



Farnham Youth Choir Safeguarding Policy September 2023

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Approved by	Melanie Hancox & Clare Wingfield (Co-Chairs)	Date	1 st September 2023
Last Reviewed	July 2023		
Next Review due by	July 2024		

Important Safeguarding Contacts

Role	Name	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Liz Chapman	07836 595585 info@fyc.org.uk
Deputy DSL	Melanie Hancox	Melanie.hancox@fyc.org.uk
Designated Safeguarding Trustee	Damian Ward	Damian.ward@fyc.org.uk
Co-Chairs of Trustees	Clare Wingfield Melanie Hancox	clare.wingfield@fyc.org.uk 07590 924265 melanie.hancox@fyc.org.uk 07775 771225

Farnham Youth Choir (FYC) is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people, and recognises its duty of care under the following legislation and regulations

- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- The Children Act 1989
- The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)

Also, used for guidance and reference are;

- Keeping children safe in education (2023) and
- Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges (2021) both available below.

Useful Links

[Working together to Safeguard Children](#)
[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
[Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges](#)
[Hackett's Continuum of Harmful Sexual Behaviours](#)
[Making Music DBS checks](#)

This safeguarding policy applies to the Artistic Director, Musical Directors, accompanists, staff, and all volunteers working with FYC. Working together, these individuals will endeavour to foster an ethos that embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people, and adults.

In order to underpin its approach to safeguarding, FYC will:

- Take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, abuse, and exploitation
- Act appropriately to respond to any allegations, reports, or suspicion of abuse.

1. Promotion of safe practice – policy outline

There are seven main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
- Raising awareness, including training key members of staff and volunteers in child protection issues
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers follow safe working practice.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse
- Supporting choir members who have particular needs
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
- Creating a culture where children can thrive as individuals without prejudice and in an environment where they feel able to trust and communicate with the adults responsible for their care.

2. Protecting children from harm, abuse or exploitation

In this policy, we adopt the NSPCC's definition of 'abuse', current at the time of writing, as follows: Child abuse is when a child is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child – it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual or emotional and it can happen in person or online. It can also be a lack of love, care and attention – this is neglect (see appendix B for detailed signs of abuse).

Given their regular contact with FYC's singers, the music team and adult helpers with FYC are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. FYC will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Make sure that choir members know there are adults in FYC whom they can approach if they are worried.
- We will ensure that all staff and volunteers:
- Understand their position of power and influence over choir members and do not misuse it in any way.

- Work in an open and transparent way, avoiding any actions that would lead a reasonable person to question their motivation and/or intentions.
- Are mindful about the recording and storage of images of choir members.
- Allow choir members to change clothes with levels of privacy appropriate to their age, gender, culture, and circumstances.

3. Commitment to respond to allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse

FYC will:

- Ensure we have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- Ensure the DSL is supported, where possible, by a Deputy DSL. One of FYC's trustees (the 'Designated Safeguarding Trustee') will also be nominated to have oversight of safeguarding matters; he/she and the wider management team will work to support the DSL and Deputy DSL.
- Implement recognised and appropriate training that will enable FYC staff to help safeguard our singers.
- Ensure that all adult choir helpers (including volunteers) and trustees know the name and contact details of the DSL.
- Ensure that all helpers and volunteers understand their responsibility to be alert to the signs of abuse and to refer any concerns to the DSL.
- Ensure that the Choir's policy on Safeguarding is published on the FYC website and shared with all parents.
- Co-operate as required with parents and schools and other statutory agencies with their enquiries regarding child protection matters, to include attendance at case conferences if required.
- Keep records of concerns about children (even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately) and make the DSL aware.
- Ensure all child protection records are kept securely for up to ten years.
- Ensure that there will be no tolerance for any forms of bullying or prejudiced behaviour towards or among FYC's singers on the grounds of disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender, or race.

4. Staff and Volunteers

Wherever possible, FYC will use only volunteer helpers who are either past members of FYC themselves, parents/family member/guardians of choir members, or parents/family members/guardians of former FYC members. This allows us to have personal knowledge of all volunteers and negates any need to recruit strangers.

If anyone outside the choir is recruited for any role, whether paid or unpaid, temporary or permanent, necessary Disclosure and Barring Service checks will be completed [and references taken] before their role is confirmed.

5. Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse

If an adult volunteer or any member of FYC staff suspects abuse or neglect of any child, they must report this as soon as possible to the DSL or Deputy DSL. If the DSL or Deputy DSL is unavailable, the volunteer or member of staff should approach the musical director of the choir (Senior, Junior or Training). The musical director must then make the DSL or Deputy DSL aware of the suspected abuse as soon as possible. If the musical director is implicated in the suspected or alleged abuse, the adult helper should instead report the suspected abuse direct to the DSL or Deputy DSL (please see Appendix B 'What to do if a child makes a safeguarding disclosure).

If there is a suspicion or allegation of abuse against the DSL or Deputy DSL, or in the event that the DSL or Deputy DSL are unavailable, the musical director should report the suspected or alleged abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Trustee or, if he/she cannot be reached, the Chair of Trustees. If a child is in immediate risk of harm, any person, volunteer or member of staff should report the matter to social services or the police.

When the DSL, Deputy DSL or Designated Safeguarding Trustee is alerted to a concern about abuse or suspected abuse, he or she will first make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern and the following two factors:

- If a choir member is at immediate risk of harm or needs emergency medical attention, contact social services, the police and/or the ambulance service.
- If the person at the centre of the allegation is working with choir members at the current time, remove them, in a sensitive manner, from direct contact with choir members and follow these procedures.

To support this decision making the relevant person will use as a guide Hackett's Continuum of Harmful Sexual Behaviours; this lists behaviours (from normal to violent) referred to within Ofsted's Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges (2021). Links to this document can be found at the beginning of this document.

If an allegation has been made that is not criminal in nature (for example, bullying between choir members), then the DSL, Deputy DSL or Designated Safeguarding Trustee will:

- Make a note of the concerns reported to him/her, preferably using the *Expressions of Concern* form (kept in the First Aid bag);
- Speak to the Trustees to decide how to handle the reported incident, but excluding from the discussion any Trustee involved in the incident; and

Escalate the report by either:

- Raising concerns with the police (if the incident is suspected of being criminal), in which case FYC will cooperate with the police in dealing with the reported incident
- Requesting an assessment by the local authority social care department to determine whether or not a choir member is in need of protection, in which case FYC will cooperate with the local authority in dealing with the reported incident

- Mounting an internal investigation (for less serious incidents where it is felt that internal mediation will be successful)

Where an internal investigation takes place, the DSL/Deputy DSL/Designated Safeguarding Trustee will:

- Inform all parties involved of the reported incident as soon as possible
- Inform the family/guardians of the choir member(s) reported to have been involved
- Arrange separate meetings with both parties within 10 days of the reported incident. A joint meeting may be arranged if appropriate
- Both parties should be given the chance to bring a friend or representative to the meeting
- Meetings will be attended by the DSL/Deputy DSL and at least one Trustee (preferably the Designated Safeguarding Trustee)
- All parties will be invited to submit a written statement in advance of the meeting.

Once meetings have taken place, the DSL/Deputy DSL and Trustee(s) who attended the meetings will decide on the next steps and will communicate them to all parties in writing within 5 days. The next steps will be either:

- Escalating the incident to the relevant authority
- Further investigation, with established procedures and timelines to work towards a resolution
- A decision or resolution.

If abuse is found to have taken place, any final resolution or decision will be taken in the best interest of the person who has suffered the abuse, supported by FYC.

6. Reporting an incident to the Charity Commission or to DBS

In certain circumstances, when a serious incident has taken place, it must be reported to the Charity Commission. Serious incidents are: an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant:

- harm to your charity's beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others who come into contact with your charity through its work
- loss of your charity's money or assets
- damage to your charity's property
- harm to your charity's work or reputation

The main categories of reportable incident are:

- protecting people and safeguarding incidents – incidents that have resulted in or risk significant harm to beneficiaries and other people who come into contact with the charity through its work
- financial crimes – fraud, theft, cyber-crime and money laundering

- large donations from an unknown or unverifiable source, or suspicious financial activity using the charity's funds
- other significant financial loss
- links to terrorism or extremism, including 'proscribed' (or banned) organisations, individuals subject to an asset freeze, or kidnapping of staff
- other significant incidents, such as – insolvency, forced withdrawal of banking services without an alternative, significant data breaches/losses or incidents involving partners that materially affect the charity (gov.uk 'How to report a serious incident in your charity')

FYC will report any such incidents to the Charity Commission without delay.

In addition, when a serious incident has involved Safeguarding, a report will also be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service. [Charity Commission](#)

7. DBS checks

FYC will carry out a DBS check on all staff, musical directors, accompanists, and regular adult helpers, and no one will take up his or her role until DBS clearance is received. Enhanced DBS checks must be satisfactorily completed in respect of adults who are routinely alone with choir members. FYC currently uses Making Music as an umbrella body to complete DBS checks for our organisation.

Regular adult helpers will be those who are often involved in supporting choir rehearsals and events. These will include the choir liaisons, chaperones and those who often assist with uniform, first aid, general supervision etc.

All DBS checks will be renewed every three years.

There will be some volunteers who help out on a much more infrequent basis. The regular helpers (often Committee members) will need to be aware of these people and will have a duty to be mindful of how they are tasked, particularly if FYC does not hold a recent copy of a DBS check. If an infrequent helper has no current DBS check, he or she must not be asked to carry out a role that involves or might involve being alone with choir members.

8. GDPR

FYC has a comprehensive GDPR Policy, covering the usage and storage of all members', parents', and volunteers' details.

Parents are invited to give their consent in writing at the beginning of every academic year to allow FYC to take photos and record videos of the choir for promotional and social media purposes.

Social media content is managed by the Artistic Director and by the management board.

The use of mobile phones/cameras is not permitted in the rehearsal area unless permission is granted by the Artistic Director or relevant Choir Liaison.

The use of cameras or mobile phones with camera or filming capability in dressing rooms and other inappropriate environments is forbidden at all times.

9. FYC Chaperone Code of Conduct

The welfare and security of members is paramount at FYC. Chaperones must be aware of their Safeguarding responsibilities at all times. The role of an FYC chaperone is to use their common sense in applying the required regulations so that FYC functions as usual and that members' enjoyment and experience of rehearsals and concerts is not compromised. Any issues arising should be handled sensitively and appropriately to the circumstances and directed through the nominated Lead Chaperone to the Choir Liaison. All FYC registered chaperones are required to adhere to the FYC Chaperone Code of Conduct.

10. Child Performance Licences

When planning any event that may be considered a performance involving children under school leaving age (who will not reach age of 16 before the end of the summer holidays), FYC will always consider at the earliest possible stage whether the event will require child performance licensing. Child performance licence regulations and guidance set out the requirements for an application to ensure children are properly safeguarded. Where possible FYC may seek a 'body of persons' approval by the relevant local authority.

11. Online Safety

Occasionally there will be rehearsals or meetings held online using the FYC secure Zoom account, the continued suitability of this will be monitored by the board of trustees and the Artistic Director. FYC communicates with parents by circulating a weekly online newsletter, using Mailchimp. Parents of older members of the choir can request that the newsletter is also e-mailed to their child.

Cyber-bullying by children, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying. It has been noted by the Department for Education in their 2021 guidance, that the sharing of inappropriate images between peers is not uncommon. If any similar incidents are identified, Government advice will be followed.

The online learning portals featured in 'Useful External Contacts' (Appendix A) will be highlighted to parents, members and staff of FYC to increase awareness.

The link to every FYC online meeting is shared with parents, with clear instructions not to pass it to anyone other than FYC members.

Each choir member's computer, tablet or phone should be used in a communal space in the home (kitchen, lounge, dining room, not a bedroom)

Appropriate clothing must be worn by anyone in the video (staff, pupil and parents) and appropriate language used by pupils and anyone in the background.

A parent, adult family member or guardian must be present in the room (or close by) for all under 16s.

Parents/guardians should activate the meeting for junior choirs, only show your first name on the screen and please set this up prior to logging into the meeting

12. Covid-19

FYC will continue to follow guidance from Making Music and the National Youth Agency in order to prevent the transmission of Covid-19.

Appendix A

Useful external contacts

Name	Description	Contact
Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA)	Multi-Agency point of reporting of any concerns for the safety of children or vulnerable adults	9-5 Mon to Fri 0300 470 9100 Out of Hours 01483 517898 Email: cspa@surreycc.gov.uk C-SPA Urgent cases call police on 999 or 101
Surrey Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	The LADO Service manages allegations against individuals who work or volunteer with children in Surrey	0300 123 1650 (option 3 LADO) LADO Surrey Email: LADO@surreycc.gov.uk
East Hampshire Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	As above, but manages issues in Hampshire	Duty LADO: Telephone 01962 876364 Email: child.protection@hant.gov.uk LADO East Hampshire
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)	Government agency who carry out checks on the suitability of people to work with children and vulnerable adults	PO Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA DBS 01325 953795
Counter-Extremism service	Helpline for advice re safeguarding children from extremist ideologies	020 7340 7264 Email: counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk
NSPCC	Support for children who may be at risk / Reporting of those at risk	0808 800 5000 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk NPCC
Childline	Information support and advice for children	0800 1111 Childline
CEOP Thinkuknow	Online Safety Training from UK National Crime Agency From age 4 to parents	Thinkuknow
Anti-Bullying Alliance	Help, tools and advice for people against bullying	Anti-Bullying Alliance
Childnet International	Internet Safety Resources for children	Childnet International
Saferinternet Centre	UK Safer Internet Advice	Saferinternet Centre

Appendix B: What to do if a child makes a safeguarding disclosure

A member of FYC staff or a volunteer who is approached by a child should listen positively and try to reassure them. They cannot promise complete confidentiality and should explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe. The degree of confidentiality should always be governed by the need to protect the child.

Additional consideration needs to be given to children with communication difficulties and for those whose preferred language is not English. It is important to communicate with them in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference.

All staff should know who the DSL is and who to approach if the DSL is unavailable. All staff have the right to make a referral to social services or Police directly and should do this if, for whatever reason, there are difficulties following the agreed protocol, for example, they are the only adult on the premises at the time and have concerns about sending a child home.

Guiding principles: the seven R's

Receive

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said and take it seriously
- Make a note of what has been said as soon as practicable

Reassure

- Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable
- Don't make promises you may not be able to keep e.g. 'I'll stay with you' or 'everything will be alright now' or 'I'll keep this confidential'
- Do reassure, for example, you could say: 'I believe you', 'I am glad you came to me', 'I am sorry this has happened', 'We are going to do something together to get help'

Respond

- Respond to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but **do not interrogate** for full details
- Do not ask 'leading' questions i.e. 'did he touch your private parts?' or 'did she hurt you?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court
- Do not ask the child why something has happened
- Do not criticize the alleged perpetrator; the pupil may care about him/her, and reconciliation may be possible
- Do not ask the child to repeat it all for another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to. Reassure the child that it will be a senior member of staff and only people who need to know will be told

Report

- Share concerns with the DSL immediately
- If you are not able to contact your DSL or the Deputy DSL, and the child is at risk of immediate harm, contact social services or Police, as appropriate, directly

- If you are dissatisfied with the level of response you receive following your concerns, you should press for re-consideration

Record

- If possible, make some very brief notes at the time, and write them up as soon as possible on the *Expressions of Concern* form kept in the First Aid bag
- Keep your original notes on file
- Record the date, time, place, person/s present and noticeable non-verbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper' words
- If appropriate, complete a body map to indicate the position of any noticeable bruising
- Record facts and observable things, rather than your 'interpretations' or 'assumptions'

Remember

- Support the child: listen, reassure, and be available
- Complete confidentiality is essential. Share your knowledge only with appropriate professional colleagues
- Get some support for yourself if you need it

Review (led by DSL)

- Has the action taken provided good outcomes for the child?
- Did the procedure work?
- Were any deficiencies or weaknesses identified in the procedure? Have these been remedied?
- Is further training required?

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

If a member of staff or volunteer is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her, or if she fears that it may be carried out, or a member of staff or volunteer observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth, the member of staff or volunteer should personally make a report to the police force in which the girl resides by calling 101. **The report must be made immediately.**

What happens next?

It is important that concerns are followed up and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are. The member of staff or volunteer should be informed by the DSL what has happened following a report being made. However, staff and volunteers should be aware that they may not be given full details of the next steps, as these may be confidential. If they do not receive this information they should seek it out.

If they have concerns that the disclosure has not been acted upon appropriately, they might inform the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding.

Receiving a disclosure can be upsetting for anyone and FYC should be aware that individuals may need support after such an event. This might include reassurance that they have followed procedure correctly and that their swift actions will enable the allegations to be handled appropriately.

Appendix C: Indicators of abuse

Neglect: The nature of neglect

Neglect is a lack of parental care, but poverty and lack of information or adequate services can be contributory factors (poverty is not, of itself, evidence of neglect).

Neglect can include parents or carers failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision or stimulation
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

NSPCC research has highlighted the following examples of the neglect of children under 12 years old:

- frequently going hungry
- frequently being dressed in dirty clothes
- regularly having to look after themselves because of parents being away or having problems such as drug or alcohol misuse
- being abandoned or deserted
- living at home in dangerous physical conditions
- not being taken to the doctor when ill
- not receiving dental care.

Neglect is a difficult form of abuse to recognise and is often seen as less serious than other categories. It is, however, very damaging: children who are neglected often develop more slowly than others and may find it hard to make friends and fit in with their peer group.

Neglect is often noticed at a stage when it does not pose a risk to the child. The duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (*What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused* DfE 2015) would suggest that an appropriate intervention or conversation at this early stage can address the issue and prevent a child continuing to suffer until it reaches a point when they are at risk of harm or in significant need.

Neglect is often linked to other forms of abuse, so any concerns school staff have should be discussed with the DSL.

Indicators of neglect

The following is a summary of some of the indicators that may suggest a child is being abused or is at risk of harm.

It is important to recognise that indicators alone cannot confirm whether a child is being abused. Each child should be seen in the context of their family and wider community and a proper assessment carried out by appropriate persons. What is important to keep in mind is that if you feel unsure or concerned, do something about it. Don't keep it to yourself. When in doubt, speak to the DSL. Your observation make complete part of a picture of which social services were already aware.

Physical indicators of neglect

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

Behavioural indicators of neglect

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

Emotional abuse: The nature of emotional abuse

Most harm is produced in *low warmth, high criticism* homes, not from single incidents.

Emotional abuse is difficult to define, identify/recognise and/or prove.

Emotional abuse is chronic and cumulative and has a long-term impact.

All kinds of abuse and neglect have emotional effects although emotional abuse can occur by itself.

Children can be harmed by witnessing someone harming another person – as in domestic abuse.

It is sometimes possible to spot emotionally abusive behaviour from parents and carers to their children, by the way that the adults are speaking to, or behaving towards children. An appropriate challenge or intervention could affect positive change and prevent more intensive work being carried out later on.

Indicators of emotional abuse

Developmental issues

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

Behaviour

- Acceptance of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes

- Continual self-deprecation (I'm stupid, ugly, worthless etc)
- Neurotic behaviour (such as rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- Self-mutilation
- Suicide attempts
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging
- Acting out
- Poor trust in significant adults
- Regressive behaviour – e.g., wetting
- Eating disorders
- Destructive tendencies
- Neurotic behaviour
- Arriving early at school, leaving late

Social issues

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

Emotional responses

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

Physical abuse: The nature of physical abuse

Most children collect cuts and bruises quite routinely as part of the rough and tumble of daily life. Clearly, it is not necessary to be concerned about most of these minor injuries. But accidental injuries normally occur on the *bony prominences* – e.g. knees, shins.

Injuries on the *soft* areas of the body are more likely to be inflicted intentionally and should therefore make us more alert to other concerning factors that may be present.

A body map can assist in the clear recording and reporting of physical abuse. The body map should only be used to record observed injuries and no child should be asked to remove clothing by a member of staff or volunteer.

Indicators of physical abuse / factors that should increase concern

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

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

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

You should be concerned if a child:

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

Sexual Abuse: The nature of sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is often perpetrated by people who are known and trusted by the child – e.g., relatives, family friends, neighbours, babysitters, and people working with the child

in school, faith settings, clubs or activities. Children can also be subject to child sexual exploitation.

Characteristics of child sexual abuse:

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

Most people who sexually abuse children are men, but some women sexually abuse too.

Indicators of sexual abuse

Physical observations:

- Damage to genitalia, anus or mouth
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Unexpected pregnancy, especially in very young girls (sexual activity below age 16 is illegal, for boys and girls)
- Soreness in genital area, anus or mouth and other medical problems such as chronic itching
- Unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections and discharges or abdominal pain

Behavioural observations:

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

Peer on Peer/Child on Child Abuse

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

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment as well as their emotional well-being. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage and should be reported to social services. An incident may seem relatively minor, but it could help to fill in a picture of behaviour beyond the child's interactions with FYC. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and that every effort is made to ensure their experience with FYC is not disrupted. It is also important that other children and FYC staff and volunteers are supported and protected as appropriate.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. Common signs are many of those associated with other forms of child abuse, but in addition: a sudden increase in apparent wealth – having expensive trainers, or a surprisingly expensive mobile phone; bragging about an older boyfriend or new older 'friend'; or being unexpectedly absent from rehearsals.

It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual.

Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Any concerns that a child is being or is at risk of being sexually exploited should be passed immediately to the DSL.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act (2003). It is a form of child abuse and violence against women.

If a member of staff or volunteer is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her, or if she fears that it may be carried out, or a teacher observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth, the member of staff or volunteer should personally make a report to the police force in which the girl resides by calling 101. **The report should be made immediately.**

Staff and volunteers should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female pupils about going on a long holiday during the summer holiday.

There should also be consideration of potential risk to other girls in the family and the wider community. Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm the member of staff or volunteer should report the case immediately to the police, including dialling 999 if appropriate.

There are no circumstances in which a member of staff or volunteer should examine a girl.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities cannot) consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

Forced marriage is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights. Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage which is common in many cultures. The families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Contact should be made with social services and/or the Forced Marriage Unit 020 7008 0151.