Children at greater risk of harm page summary

Some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm; this includes children with SEND, those requiring mental health support, those who are absent from education, children with a Social Worker, Looked After and Previously Looked After children, those who are privately fostered and those who are LGBTQ+

SEND
Children with SEND are more likely than their peers to experience online issues such as cyberbullying, online grooming, radicalisation and exploitation. Similarly, children with SEND are more likely to have their internet use restricted and therefore have limited opportunities to learn through experience, develop resilience or seek support, which would empower them to use technology safely. Additional barriers for SEND include:
- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges
- cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

Schools will implement a range of targeted and differentiated strategies to enable learners with SEND to access the internet safely and appropriately such as instead of saying: "Don't share personal information online", consider a more realistic statement: "Always ask your trusted adult, before sharing personal information online".

Children Requiring Mental Health Support
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. Any concerns are logged on CPOMS, and teachers identify key factors of mental health on the RAPs/shared documents so that these can be easily seen in combination, and then supported. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL.

Children absent from Education
DSLs are involved in discussions about children who are persistently/severely absent from school. There are clear processes in place for following up and seeing children who are not regularly in school. See **child protection and safeguarding** and **attendance** policies.

Elective home education
Heads work with Kent LA and parents/carers to ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of the child.

Child with a social worker
Heads/DSLs will work with the social worker who is registered with the family to provide support and information.

Looked after children/previously looked after children and care leavers
The 'designated teacher' in each school will work with the DSL to ensure all staff have the information they need.

Children who are privately fostered
Private fostering is when a child under 16 is cared for by a person who does not have parental responsibility or a relative where this is for more than 28 days. This information will be made available to the DSLs and logged on CPOMS.

LGBTQ+
Some children who are LGBTQ+ can be targeted in the wider community which makes them vulnerable. The schools ensure a trusted adult for these children so they can speak out safely. LGBTQ+ teaching is part of the SRE curriculum.

Policy document for: **Supporting children at greater risk from harm**
Updated: April 2024 <mark>Sept 2025</mark>
Review: <mark>Sept 2026</mark>

This policy forms part of the Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and gives specific school actions in relation to their context.

Linked guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education

Staff must remember contextual safeguarding. When considering safeguarding incident or behaviour concerns, all assessments must consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. This is an approach to understanding and responding to children's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. This includes online abuse.

Whilst **all** children should be protected, each BA-MAT school acknowledges that some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm. This includes children with SEND, those requiring mental health support, those who are absent from education, children with a Social Worker, Looked After and Previously Looked After children, those who are privately fostered and those who are LGBTQ+

Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in these groups of children.

Barriers include:
- Being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming barriers;
- The potential for children with SEND to be disproportionally impacted by negative behaviours, such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs;
- Assuming that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration

Changes in wellbeing or behaviour are recognised as a possible safeguarding risk and investigated in line with the policy.

Online safety

Whilst the internet, apps, games and social media forums can provide positive opportunities, it is important to monitor what children are accessing to ensure it is appropriate and safe. Where children are able to communicate verbally, a non-confrontational conversation about what they enjoy doing online and looking at the things, they like to look at, play or watch will enable this.

BA MAT schools have appropriate firewall systems in place which block access to inappropriate content, along with weekly reporting to the DSLs. However, staff are aware that this may not be the case in the home setting, or on pupil used mobile devices. The schools work alongside their parents and carers to provide information about how to monitor online access and how to set parental controls. Additionally, the schools send out #wakeupwednesday which provides weekly information to parents about online risks, platforms and social media, along with a parent portal and training. See also:

Online safety, harmful behaviour, harmful content, sharing nudes and semi-nudes, child protection and safeguarding, safely using digital devices and social media, cyber bullying, generative AI and filtering & monitoring policies

Safeguarding Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)

The internet and technology are an integral part of everyday life for children. It is important that we acknowledge the positive opportunities the internet provides for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND); the accessibility of images and video online make it an excellent learning tool, whilst global connectivity enables children with SEND to socialise and access support. BA MAT schools acknowledge that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and barriers for recognising abuse, neglect or exploitation.

However, children with SEND are more likely than their peers to experience online issues such as cyberbullying, online grooming, radicalisation and exploitation. Similarly, children with SEND are more likely to have their internet use restricted and therefore have limited opportunities to learn through experience, develop resilience or seek support, which would empower them to use technology safely. The CEOP link https://new.thinkuknow.co.uk/professionals/resources/know-your-friends-with-josh-and-sue/ can be used to support SEND children in understanding basic online safety rules.

We recognise that children with SEND may face additional communication barriers and experience difficulties in managing or reporting abuse or challenges. Children with SEND will be appropriately supported to communicate and ensure that their voice is heard and acted upon. This is particularly the case at Aspire school where the children have EHCP for ASD and/or Speech, Language and Communication Needs.

At Aspire school, where there are many such children, we use Communication In Print (Widgit) communication boards around the school. This is also true in the main stream schools where communication boards are in use for the children who are Pathway 1 & 2 children.

All members of staff are encouraged to appropriately explore potential indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, such as behaviour, mood changes or injuries and not to assume that they are related to the child's special educational needs or disability.

Staff are trained to be aware that SEND children are potentially more at risk of sexual violence and sexual harassment from their peers and to the additional risks they may face online e.g. online bullying, grooming and radicalisation. DSL's and the Online Safety team lead on ensuring that SEND children are enabled to stay safe online as the schools recognise that internet and social media forums enable children with SEND to make friends without having to communicate face-to-face, building friendships and relationships which they may not have in their offline life.

All members of staff will be encouraged to appropriately explore possible indicators of abuse such as behaviour, mood changes or injuries and not to assume that they are related to the child's disability. Staff will be mindful that children with SEND, or certain medical conditions may be disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.

Members of staff are encouraged to be aware that children with SEND, or certain medical conditions, can be disproportionally impacted by safeguarding concerns or behaviour, such as exploitation, peer group isolation or bullying including prejudice-based bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.

Additional barriers for SEND include:
- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration

- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges
- cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so.

To address these additional challenges, our school/college will always consider implementing extra pastoral support and attention for children with SEND. The DSL will work closely with the SENCO in each mainstream school to plan support as required.

Our schools have robust intimate care policies which ensure that the health, safety, independence, and welfare of children is promoted, and their dignity and privacy are respected. Arrangements for intimate and personal care are open and transparent and accompanied by robust recording systems. Further information can be found in our **intimate care** policy.

Our SEND team support the development of our policies so that these barriers are given consideration. We meet as a team of DSLs on a regular basis, so we share the caseload and bring fresh eyes to all open cases so that we can carefully reflect on these additional barriers for our children. This caseload review means we can spot any patterns or exceptions for the children and take rapid action.

All schools 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 by 1:1 support and communication interventions, such as Communicate in Print and British Sign Language/Makaton.

Our PSHE & SRE curriculum are designed with our pupils in mind, so contextual issues are addressed. The curriculum delivery allows for the 'over learning' of key messages about being safe, what is safe and unsafe, consistency in rules and clarity in their meaning (to reduce abstraction) and use of prompts to remind children who have memory issues.

Aspire school

Additional support is in place for children at Aspire school where the small classes mean that teaching teams know their children extremely well to support identifying where behaviour may change. The CEOP link https://new.thinkuknow.co.uk/professionals/resources/know-your-friends-with-josh-and-sue/ can be used to support SEND children in understanding basic online safety rules. The **safely using of digital devices and social media** policy for pupils and parents includes Communicate in Print images to support understanding of keeping safe online.

Online safety messages

For some pupils, the use of abstract language and concepts can lead to confusion, frustration and misunderstandings. It is important that settings work together with their learners to build and develop a collaborative understanding of the terminology being used.

Online safety is a fundamental part of our safeguarding responsibilities, and our schools will implement a range of targeted and differentiated strategies to enable learners with SEND to access the internet safely and appropriately. For example:

- What does the term 'online predator' mean to a child with SEND? Is it a dangerous person or a wild animal?
- Is an online contact still a stranger if you know their name or they send a 'friend request'?
- If you must never share personal information online, how do you tell online shops where to deliver your orders?

We are mindful that there are usually exceptions to rules which can sometimes be difficult for children with SEND to accept; ensure the 'rules' you provide are clear, consistent and not left open to interpretation. For example a learner who finds it difficult to understand abstract meaning may not be able to interpret hidden messages or metaphors in many popular video resources. We adapt our online safety messages such as instead of saying: "Don't share personal information online", consider a more realistic statement: "Always ask your trusted adult, before sharing personal information online".

Many learners with SEND will want to engage in the same activities as their peers, but may lack the understanding, skills or support to do so safely. Using the support of parents/carers, we implement a small step approach to online access, enabling learners to develop experiences and build resilience in the online environment.

Online safety education does not just take place within computing lessons but should form part of an embedded and progressive curriculum, including appropriate PSHE and Sex and Relationships Education (SRE).

One-off events or assemblies, provided by external visitors, cannot be as effective as directed, differentiated teaching which addresses the specific needs and vulnerabilities of your learners.

When teaching about online safety, learners with SEND may need:

- Complex online safety issues to be broken down and explained in greater detail
- To explore issues in a variety of contexts and approaches
- More examples of safe and unsafe practices
- Constant reinforcement and repetition of key safety messages
- Differentiated teaching resources and materials

Visual resources and verbal support can be useful for learners with SEND, but some learners may respond better to multi-media content such as videos, interactive presentations, screensavers or spoken/ sound recordings that they can associate with 'good' or 'bad' decisions. 'Know your friends with Josh and Sue' is an illustrated video from CEOP which uses clear facial expressions and visual clues to communicate basic online safety rules.

Some learners with SEND may intentionally test boundaries and contravene the rules in the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for pupils, which is given consideration in the writing of the policy. We also consider:

- Do all learners recognise and understand safe and unsafe behaviour online?
- Can they transfer rules about safety, or skills, from one activity and apply it to the online environment?
- Are there appropriate boundaries and support networks for learners at school?
- Are there appropriate boundaries and positive role models for learners at home?
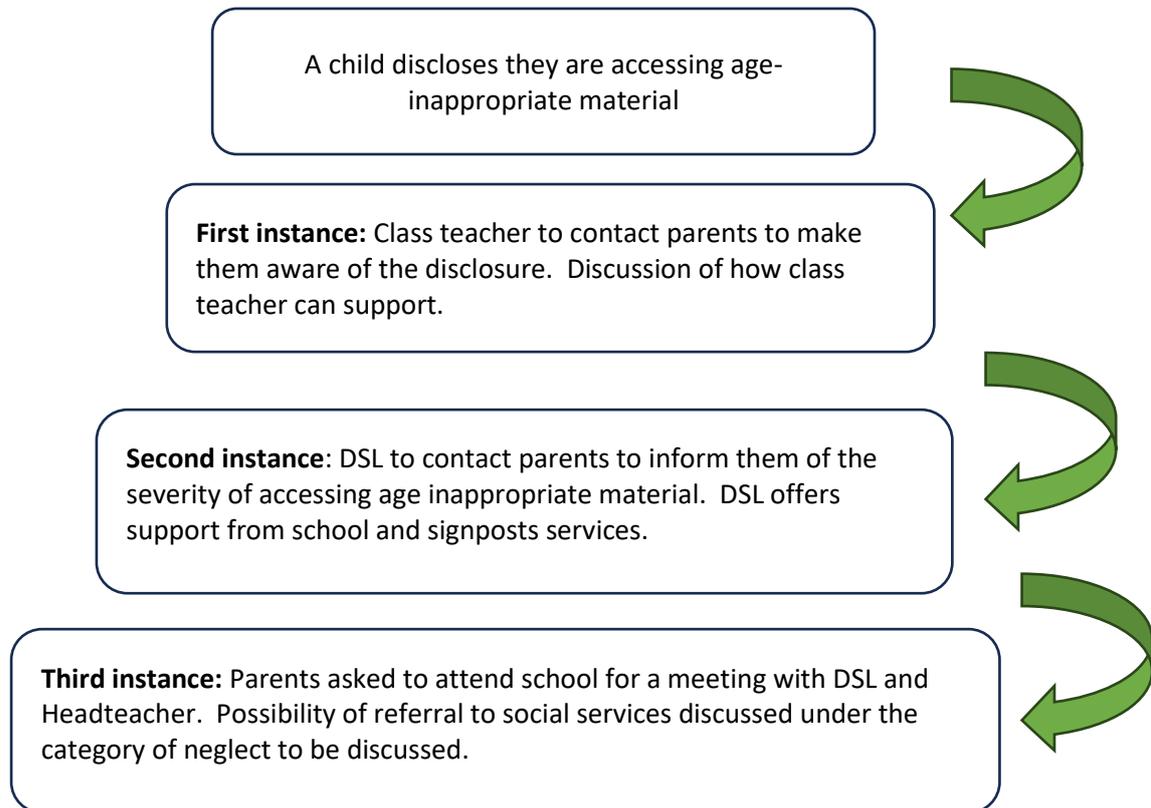
Aspire school – addressing access to age-inappropriate materials

At Aspire School, we recognise the vulnerability of our pupils when it comes to accessing apps or games that are age inappropriate. To tackle this issue, we have implemented a comprehensive approach aimed at safeguarding our pupils, staff and parents.

- **Learning Walks and pupil Voice** We will conduct learning walks to hear the pupils' perspectives on online safety. Through discussions, we aim to understand their knowledge and experiences regarding age-inappropriate material. The School Council will also gather data on the games and apps children are using at home, which will help us prioritise our focus.

- **Weekly App Identification** Each week, we will identify one app that could potentially harm children. This app will be highlighted during staff briefings, ensuring that all staff members are informed about its risks. Additionally, information about the app will be shared with parents via Class Dojo.
- **Online Safety Lessons** For pupils on the 'Explore' and 'Discover' pathways, a 10-minute online safety lesson will be integrated into their weekly schedule before their computing lessons. These lessons will be from the National Online Safety lesson plans.
- **Monitoring and Reporting** To identify pupils at risk, we will produce termly reports on CPOMS, monitoring students who may be accessing inappropriate material.

Response Flow Chart for Continued Access to Age-Inappropriate Material

A child discloses they are accessing age-inappropriate material

First instance: Class teacher to contact parents to make them aware of the disclosure. Discussion of how class teacher can support.

Second instance: DSL to contact parents to inform them of the severity of accessing age inappropriate material. DSL offers support from school and signposts services.

Third instance: Parents asked to attend school for a meeting with DSL and Headteacher. Possibility of referral to social services discussed under the category of neglect to be discussed.

Engaging parents and carers of SEND children

Parents/carers play a vital role in supporting their children learn how to be safe online, but may have their own concerns about insufficient computer skills or a limited understanding about the online environment can be off-putting for many parents, regardless of whether their child has SEND or not.

We reassure parents that online safety has more to do with parenting than technology; their child is likely to be vulnerable both on and offline, so we encourage parents to adopt similar mechanisms for supporting their child online, as they use in the 'real' world. For example:

- A parent assumes that their child is not physically or mentally capable of accessing the internet, so does not implementing blocks or filters.
- A parent is frightened that their child will be an easy target online, so bans internet access, restricting their child's ability to learn and develop online resilience.
- A parent assumes that their child, who is very technology literate, knows how to keep themselves safe, so does not actively discuss online safety rules.

Both professionals and parents should take an active interest in children with SEND online activities and talk to them regularly about what they do online.

Informing policies and procedures in all schools

In the mainstream schools, the SENCo is part of the DSL team and provides support when reviewing and updating policies so that the needs of our vulnerable children are considered in our procedures and practice. For examples, if we have a child with an EHCP who is particularly vulnerable online, this will be included in their EHCP targets. Similarly, we can use an Online Safety Plan with any child who demonstrates unsafe behaviour online, which is shared with the parents so they can support their child further at home.

We consider the specific needs of our children to ensure they receive additional adult supervision where they may be unable to regulate their own online behaviour. Any child which requires additional supervision is tracked through our internal systems so that all staff are aware.

Vulnerable children may also find it difficult to explain or describe things that happened online; DSLs are aware of this when they investigate as some children may need to show what they did rather than tell.

Useful Resources for parents/carers

- **Parent Info:** www.parentinfo.org/article/learning-disabilities-autism-and-internet-safety
- **Think U Know:** www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/Does-your-child-haveAutistic-Spectrum-Disorder/
- **Cerebra:** www.cerebra.org.uk/help-and-information/guides-for-parents/learningdisabilities-autism-and-internet-safety-a-parents-guide/
- **The National Autistic Society:** www.autism.org.uk/technology

Children Requiring Mental Health Support

Aspire school & Bobbing Village School have trained Senior Mental Health Leads. They are Tracy Taylor (Aspire) and Suzie Ferdinand (Bobbing).

Our schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils. 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.

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.

Any concerns are logged on CPOMS, and teachers identify key factors of mental health here so that appropriate support and agencies can be put into place. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL.

Staff are aware that children's experiences, for example where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education. School staff understand how ACEs may have impacted of their lives and how to support them in school.

Where there are concerns regarding possible mental health problems for pupils, staff should:

- **Provide information regarding any specific systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.**

- Age/ability appropriate education will be provided to our pupils/students to help promote positive health, wellbeing, and resilience. **Provide information regarding how and where this is delivered, for example in PSHE, RSHE, via specific educational approaches.**

School support

Where there are concerns regarding possible mental health problems for pupils, staff should record concerns on CPOMS and speak with a DSL. The Trust has a wellbeing team, which consists of a number of teachers and TAs who are trained in counselling and mental health first aid, including trauma. There is also access to external counselling services. Additionally, we are able to pull on support using our FLO/Pastoral teams for signposting as well as Early Help support and the Front Door.

Within the Trust we recognise the importance that all pupil have someone to speak with. We use an external counselling team who offer Talk Time and counselling from EDIFY who work in the mainstream schools. Aspire school use an external counsellor who can also offer family counselling and support. We also have a well trained and experienced Trauma Teacher.

Teaching children about wellbeing

The schools also incorporate age/stage appropriate education will be provided to our pupils to help promote positive health, wellbeing, and resilience. This is significant within Aspire through the work on life skills.

See also Mental health and behaviour in schools (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Children who are absent from education

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines.

All the schools in the Trust have a continued focus on targeting children who are persistently or severely absent from school and working with their families to ensure children return to school. DSLs are involved in the discussions about such children so that the risks continued to be held in focus in each case. All conversations, letters, meetings and discussions around attendance are logged on CPOMS.

A robust response to children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions will support the identification of such abuse and may help prevent the risk of children going missing in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging and also where children are already known to Kent Integrated Children's Services and/or have a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

There is an expectation that emergency contact information will be held for both parents, unless doing so would put a child at risk of harm. It is good practice for school/colleges to have additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

It is recommended local practice for schools to request and capture emergency contact information for both parents, unless it places a child at risk of harm to do so, for example a court or other legal order preventing access is in place. If this is the case, it should be recorded on the child's safeguarding file. Schools should be proactive in being inclusive of fathers; effective father engagement should be

the expectation from the outset, and it is important to help schools/colleges understand the child's significant relationships and lived experiences.

Where the school/college have concerns that a child has unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education and/or is missing from education, we will respond in line with our statutory duties (DfE: Children missing education) and local policies. Local support is available via the Kent PRU and Attendance Service (KPAS).

Information regarding schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the department's statutory guidance: Children Missing Education. Please see part two of KCSIE links to other relevant guidance.

Each school has a procedure in place for responding to unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. These policies can be seen on the individual school websites. See also PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS) - KELSI

Where no contact with the school is made regarding absences, with liaison with Class Teacher, SENCO, DSL and Head of School/Teacher a home visit maybe undertaken. Other alternative options are to talk to the child on the phone, or on a video call.

Children attending alternative provision

(added Sept 25)

Where the school/college places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, it continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil. The decision for this placement, along with all details will be logged on CPOMS as well as appropriate checks being made for safeguarding on the alternative provision. This will also be logged.

This includes the school:
- having records of the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend.
- regularly reviewing (at least half termly) the alternative provision placements made to provide assurance that the child is regularly attending and the placement continues to be safe and meets the child's needs.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, placements will be immediately reviewed, and terminated, if necessary, unless or until those concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

Many home educated children have an overwhelmingly positive learning experience. We would expect the parents' decision to home educate to be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision. However, this is not the case for all, and home education can mean some children are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs.

Where a parent/carer expresses their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, we will respond in line with national Elective Home Education guidance and local Kent guidance. We will work together with parents/carers and other key professionals and organisations to ensure decisions are made in the best interest of the child.

Elective home education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Educating your child at home - Kent County Council

Children who may benefit from Early Help

Any child may benefit from early help, but all staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child

Where it is identified a child may need early help, staff and DSLs will respond in line with this policy.

Children who need a Social Worker (Child in Need and Child Protection plans)

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse and/or neglect and/or complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health

The DSL will hold details of social workers working with children in the Trust so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes. This will be logged on CPOMS, along with all meeting notes and outcomes (added Sept 25).

Where children have a social worker, this will inform our decisions about their safety and promoting their welfare, for example, responding to unauthorised absence and provision of pastoral and/or academic support.

Looked after children, previously looked after children and care leavers

Our schools recognise the common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect and a previously looked after child also potentially remains vulnerable.

Each school has appointed a 'designated teacher' who works with local authorities, including the Virtual School Kent (including the virtual school head), to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after or who have been previously looked after including those in kinship care.

- The designated teacher will work with the DSL to ensure appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after them.

- Where a child is looked after, the DSL will hold details of the social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.

The designated teachers are:

Aspire	Bobbing	Grove Park	Iwade
Linda Thomas	Sean Johnson	Mandy Harling	Lisa Bunning

[Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](www.gov.uk)

The designated teacher will work with the DSL to ensure appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after them.

Where a child is looked after, the DSL will hold details of the social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.

Where the Trust believe a child is being cared for as part of a private fostering arrangement (occurs when a child under 16 or 18 if the child is disabled is cared for and lives with an adult who is not a relative for 28 days or more) there is a duty to recognise these arrangements and inform the Local Authority via the front door.

Where a child is leaving care, the DSL will hold details of the local authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support them and will liaise with them as necessary regarding any issues of concern.

Children who are privately fostered

Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 for children with a disability) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer. Such arrangements may come to the attention of our staff through the normal course of their interaction, and promotion of learning activities, with children.

Where private fostering arrangements come to the attention of the school must notify Kent Integrated Children's Services in line with the local KSCMP arrangements in order to allow the local authority to check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.

Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi, or gender questioning/Trans (LGBTQ+)

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm, however, our schools recognise that children who are LGBT or are perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be targeted by other children or others within the wider community.

When supporting a gender questioning child, the school/college will consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with the child's parents (other than in the rare circumstances where

involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child), including any clinical advice that is available and how to address wider vulnerabilities, such as to support any complex mental health and psychosocial needs and to manage the risk of bullying.

Our schools will refer to our Guidance for Schools and Colleges in relation to Gender Questioning Children, when deciding how to proceed ** once this is released *

We recognise risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

LGBT is included within our Relationships Education/ Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum. This is delivered in a stage and cognition appropriate way at Aspire school.