argument within the family
- children with parents working or studying elsewhere in the UK
- children with parents overseas
- children on holiday exchanges

Current arrangements for the regulation of private fostering originate from concern following the death of Victoria Climbié in 2000. Victoria was privately fostered by her great aunt. Arrangements were codified in the Children Act 2004. Following this, the Children (Private Arrangement for Fostering) Regulations 2005 set out the duties of local authorities in their arrangements for private fostering, and national minimum standards for local authorities were published in 2005.

Appendix 4 - Statutory legislation and guidance documents links

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (March 2015)
Education Inspection Framework and handbooks (April 2021)
Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021
Use of reasonable force: advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2013)
Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners (DfE, 2018)
Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales' (2015)
Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
The Children Act 1989
The Children Act 2004
Domestic Abuse Act 2021
Education Act 2002
The Children and Families Act 2014
SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE 2017)
Mental Health & Behaviour in Schools Nov 2018
Disqualification under the Childcare Act (DfE, 2006)
The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
School attendance August 2020
Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance (July 2017)
The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974,
Safeguarding and Remote Education
Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people (Dec 2020)
Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
Statutory guidance on FGM
The Human Rights Act 1998,
The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
The Equality Act 2010
The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Information Protection Regulations
Serious Crime Act 2015 (*sets out a duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18).*
The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, 2019 (which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act)
'When to call the police' Guidance for schools and colleges, produced by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) 2020.
Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement

Appendix 5 - Safeguarding Issues that can place children at risk of harm (external links to further guidance/advice)

Abuse
Bullying including cyberbullying
Children and the Court System (Ages 5-11)
Children and the Court System (Ages 12-17)
Children with family members in prison
Child Missing from Education
Child Missing from home or care
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adult's county lines
Domestic Abuse
Drug Advice for Schools
Fabricated or Induced Illness
Faith or Belief Based Abuse
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
Forced Marriage
Gangs and Youth Violence
Gender based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
Hate
Homelessness
Mental health
Child on child
Private fostering
Preventing radicalisation
Protecting children from radicalisation
Consensual and non-consensual sharing nudes and semi nudes
Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
Serious Violence
Trafficking and modern slavery
Up-skirting

Appendix 6 - Recruitment & Appointment Policy

https://arkschools.sharepoint.com/ArkNetCentral/policies/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2FArkNetCentral%2Fpolicies%2FShared%20Documents%2FOur%20People