

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

During the college day all concerns regarding safeguarding should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the appropriate Campus.

- **Catherine Plant at English or Welsh Bridge Campus on 01743 653540**
- **Sophie Charles at London Road Campus on 07792 147376**
- **If it is not possible to contact the appropriate lead person above, then call**
 - **Stacey Dickson on 07970 735208 or**
 - **Steve McAlinden on 07970 168953**

as Senior Designated Safeguarding Leads

- **It is also possible to report a concern directly to any college reception or to email the safeguarding team on pleasehelp@shrewsbury.ac.uk**
- **If you believe there is an immediate risk of significant harm, please call the emergency services on 999**

If you have a concern outside of college hours, then follow the steps below as appropriate

- **If you believe there is an immediate risk of significant harm, please call the emergency services on 999**
- **If a student needs immediate safeguarding advice or support they should call the Student Assistance Programme helpline on 0800 028 3766. They will support the student to be safe.**
- **If you need advice regarding a safeguarding matter call NSPCC: 0800 800 5000 or Childline on 0800 1111**
- **For children resident in Shropshire concerns can be raised directly with Shropshire Social Care on 0345 678 9021 or if after 6pm or a weekend 0345 678 9040 (option 1)**
- **If you are unsure which local authority to report your concerns to, use the tool linked below**

[Report child abuse to a local council – GOV.UK](#)

Contents

1. Statement and Aims.....	1
2. Safeguarding Principles & Culture.....	3
3. Safeguarding Roles & Responsibilities.....	4
4. Safeguarding Issues	9
5. Our Approach to Child-on-Child Sexual Violence & Harassment.....	21
6. What to do if you have a concern about a student	24
7. Gender Questioning Students.....	33
8. The Management of Safeguarding	39
9. Online Safety (including Filtering & Monitoring).....	43
10. Reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff...	44

Annex A – Further information on safeguarding issues

Annex B – Role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

These can be found in the following link –

[Keeping children safe in education 2026 \(comes into force from 1 September 2026\)](#)

1. Statement and Aims

Policy Statement

Shrewsbury College is committed to providing a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment in which all students can thrive. We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We maintain a culture of vigilance where students feel safe, are listened to, and know that concerns will be taken seriously.

Safeguarding at Shrewsbury College is everyone's responsibility.

All staff, governors, volunteers, contractors and partners share an unwavering commitment to:

- Protect students from harm
- Prevent impairment of health or development
- Ensure students grow up in safe, effective care
- Take action to enable all students to have the best outcomes

This policy applies to:

- All students enrolled at Shrewsbury College, including those aged 18+
- Apprentices and work-based students
- Visitors, contractors and external partners
- All college sites, transport, trips and online activity
- Host employers and placement providers

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear procedures for identifying, reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities under **Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2026**
- Promote early help and timely intervention
- Protect students from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm

- Embed safeguarding across the curriculum, support systems and wider college life
- Ensure robust safer recruitment, induction and training
- Maintain effective partnerships with the local authority, police, health and other agencies
- Ensure students' voices are central to safeguarding practice

Definitions

We adopt the definitions of abuse, neglect and exploitation set out in:

- KCSIE 2026
- Working Together 2026
- Local Safeguarding Partnership guidance - [Procedures – Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership](#)

This includes:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Child-on-child abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Online abuse
- Criminal exploitation (including county lines)
- Sexual exploitation
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Serious violence indicators
- Mental health-related safeguarding concerns
- Abuse linked to faith or belief
- Honour-based abuse

- Forced marriage
- Female genital mutilation

Full definitions will be included throughout this policy and/or in Annex A of KCSIE 2026.

Statutory Framework

This policy is written in accordance with:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)**
- **Education Act 2002**
- **Children Act 1989 & 2004**
- **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)**
- **Sexual Offences Act 2003**
- **Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014**
- **Data (Use and Access) Act 2025**
- **Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019**
- **Online Safety Act 2023**

2. Safeguarding Principles & Culture

Shrewsbury College adopts the following principles:

- **Student-centred practice** – the welfare of the student is paramount
- **No delay** – concerns are acted on immediately
- **Proportionality** – responses are appropriate to the level of risk
- **Partnership** – we work collaboratively with families and agencies
- **Accountability** – staff understand and accept their responsibilities
- **Transparency** – safeguarding decisions are recorded and auditable

Shrewsbury College maintains a culture where:

- Staff are professionally curious

- Students feel safe to disclose
- Concerns are never ignored
- Staff have high expectations
- Safeguarding is embedded in teaching, tutorials, support, curriculum and enrichment
- Online safety is treated with the same seriousness as offline harm

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We recognise that some students face additional barriers to staying safe, including:

- SEND students
- Care-experienced young people
- Young carers
- Students with mental health needs
- LGBTQ+ students
- Students experiencing poverty or homelessness
- Students where English is an additional language
- Those questioning their gender identity

We take proactive steps to ensure equity of protection and support.

3. Safeguarding Roles & Responsibilities

- 3.1. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility. This involves at all times taking a student-centred approach and everyone who comes into contact with our students has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

All Staff

3.2. Every member of staff has a duty to:

- Read and understand **KCSIE 2026 Part 1**
- Maintain professional curiosity
- Recognise indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and serious violence
- Report concerns **immediately** to the Safeguarding team
- Never promise confidentiality to a student
- Record concerns accurately and promptly
- Promote a safe, respectful and inclusive environment
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour, including sexualised language or conduct
- Understand online safety risks, including AI-generated content
- Support students' mental health and wellbeing
- Understand the needs of SEND students and those with additional vulnerabilities
- Staff **must not** investigate concerns themselves.

3.3. To enable staff to meet these commitments the College will provide appropriate training. This includes –

- training in child protection for all staff working with children in line with Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership (SSCP) guidance (refresher training will also be provided every three years minimum)
- training in inter-agency procedures for the designated person and their deputies (with refresher training every 2 years).

3.4. All staff will receive guidance on college procedures on safeguarding during their induction.

3.5. All staff will be familiarised with the college documentation on safe working practices.

- 3.6. All staff will receive regular safeguarding updates via 'continuing professional development' and the 'In The Loop' college newsletter with reminders of aspects of these procedures and updates on contemporary safeguarding issues.
- 3.7. Additional reminders will be provided through the weekly Staff Briefing and issue specific briefings as appropriate.
- 3.8. All staff employed by the college will be undergo pre-employment checks as stipulated in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026). For more detail see Safer Recruitment Policy.

Staff responsible for Safeguarding

- 3.9. Overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes) is held by:

- Steve McAlinden (Vice Principal – Students)

The 'Designated Senior Person' at Senior Leadership Team level.

- 3.10. The 'Designated Senior Person' will be supported by:

- Stacey Dickson (Head of Safeguarding & Student Conduct) – Designated Senior Lead for Safeguarding & Mental Health
- Sophie Charles (Safeguarding Lead at London Road Campus) – Designated Safeguarding Lead & Designated Teacher
- Catherine Plant (Safeguarding Lead at English & Welsh Bridge Campuses) – Designated Safeguarding Lead

- 3.11. The Staff responsible for Safeguarding must:

- Lead on all safeguarding concerns, referrals and case management
- Liaise with the Local Authority, police, health and other agencies
- Provide advice and support to staff
- Ensure early help is considered and offered where appropriate
- Maintain accurate, secure and timely safeguarding records
- Oversee support for students with mental health needs

- Lead on responses to child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, and serious violence indicators
 - Ensure compliance with Prevent Duty
 - Ensure safeguarding is embedded in the curriculum
 - Oversee online safety, filtering and monitoring systems
 - Ensure staff understand updated terminology for intimate image sharing (2026 update)
 - Ensure appropriate support for gender-questioning students
 - Deliver and monitor safeguarding training
 - Attend DSL networks and keep up to date with national guidance
 - Receive training in Child Protection issues and inter-agency working, as required by the SSCP, and receiving refresher training at least every 2 years
 - Provide an annual report to the Governing Body to summarise the college's safeguarding duties and responsibilities.
- 3.12. These Designated Safeguarding Leads are responsible for determining such action as is necessary under the Safeguarding procedures contained within this document.
- 3.13. The wider Safeguarding Team details are on posters displayed around each Campus and the college website
- <https://www.scg.ac.uk/students/safeguarding>
- Students are made aware via the posters and other updates that they can report concerns to any member of staff or directly to the Safeguarding Team via the contact details on posters, in person at a safeguarding office, via reception or on the email pleasehelp@shrewsbury.ac.uk
- 3.14. There is also a designated member of the board of governors with responsibility for child protection and safeguarding issues. The designated member is Joycelin Hoyland.

Employer Partners

3.15. Employers must:

- Comply with Shrewsbury College safeguarding expectations
- Provide a safe working environment
- Report concerns to the Safeguarding team immediately
- Ensure students know how to report concerns
- Support students experiencing difficulties in the workplace

Shrewsbury College retains overall safeguarding responsibility for apprentices.

Contractors, Visitors & External Agencies

3.16. All contractors and visitors must:

- Follow college safeguarding procedures
- Wear identification at all times
- Follow college processes for vetting & barring checks
- Report concerns immediately to the Safeguarding team
- External agencies must comply with safeguarding expectations.

For more detail see our **Visitor Policy & Safeguarding advice for visitors leaflet** available in all Reception areas.

Students

3.17. Our students are encouraged to:

- Report concerns about themselves or others.

This can be done in a variety of ways –

- By speaking to a staff member, they see as a trusted adult
- By visiting a member of the Safeguarding team face to face
- By emailing 'pleasehelp@shrewsbury.ac.uk' (non-urgent concerns)

- By speaking to Reception or Student Services
- Outside of college hours, call the Student Assistance Helpline – 0800 028 3766
- Treat others with respect
- Engage with safeguarding education and online safety guidance
- Use college systems responsibly

3.18. Students will never be penalised for raising safeguarding concerns

Parents & Carers

3.19. Parents and carers should:

- Work in partnership with the college
- Share relevant information that may impact a student's safety or wellbeing
- Support the college's safeguarding and online safety expectations

4. Safeguarding Issues

At Shrewsbury College **all** staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that often overlap and can put children at risk of harm (including but not limited to those listed below).

Additional information on these safeguarding issues and information on other safeguarding issues is included in Annex A.

Abuse, neglect and exploitation

- 4.1. All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery (see below), understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of college, inside and outside of home, and online. Exercising professional curiosity and knowing what to look for is vital for the early identification of abuse and neglect so that staff are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

- 4.2. All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.
- 4.3. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse – including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and stalking), criminal exploitation (including financial exploitation), serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.
- 4.4. All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline.
- 4.5. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non consensual making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.
- 4.6. **In all cases, if staff are unsure, they should always speak to the Safeguarding team.**

Indicators of abuse and neglect

- 4.7. **Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or care giver abuse.

- 4.8. **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- 4.9. **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and 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 verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling, or name-calling, as well as 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 from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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.
- 4.10. **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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 penetration with an object) 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual

abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

- 4.11. **Neglect:** 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, for example, 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 caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Child-on-Child Abuse

- 4.12. All staff are aware that students can abuse other students. This can happen inside or outside of our college and online.
- 4.13. All staff are expected to challenge inappropriate behaviours between peers. Downplaying certain behaviours or dismissing sexual harassment as –
- “just banter”
 - “just having a laugh”
 - “part of growing up”
 - “boys being boys”

can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for young people and vulnerable adults, and in worst case scenarios, a culture that normalises abuse leading to students accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

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

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
 - abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
 - physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
 - serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon
 - sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
 - sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
 - causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
 - consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi nudes, and intimate image sharing
 - upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
 - initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).
- 4.15. The College adopts a **zero-tolerance** approach.
- 4.16. All instances of suspected child on child abuse must be reported to the Safeguarding team.
- 4.17. In a case of bullying this is in addition to following the anti-bullying policy.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CCE

- 4.18. Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines. This can include –
- Working in cannabis factories
 - Shop lifting
 - Pick pocketing
 - Committing vehicle crime
 - Threatening or committing serious violence to others
- 4.19. Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt.
- 4.20. Children who are criminally exploited should have their vulnerabilities recognised by adults and professionals (particularly older children) and should be treated as victims.
- 4.21. It is not possible for a child to consent to be exploited, abused or trafficked, and they may not recognise that it is happening to them.
- 4.22. It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

CSE

- 4.23. CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. It may involve –
- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or penetration with an object)
 - Non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing.

- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities
 - Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.
- 4.24. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge, for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media
- 4.25. CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex.
- 4.26. This can be committed by an individual or an organised network and most sexual abuse is committed by those previously known to the victim.
- 4.27. All instances of suspected exploitation must be reported to the Safeguarding team.

Modern Slavery & the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

- 4.28. Modern slavery is a form of abuse and exploitation that includes human trafficking, forced labour, slavery, servitude, criminal exploitation and sexual exploitation. This can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and victims may identify as part of this group.
- 4.29. Children and young people may be groomed, coerced or controlled into exploitative situations and may not recognise themselves as victims.
- 4.30. Where there are concerns that a student may be a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking, the Safeguarding Team will work with relevant agencies and make referrals through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), in accordance with local Shropshire safeguarding procedures, to ensure appropriate protection, support and intervention.
- 4.31. All instances of suspected modern slavery must be reported to the Safeguarding team.

Preventing Radicalisation

- 4.32. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. The College has a specific Prevent policy, risk assessment and action plan surrounding this area of safeguarding and this should be referred to for guidance.
- 4.33. All instances of suspected radicalisation must be reported to the Safeguarding team.

Hate Crime

- 4.34. Hate Crime is defined as –
- Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim, or by any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards a person's actual or perceived race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity.
- 4.35. A person does not need to belong to a protected group to be the victim of a hate crime. It is sufficient that the offender targets them because of a perceived characteristic or an association with a person or group sharing that characteristic.
- 4.36. Hate incidents are:
- Non-criminal incidents that are perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity.
- 4.37. The College we adopt a **zero-tolerance** approach to discriminatory behaviour and any incidents will be responded to appropriately through our student conduct procedures. This includes incidents occurring online and on campus.
- 4.38. All instances of suspected hate crime must be reported to the Safeguarding team.

Domestic Abuse

- 4.39. Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. It includes:
- Physical abuse
 - Emotional abuse
 - Coercive control
 - Financial abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Online abuse
- 4.40. Children can experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse)
- 4.41. All instances of suspected domestic abuse must be reported to the Safeguarding team.

Honour or Faith based abuse (including FGM & Forced Marriage)

- 4.42. The College recognises that so-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) is a form of abuse and may include female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, breast ironing and other practices carried out in the name of protecting or preserving the perceived honour of a family, community or culture. Abuse of this nature may involve multiple perpetrators, including family members, and can place a student at significant risk of harm.
- 4.43. The College will treat all concerns relating to HBA as safeguarding concerns and respond in line with local safeguarding procedures.
- 4.44. Any concerns must be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Team and they will make referrals to Children's Social Care, Adult Safeguarding and/or the Police, as appropriate, in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.
- 4.45. All instances of suspected honour or faith based abuse must be reported to the Safeguarding team.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- 4.46. FGM is a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. It comprises all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs, for non-medical reasons. FGM has no health benefits and can cause serious short-term and long-term physical, psychological, and emotional harm. It is illegal in the UK and is a safeguarding concern requiring appropriate action where there is a risk that a girl may be subjected to FGM or where FGM is known or suspected to have taken place.
- 4.47. The Serious Crime Act (2015) places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.
- 4.48. If a disclosure of FGM is made (or evidence seen, though this is unlikely as teachers should not look or investigate) and the girl is under 18 at the time of the disclosure –
- The disclosure should be recorded in the usual way
 - The disclosure should be shared as soon as possible with the designated safeguarding lead
 - The DSL will support the teacher in reporting the disclosure to the police – usually via 101
 - **This reporting is the teacher's statutory duty and they will face disciplinary sanctions if it is found that a report to the police is not made following a disclosure**
- 4.49. A report should be made to the Safeguarding team in the event that a safeguarding concern involving FGM comes to light where –
- Risk of FGM is identified, but it has not yet been carried out
 - The disclosure does not come directly from the alleged victim
 - The victim is no longer under 18 (even if they were when the FGM took place)
 - The disclosure is made to a member of staff who is not a teacher

In these cases the DSL will follow local safeguarding procedures and the staff member will not have to contact the police.

Homelessness

- 4.50. The College recognises that homelessness, or the risk of becoming homeless, can have a serious impact on a student's safety, wellbeing and education.
- 4.51. The Safeguarding Team will be aware of local support services and referral routes, and will seek support as early as possible where concerns are identified.
- 4.52. Staff will be alert to students experiencing housing difficulties, including temporary accommodation, sofa surfing, family breakdown or homelessness.
- 4.53. We recognise that some students aged 16 and 17 may be living independently or may become homeless. Where this is identified, the Safeguarding team will work with Children's Social Care, Housing Services and other relevant agencies to make sure the student receives the support, accommodation and protection they need.
- 4.54. For students aged 18 and over, the College will provide support, advice and signposting to appropriate housing and welfare services where homelessness or housing difficulties are identified.
- 4.55. All instances of suspected homelessness must be reported to the Safeguarding team.

Mental Health

- 4.56. Mental health difficulties may be:
 - A symptom of abuse, neglect or exploitation
 - A result of trauma as a consequence of adverse childhood experiences
 - A safeguarding concern in themselves

4.57. Staff must:

- Recognise signs of mental health deterioration
- Report concerns to the Safeguarding team
- Not attempt to diagnose conditions

4.58. The Safeguarding team will:

- Liaise with mental health professionals
- Consider early help or referral
- Ensure appropriate support is in place

4.59. Where students have a mental health need, we will implement a safety plan and risk assessment, these will be dynamic and regularly reviewed.

4.60. **Suicide Prevention** – we accept and understand that thoughts of suicide are common and the leading cause of death in young people. As such, suicide intervention is our business too. We too work with our students and work in partnership to support anyone in our community that may have thoughts of suicide. We will follow our guidance from 'Shropshire Safeguarding Suicide Prevention Pathway' to assist wherever we can in making those in our care as safe as possible.

4.61. We will obtain medical help for students who are experiencing mental health concerns, where required.

4.62. Like with medical conditions, we will always want to obtain confirmation of mental health diagnosis from a suitable professional when diagnosis is self-reported or reported by parents/carers.

4.63. Our Senior Mental Health Lead is Stacey Dickson. The appointed member of our leadership team who supports our senior mental health lead is Steve McAlinden.

4.64. The college operates an Emotional Health and Well-Being (EHWB) service, and underpinning strategy that seeks to support students of all ages with mental health concerns. The EHWB team works with the Safeguarding team to ensure that where there is a link between mental health and safeguarding so students are appropriately supported.

4.65. Students can self-refer to the EHWB service via the college website – <https://www.scg.ac.uk/students/emotional-health-wellbeing>.

- 4.66. Students can directly call the Student Assistance Programme Helpline – 0800 028 3766 and they will support the student to be safe.

Serious Violence

- 4.67. Staff must be aware that it may involve –
- Physical assault
 - Carrying weapons
 - Threats or intimidation
 - Gang involvement
 - Online incitement
 - Injuries with unclear explanations
 - Fear of certain individuals or locations
- 4.68. Any concerns should be reported to the Safeguarding team, and they will consider making the appropriate referrals to partner agencies and depending on the risk, put in place a safety plan and where relevant, consider action to de-escalate peer conflict.

5. Our Approach to Child-on-Child Sexual Violence & Harassment

- 5.1. **Sexual Violence** – We refer to sexual violence as sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2023 as listed below –
- Rape
 - Assault by Penetration
 - Sexual Assault
 - Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- 5.2. **Consent** is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, and can be withdrawn at anytime.
- A young person under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity
 - The age of consent is 16

- Sexual intercourse without consent is rape.
- 5.3. **Sexual Harassment** – We refer to sexual harassment as ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline, both inside and outside of our college. It is likely to –
- Violate a young persons dignity
 - Make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated
 - Likely to create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment
- 5.4. All those who are part of our college community believe that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- 5.5. We understand that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more students of any age and sex. It can occur online. It can also occur through a group of students sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single student or group of young people, students and apprentices. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap.
- 5.6. We recognise that students who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, likely, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attend(s) our college.
- 5.7. We will work to ensure our college community are aware of the importance of:
- Challenging inappropriate behaviours
 - Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
 - Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment
 - Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts.

Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

- 5.8. For the purpose of this policy, we use the term 'victim', 'alleged perpetrator(s)' or where appropriate 'perpetrator(s)'. Ultimately, the use of appropriate terminology will be determined, as appropriate, on a case-by-case basis. In some instances, we will use terminology such as 'reporter' and 'reported'.
- 5.9. Along with providing support to students who are victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment, we will provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with an education, safeguarding support as appropriate, and implement any disciplinary sanctions. We recognise that a student abusing another student may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of our college. Taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support, can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary.
- 5.10. We understand that reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. We know it is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. We also know it is also important that other young people, students and apprentices, adult students and our staff are supported and protected as appropriate.
- 5.11. We will try to be aware of, and respond appropriately to all reports and concerns, including those outside of our college, and or online.
- 5.12. While the focus of this policy is on protecting and supporting young people, and vulnerable adults, we will of course protect any adults and engage with adult social care, support services and the police as required.
- 5.13. The College recognises that the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including AI-generated or digitally altered images requires a safeguarding response, whether they are consensual or non-consensual.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

Definition – sexual behaviour displayed by a child or young person that is developmentally inappropriate, harmful, abusive, coercive, or exploitative. It can

occur online or offline. Early identification and intervention are essential to prevent escalation and protect all children involved

- 5.14. We recognise that HSB exists on a continuum and may escalate into sexual harassment or sexual violence, it is never acceptable and will also be considered within a child protection context.
- 5.15. Our safeguarding team will undertake training in HSB and incorporate this into our approach to managing sexual violence and harassment. This training includes the Brook Traffic Light Tool Kit.
- 5.16. Staff should be aware that some groups of students are more likely than others to be victims of HSB, for example girls and students with disabilities.
- 5.17. We recognise that victims often find the experience stressful and distressing and will need support to deal with the impact of their experiences.
- 5.18. We will ensure that any impact on academic progress is minimised by carefully managing appropriate support and arrangements, especially if the alleged perpetrator also attends the college.
- 5.19. The Safeguarding team will:
 - Use the Brook Traffic Light Tool or equivalent
 - Assess risk and provide safety planning
 - Refer to social care or police where required
 - Provide support for all students involved

6. What to do if you have a concern about a student

Safeguarding concerns must be identified, reported and responded to **immediately**

- 6.1. All staff must maintain **professional curiosity** and be alert to signs that a student may be at risk of harm. Concerns may arise from:
 - A disclosure from a student
 - Observed behaviour or physical signs
 - Changes in attendance, engagement or presentation
 - Concerns raised by peers, parents, or external agencies

- Online activity or digital behaviour
 - Indicators of serious violence or exploitation
 - Mental health deterioration
 - Concerns relating to gender identity
 - Concerns arising in the workplace for apprentices
- 6.2. Staff must not assume that someone else will act.
- 6.3. If you are concerned that a student has suffered maltreatment you should follow these guidelines.
- 6.4. Although, 'child' refers legally to people under 18, follow these guidelines with any student and the safeguarding team will decide who to refer the matter to later.

Immediate Actions for Staff

- 6.5. If a student is at risk, staff must:
1. **Listen carefully** and reassure the student
 2. **Take the concern seriously**
 3. **Explain that you must share the information** with the Safeguarding team
 4. **Record the concern immediately** by carefully writing what the student has told you, or what has been observed.
 5. **Immediately inform the Safeguarding team.** Contact details on first page of this policy.
 6. **You can also contact any college reception** to support you to contact a DSL.
 7. **Report concerns to appropriate agencies if outside of college hours.** Contact details on the first page of this policy.

Staff must **not**:

- Promise confidentiality
- Investigate or ask leading questions
- Delay reporting

- Confront alleged perpetrators
- Contact the students parents or carers.

All concerns must be reported **as soon as possible** and always **on the same day**.

If a student is in **immediate danger**, staff must call **999** and then notify the Safeguarding team

Safeguarding Team's response to concerns

6.6. The DSL or Safeguarding Mentor will:

- Review the concern and assess the level of risk
- Consult with the student where appropriate
- Consider early help, referral or internal support
- Contact parents/carers unless doing so places the student at risk
- Liaise with external agencies as required
- Record all actions, decisions and outcomes

The Safeguarding team will follow local safeguarding partnership thresholds.

6.7. The Safeguarding team will ensure that a DSL is always available to discuss safeguarding concerns. If in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and/or take advice from local authority children's social care. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

Early Help

Early help is support provided **as soon as a problem emerges**, at any point in a student's life.

6.8. The Safeguarding team will consider early help when a student:

- Is experiencing mental health difficulties
- Has SEND or additional vulnerabilities
- Is persistently absent or disengaged
- Is experiencing family conflict or instability
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- Has a family member in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- Is at risk of 'honour' based abuse, such as Female Genital Mutilation or forced marriage
- Is struggling with identity, including gender questioning
- Is a young carer
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is a privately fostered child
- Is experiencing homelessness or poverty

6.9. Early help may include:

- Pastoral support
- Referral to our Emotional Health & Wellbeing Service
- Family support
- Referral to Early Help services
- Multi-agency meetings

6.10. At Shrewsbury College our early help offer is aligned with the expectations of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026', ensuring that children and families receive the right support at the right time.

[Working together to safeguard children 2026](#)

We recognise that some children and families may require more targeted support than that offered at the universal and community based early help level and we use the SSCP 'Family Help Together' Framework and 'The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme Guide' to inform our decisions and work collaboratively with partners to deliver integrated support.

This framework explains what practitioners who work with children must do when they're worried about a child, how to get help, and how we work together across the system.

Everyone who works with children in Shropshire must use this framework in their policies and day-to-day practice. We will keep updating it as we develop national changes such as the Families First Partnership.

[family-help-together-a-framework-for-action.pdf](#)

Thresholds for Referral to Children's Social Care

- 6.11. Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, a referral to local authority children's social care will be made, and if also appropriate a call to Police.
- 6.12. A referral will be made when:
 - A student is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm
 - There is evidence of abuse, neglect or exploitation
 - A student discloses sexual abuse or serious harm
 - A student is at risk of criminal exploitation or serious violence
 - A student is at risk of forced marriage, FGM or honour-based abuse
 - A student is experiencing severe mental health crisis
 - A student is at risk due to unsafe home circumstances
 - A student is at risk due to online abuse or coercion
- 6.13. We recognise that our student population spans a large geographical area and our Safeguarding team will ensure referrals are made in line with specific local authority procedures relevant to individual need.

Children potentially at greater risk of harm

- 6.14. At Shrewsbury College we recognise that all children should be protected. However, we acknowledge that some groups of children are potentially at greater risk of harm than others. This list below is not exhaustive but highlights some of those groups

Children who need a social worker (Child in Need & Child Protection Plans)

- 6.15. 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. 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.
- 6.16. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.
- 6.17. As outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children, local authorities, with their safeguarding partners and any relevant agencies, should develop, agree and publish local protocols for assessments and support. This should set out who can act as lead practitioner in supporting children and their families under section 17 (which is not limited to social workers).

Children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

- 6.18. Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.
- 6.19. Such enquiries enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and must be initiated where there are concerns about maltreatment. This includes all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- 6.20. Within one working day of a referral being made, a local authority social worker should acknowledge its receipt to the referrer and make a decision

about the next steps and the type of response that is required. This will include determining whether:

- the child requires immediate protection and urgent action is required
- any services are required by the child and family and what type of services
- the child is in need and should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Working Together to Safeguard Children provides details of the assessment process
- there is reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and whether enquiries must be made, and the child assessed under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children provides details of the assessment process and further specialist assessments are required to help the local authority to decide what further action to take.

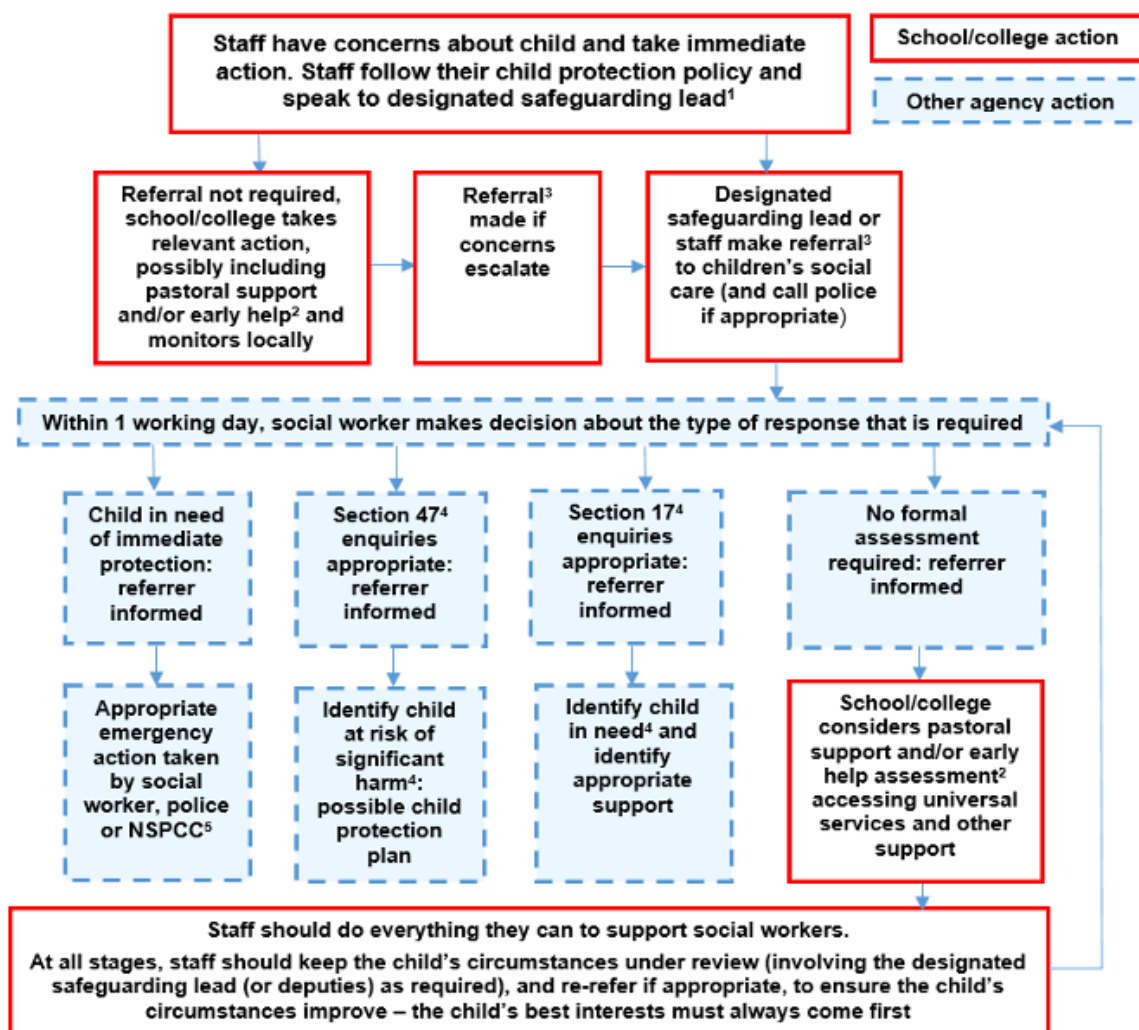
- 6.21. The Safeguarding team will follow up this information, and staff should do everything they can to support that assessment, supported by the Safeguarding team.
- 6.22. If, after a referral, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the referrer should consider following local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and, most importantly, that the child's situation improves.
- 6.23. Local authorities should share the fact that a child has a social worker, and the designated safeguarding lead should hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. This should be considered as a matter of routine.

Escalation Procedures

- 6.24. If staff believe that a student remains at risk despite action taken, they must:
- Speak to the DSL

- Request escalation to a senior manager
- 6.25. If a DSL believes that a student remains at risk despite action taken by a local authority, they must:
- Speak to a Senior Designated Lead to discuss using the Local Safeguarding escalation policy.
- 6.26. Staff must challenge decisions professionally and respectfully.
- 6.27. The following flow chart sets out the process for staff when they have concerns about a student

Figure 1: Flowchart setting out the actions taken where there are concerns about a child



Children who are absent from education

- 6.28. At Shrewsbury College we understand the importance of student attendance and recognise that a student being absent for a prolonged periods and/or on repeated occasions can be a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues.
- 6.29. Our Curriculum Teams, will work closely with the Safeguarding team to keep them informed in any concerning patterns of non-attendance, so we can follow the statutory guidance outlined in KCSIE 2026 relating to 'Children Missing Education (CME)'.
- 6.30. The Head of Safeguarding and Student Conduct is responsible for ensuring a safety check for all students who have been absent for 4 weeks, without an explanation.

Looked after children, previously looked after children and Care leavers

- 6.31. The most common reason for children to become looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect and we work with other agencies to safeguard this vulnerable group of students.
- 6.32. Our Designated Teacher is Sophie Charles.
Our Progression Specialist for LAYP is Jemma Broomhall.
- 6.33. They work with local authorities, our wider Safeguarding team and Curriculum teams to promote the educational achievement of our students who are looked after.
- 6.34. We will record details of a student's legal status and care arrangements, and contact details for their social worker and virtual school head, and for our students that are care leavers, we will record details of their personal advisor.

Young Carers

- 6.35. Legislation defines a 'young carer' as '...a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age, except where that care is provided for payment, pursuant to a contract or as voluntary work).'

- 6.36. At Shrewsbury College we acknowledge that caring for someone can be very isolating, worrying and stressful for young people and understand it can negatively affect their experience in education.
- 6.37. We aim to work with families and other agencies to identify young carers and ensure their needs are assessed and appropriate support is put in place.

Children with special educational needs, disabilities or health issues (SEND)

- 6.38. Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline.
- 6.39. We recognise that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group of children.
- 6.40. Our Safeguarding and Additional Learning Support teams will work closely together to ensure oversight of these students to consider extra pastoral support and attention is in place to support communication of any safeguarding issues that may arise.

Students who are lesbian, gay or bisexual

- 6.41. We recognise that a young person being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself a inherent risk factor for harm. However, they can sometimes be targeted by other students. In some cases, a student who is perceived by other students to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as those who identify as LGBT. If you have any concerns please report to the Safeguarding team.

7. Gender Questioning Students

For the purpose of this policy:

Gender-questioning student means a student who is exploring, questioning or expressing uncertainty about their gender identity. This is often where a student identifies with a sex which is different to their biological sex.

Social transition may include requests relating to:

- Changes to preferred name or name.
- Changes to pronouns.
- Requests regarding facilities, including toilets, changing facilities & residential arrangements on trips.
- Requests regarding participation in other activities as a sex other than that ascribed biologically at birth.

The college approach

The College is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment for all students. We recognise that some students may question their gender identity and may seek support from staff during this process. This support will be provided to all students regardless of age and can be provided by any member of staff. Staff are encouraged to discuss the support of students who are questioning their gender with the Safeguarding Team where needed and must share where they have safeguarding concerns regarding any student.

In cases where a student confides in a member of staff that they are questioning their gender but does not ask the college to make changes to how they are treated then this information does not have to be shared with the Safeguarding Team unless there is a related safeguarding concern.

Social Transition

KCSIE (2026) provides statutory guidance relating to children in colleges where a request has been made for social transition related to them questioning their gender identity. The guidance stipulates that it is not for the college to initiate any action and we must only respond to requests as they arise. We will respond to requests relating to social transition for students who are under 18 on a case-by-case basis through a safeguarding-led process. KCSIE (2026) states the allowing of social transition of a child by a school or college should be viewed as an active intervention that may have significant effects on the child in terms of their psychological functioning and longer-term outcomes. This allows the college to take into account the safeguarding implications.

Support will be provided for students over 18, and this will often involve working with parents, but the same statutory requirements for working with children do not apply for adults.

Dealing with a Student or Parent request for social transition at college

The Initial Request

Where a student or parent has requested that we make changes or put support in place in order to facilitate **a student under the age of 18** to socially transition at college.

1. Staff should listen calmly and respectfully.
2. Staff must not make promises of absolute confidentiality.
3. Staff should explain that relevant information will need to be shared with the Safeguarding Team.
4. The Safeguarding Team must be informed promptly.

Staff must not agree to requested changes in name, pronouns, records or treatment for students under 18 until they have received confirmation that the process set out below has been completed and the approach to social transitioning in college has been agreed by the Vice Principal – Students.

Safeguarding Assessment

Once information regarding a request to socially transition has been shared with the Safeguarding Team they will undertake a risk and needs assessment considering the following factors as appropriate:

- Student voice and wishes.
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Potential vulnerability or exploitation.
- Autism, SEND or neurodiversity considerations.
- Family circumstances including parental views
- Medical or clinical advice, where available.
- Risk of bullying or harassment.
- Impact upon other students.

- Educational engagement and attendance.

The assessment and subsequent recommendation regarding social transitioning will be recorded on CPOMS by a **Designated Safeguarding Lead**. This recommendation will be considered by the Vice Principal – Students who will make a decision as to whether social transitioning can be facilitated in college for the student. It is possible that the decision relating to social transition may not be the same as the child's wishes.

Parental Involvement

For students under 18, parents or carers will normally be involved at the earliest opportunity when a request to socially transition is received.

We recognise the importance of parental engagement in supporting the student and promoting welfare under the doctrine of parental responsibility. Parents' views will be given significant weight within decision-making processes and they will be at the centre of any discussions to establish what is best for the child.

At the discretion of a Designated Safeguarding Lead, parents may only be excluded from discussions where:

- There are reasonable grounds to believe involvement would place the student at risk of significant harm.
- Advice from safeguarding partners indicates parental involvement would increase risk.

A decision to exclude parents from discussions must be approved by Vice Principal – Students and the concerns regarding risk of harm must be shared with the appropriate Local Authority partner.

This discussion with parents must form part of the safeguarding assessment and be recorded on CPOMS by a designated safeguarding lead

Requests for Changes in Name and Pronouns

Requests from under 18s relating to social transition regarding changes to names and pronouns will be considered individually following the safeguarding assessment outlined above. Where the college process is followed it is possible for social transition of this type to be agreed.

Consideration will include:

- Student wellbeing.
- Parent/carer awareness of request
- Views of parents/carers.
- Potential safeguarding implications.
- Age and maturity of the student.
- Impact upon staff and other students.
- Provision of Deed Poll evidence
- Legal and record-keeping requirements.

Any change to the college record of name or preferred name of a student

under 18 must be approved by Vice Principal – Students who will then request a change on college records as appropriate and share the information with staff working with the student in college. Official records required for legal, safeguarding or funding purposes will always maintain accurate documentation of biological student sex.

Changes to pronoun and name or preferred name can be made for adults without going through the process above. The Vice Principal –Students should be informed of each agreed change so that communication with staff and safeguarding considerations can be managed.

Toilet Facilities, Changing Areas and Residential Trips

We will comply with legal requirements relating to single-sex spaces and facilities and this means that social transitioning whereby students of **any age** access toilets, changing rooms or residential accommodation designated for the opposite biological sex will not be allowed, with no exceptions.

There may be students who request this type of social transition. These requests should be shared with the Safeguarding Team who will take time to sensitively explain the legal position, and this includes explaining that supporting any degree of social transition will **not** include allowing access

to toilets, changing rooms or residential accommodation designated for the opposite sex.

We will continue to offer gender neutral facilities that can be accessed by everyone, these will be –

- A self-contained individual toilet
- An alternative changing/washing facility (this could be a fully enclosed room – for use by one student at a time that can be secured from the inside – or by allowed access to facilities at alternative times)

These alternative arrangements will not compromise the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of any other student.

For residential trips & visits, we will not allow students of a different biological sex to share rooms and so all rooms will be single sex. This may mean that alternative provision, such as a discrete room, needs to be considered for individuals who do not feel comfortable sharing with people of their biological sex. These instances must always be discussed with parents and signed off by Vice Principal – Students as part of the residential trip panel process.

The Safeguarding Team will keep a record on CPOMS of all requests around toilets, changing facilities and residential accommodation and complete a safeguarding assessment and discuss with parents where appropriate.

Children living in stealth

We will be conscious of the vulnerabilities of any students who have fully socially transitioned from an early age and may be living in stealth.

We also recognise that staff and friends of these students may be unaware of the biological sex of the young person. Where these cases become apparent the Safeguarding Team must be notified so that a safeguarding assessment can be completed and appropriate discussions with parents take place. Continued use of pronouns or names of the opposite biological sex will be subject to the above assessment, parental discussion when the student is under 18 and agreement by Vice Principal-Students.

Support for children who wish to detransition

Where there is a circumstance where a student wants to fully or partially reverse a request that has previously been agreed we will work closely with parents/carers and the relevant experts involved to ensure students are supported.

We acknowledge the guidance that states the importance of maintaining flexibility and keeping options open for children who have socially transitioned.

8. The Management of Safeguarding

Governing Body

- 8.1. Has responsibility for our safeguarding arrangements and ensure that we comply with their duties under legislation.
- 8.2. Our governing body have regard to KCSIE, ensuring our policies, procedures and training in our college are effective and comply with the law at all times.
- 8.3. Our principal will ensure that the policies and procedures, adopted by this governing body, are understood, and followed by all staff.
- 8.4. All governors have received appropriate safeguarding and child protection training. This training will be updated annually.
- 8.5. This will ensure they have the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies in our college are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole-setting approach to safeguarding.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

- 8.6. At Shrewsbury College it is understood that the role of DSL carries a significant level of responsibility and the DSL's are given the additional time, funding, training, resources and support needed to carry out the role effectively.

- 8.7. We will implement robust cover arrangements to ensure a DSL is available during the college day, all year round. The only exception to this is the 2 weeks that college is closed over the Christmas period.
- 8.8. All DSL's are trained to the same standard as required by the Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership and receive refresher training at least every 2 years.

See Annex B in KCSIE 2026, which describes the broad areas of responsibility and activities related to the role.

Local Authority & Multi-Agency Partners

- 8.9. Shrewsbury College recognises the role it plays in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements as outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- 8.10. We work closely with:
- Children's Social Care
 - Adult Social Care
 - Police
 - Health services
 - Early Help teams
 - Youth justice services
 - Local Safeguarding Partnership

Information Sharing

- 8.11. Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and in promoting children's welfare, including in relation to their educational outcomes.
- 8.12. We will be proactive in sharing information as early as possible.
- 8.13. When deciding what information to share we will consider the 'information sharing duty' and consider –
- the relevancy of the information, including to the current safeguarding risk

- what is necessary for the receiving setting to know, and
 - whether it is clearly presented and appropriately contextualised.
- 8.14. We will have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow us to share (and withhold) personal information.
- 8.15. However, the data protection laws do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.
- 8.16. Where a student (under the age of 18) leaves our college, we will ensure their child protection file is transferred to any new education provider as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. We will transfer this file electronically via CPOMS or ensure secure transit, and confirmation of receipt is obtained if a CPOMS transfer isn't possible.
- 8.17. The school or previous setting's DSL will be asked to share any relevant safeguarding information with us as part of a student's transition process, but this will not include the transfer of any child protection file until the student appears on our roll.

Staff Training

- 8.18. Shrewsbury College will provide appropriate training.
- 8.19. This includes –
- Training in child protection for all staff working with children in line with SSCP guidance (refresher training will also be provided every three years minimum)
 - Training in inter-agency procedures for the DSL's and their Safeguarding Mentors (with refresher training every 2 years).
 - Staff will receive regular safeguarding updates via CPD and the 'In The Loop' college newsletter with reminders of aspects of these procedures and updates on relevant safeguarding issues.
 - Additional reminders will be provided through the weekly Staff Briefing .
 - Issue specific briefings as appropriate/required.

Opportunities to teach safeguarding

- 8.20. At Shrewsbury College we teach students about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online through our Tutorial programme.
- 8.21. Our Tutorial programme is delivered in accordance with the RSHE Statutory Guidance September 2026. It equips our students to tackle issues such as –
- Developing the skills to form the building blocks of positive relationships
 - Healthy and respectful relationships
 - Boundaries, consent and kindness in relationships
 - Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
 - Body confidence and self-esteem
 - How to recognise and report concerns about an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
 - The concepts of, and laws relating to all forms of sexual harassment, and abuse, and how to access support
 - What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it
 - Understanding online harms such as sharing images, the prevalence of deepfakes, pornography and misogynistic influencers and when and where to seek help
- 8.22. Safeguarding themes are integrated into the Tutorial programme, and it is responsive to the needs of our students.
- 8.23. We ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems that are in place and do not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what students can be taught with regard to online teaching and safeguarding.

9. Online Safety (including Filtering & Monitoring)

- 9.1. Shrewsbury College recognises that online safety is a core safeguarding responsibility.
- 9.2. Students are increasingly exposed to digital risks both inside and outside the college environment.
- 9.3. We are committed to ensuring that our systems, curriculum, staff training and safeguarding procedures reflect the latest statutory requirements, including the strengthened expectations in **KCSIE 2026** and the **Online Safety Act 2024**.
- 9.4. KCSIE 2026 introduces new expectations around AI-related risks, we recognise that students may be exposed to:
 - AI-generated sexual imagery
 - Deepfake harassment
 - AI-driven grooming or impersonation
 - AI-generated extremist content
 - AI-generated misinformation
- 9.5. Staff must report concerns immediately.
- 9.6. The Safeguarding team will:
 - Assess risk
 - Provide support to affected students
 - Liaise with police where criminal offences may have occurred
- 9.7. The Governing Body, Vice Principal for Students & Vice Principal for Quality, Apprenticeships & Information will ensure that filtering and monitoring arrangements are effective, proportionate and reviewed annually by working closely with the Head of Safeguarding & Student Conduct and Director of Technical Services to oversee the effectiveness of online safety measures.
- 9.8. Further information relating to this can be found in our **Online Safety Policy & Cyber Security Policy**.

10. Reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff

- 10.1. These procedures apply to all staff, whether teaching, administrative, management or support, as well as to volunteers, agency and supply staff, trainee teachers and contractors.
- 10.2. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) makes a distinction between concerns or allegations that may meet the harm threshold and those that don't (low level concerns).
- 10.3. Where you have concerns, or a disclosure is made that indicates, that a member of staff poses a risk of harm (may meet the harm threshold) the process for reporting outlined below should be followed without delay.
- 10.4. An allegation may meet the harm threshold when a member of staff has:
 - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
 - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (this includes behaviour that has occurred outside of college or online: known as transferable risk)
- 10.5. If you are concerned that the harm threshold may be met then follow this process:
 - You should not investigate the concerns.
 - Do not ask questions (which may prejudice any subsequent enquiry) or examine the child for any sign of injury.
 - Listen carefully to what you are being told and don't pass any kind of judgement on any of the information that you are being given.
 - Carefully record in writing what the child has told you, or what has been observed, as soon as possible. Sign and date this

disclosure and pass on to a designated safeguarding lead or report the concern to pleasehelp@shrewsbury.ac.uk

- Do not promise confidentiality as this cannot be delivered.
- Do not contact the child's parents or carers if there is one involved.
- Immediately consult with a designated safeguarding lead
- If there is any need for emergency medical treatment do not delay, contact a First Aider.
- If the allegation is made against a designated safeguarding lead the Principal must be contacted immediately.
- If you cannot access a designated safeguarding lead do not delay. Any member of staff can make a referral including when then college is closed (as outlined in Annex A).

10.6. In cases of allegations of abuse being made against a member of staff, the Staff Disciplinary Procedure will be invoked.

10.7. The College Vice Principal: Students will work with other designated safeguarding leads as appropriate to follow the Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership Guidelines linked below and the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026). It is likely that, as part of this process, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted.

[Managing Allegations against staff or volunteers – Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership](#)

10.8. Where a concern does not meet the harm threshold it is categorised as a low level concern. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) sets out that low level concerns must be taken seriously and acted upon promptly in order to minimise the risk of escalation and to ensure the safest possible educational environment.

10.9. A concern is low level when an adult working in or on behalf of the college may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the college Safer Working Guidance, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and

- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer
- 10.10. Low level concerns can come from a number of sources such as complaints, observations, references and vetting checks, a member of staff or members of the public. A member of staff may also self-refer if they feel that they have behaved in a way that could be misinterpreted or where they feel that they have behaved in a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.
- 10.11. Low level concerns should be reported to a DSL or the pleasehelp@shrewsbury.ac.uk email.
- 10.12. Where the concern is about a contractor or agency member of staff their employer will be informed.
- 10.13. Where a low level concern has been raised by a third party, such as a member of the public, the college will speak to them in order to get as full a picture as possible.
- 10.14. Where there is a concern about a volunteer the same process should be followed as for a member of staff employed by the college.
- 10.15. Concerns will be recorded appropriately by the college and follow up actions taken if necessary. This could include a decision that the harm threshold has been met, that there is a need for support or training for an individual or that there needs to be a response across the organisation such as a revision of policies.
- 10.16. Further detail on low level concerns can be found in the college approach to **Safe Working Practice**.
- 10.17. Safer recruitment is covered within the College's **Safer Recruitment Policy**
- 10.18. All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the College's safeguarding regime and that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.
- Staff can raise concerns by contacting the Principal, Vice Principal ; Students or Vice Principal ; People
 - Staff can also raise concerns via the Whistleblowing Policy

- Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with the College or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:
- General guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>
- The NSPCC what you can do to report abuse dedicated helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection processes internally.

Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.